

How to Win Sales and Influence Members

By **BOB GUTWEIN**

Professional, Kenwood Country Club, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Last year was the one pro expected would produce their biggest business. It was not that; nevertheless the pro who was on the job in selling sports wearing apparel made 1946 one of his most profitable seasons.

While it has been true that sportswear was pretty hard to get it has been amazing how much a pro could get his hands on by writing a few letters or, better still, by telephoning.

This year, with golf merchandise being produced in large quantity the pro should make sales records that will be the tops for some years to come. But he'll do that only if he now is doing the groundwork for his 1947 sales campaign. This year isn't going to be one in which the pro can depend mainly on the stored-up demand for golf goods. That volume will interest aggressive merchants who will try to cut in on what the pro would consider his own marketing field.

But that isn't something that will scare the alert pro. It is only another challenge to his ability and energy. It demands that he completely modernize his shop now, and adjust his mental attitude to get an "in" with his customers so deep and solid that no competition can beat him.

We can't kid ourselves about our customers feeling that they "owe" us their business even though that's the opinion some pros are inclined to have. The members, as customers, are just the same sort of human beings pros are. They will buy wherever they feel they are getting the most for their money.

The day has gone when the club member bought all of his needs from the pro just because it was the thing to do, or just because the pro was a good guy and could slam the hell out of a golf ball.

The day also has passed when good golf merchandise could only be found in the pro shops. This means we have had to expand our pro shop lines. We're now in competition with a lot of guys who have spent their life in this wearing apparel business and if we are to get

our share of this volume, we have got to get in there and pitch.

If we expect to get this business we must prove to these members that the merchandise for sale in our pro shops is the best that money can buy and that our prices will meet all store competition.

Price Tags Educate

I think one of the worst things a pro can do is fail to put price tags on all merchandise. Too many people still believe that it costs more to buy in a pro shop than it does downtown. This was brought about by the better workmanship on pro shop clubs in hickory-shaft days and, by pros not pricing their merchandise firmly, but selling to different members at different prices.

Remember, you are expected to make a fair profit. Don't be afraid to price your merchandise at the regular retail prices. Don't however make the fatal mistake of selling to one member at a lower price than you did to another. I firmly believe that failing to price merchandise and selling at various prices has done more than any thing else to drive members downtown.

You can whip this condition by good smart buying and by informing your members by mail and by mouth just what you have to offer.

Sale Authority

You are supposed to be the authority on golf; on every phase of golf. You probably are on clubs, balls and bags, otherwise you haven't much license to be a pro. On the apparel fashions in golf you're also expected to be an authority. That's a basis of the volume of apparel business you should be doing not only as a service to your members but as a source of decided profit to yourself.

I have always taken "Esquire" and for more than one reason. There are other books that may give you the latest in wearing apparel but I have found that you can always find out the latest in men's styles by fol-



Bob Gutwein

lowing this book. I have also found it advisable to shop around at the men's stores in town to see what they were featuring and what they were charging for these items. Make up your mind just what you intend to feature and then buy enough so that you will have an ample stock to work with. Don't expect to sell many sweaters if you only have a few on hand. Decide on a number, enough to make a good display and then go to work selling that item.

Talk to some of your merchandise men at your club. You will find them eager to help you and their advice will save you many a dollar.

Regardless of all that I have said if you do not keep your shop clean, neat, and your stock well arranged you will not get the business. You are dealing with a very fine class of people. Offer them the type service and surroundings to which they are accustomed when they go to purchase their new suit and you will find your sales mounting.

There is one point that a good many of us overlook, that is the ease with which a member can buy in the pro shop.

Most men are about alike; they just don't want to take time off from work or

lunch to go buy the things they need. They do, however, have time to kill either before or after their golf game when they can browse around your pro shop in search of the things they need. This really gives us the jump on the stores. Are you taking advantage of it?

Make your displays inviting. Don't pile merchandise up in any old manner. Make neat attractive displays and change these at least once a week. If your shop looks the same to your members they will not become accustomed to walking in and looking around. They will assume that you have nothing new if your displays are practically the same. If you can't get new merchandise move the old to another part of the shop, change location of your cases or tables or get new ones. Do something that will let your members know that your merchandise is moving if only in the shop.

If you have tournaments at your club and if you give merchandise as prizes be sure and let the winners know that it can be changed. You will be surprised at the added sales that will come your way when they take the time to drop around and change that prize.

Flood of Business Demands Pro Vigilance

By JACK JOLLY

Often one hears a pro say, "I've got more business than I can handle." I've said it myself. I've had to ration Silver Kings among professionals ever since we were able to renew manufacture after the war. Although there are numerous uncertain conditions in the golf goods manufacturing business one thing is sure and that is a demand in excess of supply in 1947. There'll still be shortages of the better class of merchandise.

It's logical that shortages will ease up on the lower grades of merchandise first. There will be a lot of stuff made quickly to sell and without much regard—if any—for pro standards. There also will be plenty of places selling this inferior merchandise. There are pros who will be bothered by having members go for the inferior stuff because of inability of a pro to furnish the needed amount of pro quality goods. Then a pro may say to himself, "If they insist on buying junk why should I beat myself out of a profit by trying to protect them with quality?" That's going to be a temptation of having more business than you can handle.


But it won't be a temptation to the experienced and thoughtful pro. He knows that the punishment the average golfer gives clubs and balls is such that it shows pro quality merchandise to decidedly good advantage by comparison. The buyer who was too eager to wait for pro quality will learn the hard way and the expensive way. His experience will impress upon him the

wisdom and thrift of buying pro-approved golf goods. If the pro had been stampeded he would have identified himself as just another retailer willing to sell the unwary anything for a quick profit.

Certainly the war years when new clubs and rubber golf balls of any grade were unavailable provided many convincing tests of the lasting economy of quality. Compare the performance and durability of the recovered balls of quality during the war years and the satisfaction of pro quality clubs as contrasted with the cheap and hurriedly made implements that some had to use during the war years because nothing else was procurable.

The five years of shortages proved the economy and consumer satisfaction of pro-quality goods. That history is something for the pro to bear in mind should he ever be inclined to figure that the answer to his problem of having more business than he can handle is the slightest lowering of pro quality.

It may be a tough task for a younger pro in some cases to convince a member that it's much better to wait until the pro can equip him properly than to grab any quantity of inferior grade balls or any cheap clubs that can be bought. But eventually the sadder-but-wiser cheap goods buyers will come around to the pro. They won't if they think of the pro as just another fellow who is in business solely to make a profit off of them.



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How 9-hole Course Can Raise Its "Class" Profitably

By **DON CARMICHAEL**

Greenkeeper, Martinsville (Ind.) Country Club.

In the majority of cases the condition of the smaller town 9-hole courses can be greatly improved by well-planned operations that don't involve expense beyond the comfortable reach of the smaller club budget. Primarily the reason for so many small town courses being cow-pasture establishments rather than courses that compare favorably with metropolitan area jobs is in official policy. If the club has officials who get around and have a clear idea of what good playing conditions should be then the tough part of the task of improving course standards is out of the way.

Our situation at Martinsville differs from that at many other small towns because our club is privately owned. Walter Kennedy, the man who developed the town as a mineral water health resort, is the owner of the Martinsville CC. Kennedy is present Indiana senior champion and won the state seniors' title twice previously. As a proficient and enthusiastic golfer who has played on many courses Kennedy knows what is needed. As a businessman and civic-minded citizen he also realizes that the course to be a civic asset has to be in such condition that it will please the many members of metropolitan district clubs who play golf here as part of their health and pep-restoration plan.

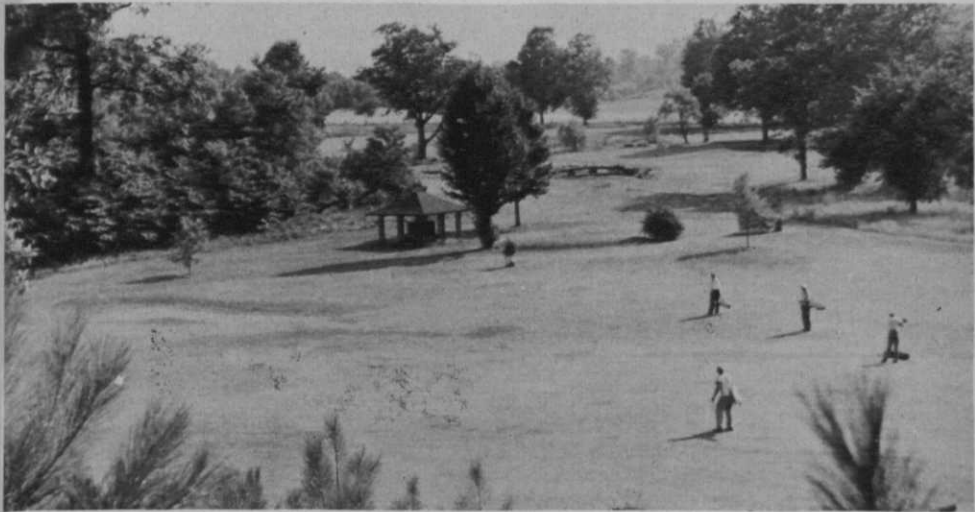
9 Good Holes Wiser Decision

Kennedy could have had built an 18 hole course that would have involved heavy maintenance expense out of proportion to the amount of play we get and which would have required more labor than we were able to get in the war years.

But he considered that most of our play is that of men past their mid-forties who get a satisfying amount of golf in 9 holes. If they want 18 hole play our tees are long enough to give them considerable variety. However, at that point, let me mention that one of the things Kennedy and I both recommend to groups building new 9-hole courses is to have double tee layouts providing interesting variety of tee shots on the same hole and so constructed that the fairway mowers can keep the added tees in rather good shape.

One of the most common mistakes made by the smaller town courses is that of trying to get by on too small acreage. Most of them have 40 or 50 acres and cramped layouts; frequently with parallel holes that are dangerous.

In another respect many of them start out wrong by not getting competent architectural advice in laying out the course. Ground that lends itself to naturally fine golf holes often is not used, or is misused.



A little stream that winds through the valley on the Martinsville course supplies natural hazards at the right places because of talent of architect Wm. Diddle in designing the course.

Will Diddle of Indianapolis designed our course by fitting greens into locations nature seems to have built especially for them in most instances.

We have only 7 sand traps on the course and they are not large. But they are smartly located to catch the shots of the longer player who gets off line when he takes a chance. They do not penalize the player who already is handicapped by his lack of distance. These traps are just enough to fill out our boast of our course as a fine test of golf. They give a good variety of sand trap shots. Other hazards are the natural roll of the ground, out of bounds, trees, and a creek that wanders through the valley in which most of the Martinsville CC course lies.

There, in use of natural hazards, is where the smaller town course is wise if it makes use of experienced architectural service.

Nature Used By Architect

I'll show you how skilled design, taking advantage of the natural terrain, makes interesting holes:

The 1st hole is a 340 yard dogleg to the left. The tee shot goes into a valley; but just where it goes has a lot to do with the difficulty or ease of the second shot—a pitch to an elevated green.

The 2d is a 525 dogleg to the right with out-of-bounds in the angle of the dogleg. The tee shot has to be smartly placed to take advantage of knobs and a valley, and to put the ball in position for getting across a creek. There are grassy hollows and sandtraps guarding this green.

The 3d, a 400 yard hole to an elevated green, again makes use of the creek as a hazard to punish the fellow who is longer than he is wiser off the tee. The green is in front of a hill. This hill cuts off a lot of air circulation and calls for plenty of vigilance to keep it in fine condition up to the standard of the rest of the greens.

The 4th is a 165 yard hole with the creek wandering in front of it, to the left, and in

the rear. There is a grassy hollow at the right. We used to have an elevated tee for this green but eliminated the climb without sacrificing the beauty and the playing qualities of the hole.

The 5th is a 376 yard slight dogleg to the left on flat ground with two sand traps to catch fairly long hooks or slices.

The 6th is a straightaway 412 yd. hole with out of bounds to the right and the creek about 35 yards in front of the green.

The 7th is 505 yards with out of bounds to the right and a grassy hollow in the face of a hill at the right to catch drives that are off of line. The hole plays down a valley until the approach to an elevated green. There are two grassy hollow traps in the left of the fairway to catch mishit second shots.

The 8th is a 200 yd. hole with a ravine to the right, a grassy hollow to the right in front of the green and a sand trap to the left. It is a hole that can be changed a lot by changing the location of the cup.

The 9th is a 396 yd. dogleg to the right with the tee shot across a deep ravine. The ravine and trees are to the right and the green is guarded by grassy hollows.

I think you can get from that description that the playing interest of the holes is equal to that of many metropolitan 18-hole courses.

Major Factor Is Good Greens

Of course the major point is greens. First of all, they were constructed right with good tile drainage and properly conditioned soil. We topdress them 5 times a year; in early spring, in May, June, about the first of August, and finally in fall to carry them through the winter. We topdress with a compost of 30% local peat, 20% manure and the other half being sand and a good loamy field dirt. We fertilize greens and fairways with Milorganite.

By looking around the neighborhood we located some excellent leaf-mold and peat and dirt and manure which we throw into

Martinsville's charming 9-hole course uses rolling terrain of southern Indiana in providing an interesting test of golf without being too tough.



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We watch our greens carefully to see that no nap or mat develops. When there are signs of a mat we rake the greens vigorously and cut short. We also are great believers in using a spiking and renovating machine along with our topdressing operations.

Our general practice is to mow the fairways twice a week and the greens 3 times a week. Two other men and I do the work on the course.

Untold benefits may be received by the small course whose greenkeepers take advantage of the experience and advice of greenkeepers in the nearest metropolitan centers. Carl Bretzlaff and other top-ranking Indianapolis greenkeepers have been most generous and helpful in guiding me and in steering me into solutions of my problems. The short courses in greenkeeping at Purdue have been of tremendous assistance too. I came onto the Martinsville course as a caddy and grew up with it, so the greenkeeping I had to learn would have been the long, hard and probably unsatisfactory way had it not been for making use of the practical, authoritative advice of veteran large-club greenkeepers, Purdue, the USGA green section and the supply men.

Live With the Greens

One thing they've all impressed on me is that one has to live with greens to make sure that the greens are good. By constantly and closely watching them you learn when they need water and how much, instead of having a set watering schedule. The result of living with your greens is that you minimize risks of disease. Of course at the smaller town courses one doesn't have to high-pressure greens and make them as susceptible to disease as greens are at some of the larger city district courses due to members' demands of conditions that are not healthy for grass.

Tees always are a problem at the smaller course. Ours are in pretty fair condition but they could be better as they are hard-worn by mid-summer. One has to watch to make frequent changes of tee markers. Probably larger tees are one of the answers and maybe some other grass such as zoysia may be tough enough to stand the wear and hacking, especially on the short holes.

Several years ago we got sewage sludge which we used for fairway fertilizer, but now are back on a Milorganite and lime program. In the case of small town clubs where the budget is very tight I'd suggest fertilizing the fairway shot areas. After the members note the contrast chances are the budget will be increased.

Very important, and not costing much money to the smaller town clubs is the conditioning of tee benches, walks, shelters, bridges and stiles where players or caddies may have to go over fences to get balls out-of-bounds. By keeping these features in repair, and having the ball-markers and flags and flagpoles smart-looking the small town course can be given a classy look without much expense.

And that classy look, after the necessities of good turf and sound, interesting design, is going to be more important to the smaller town club than ever before. Now golfers travel around and will compare standards of courses. In very few cases will they continue to be content with the pre-war idea of the cow-pasture course.

I think that the Martinsville CC is a quite pleasant and impressive exhibit of the maintenance standards that eventually will prevail at most of the smaller town courses. The cost of our operations isn't out of line for what we really believe is far, far above average playing conditions on 9-hole courses. Last year we spent \$6500 as our complete maintenance budget and the income attracted by good playing condition made the course upkeep cost a very wise investment.

SEES MORE WORKER'S GOLF

Joe Green, veteran Jersey golf pro, is confident golf play in 1947 will far exceed capacity of public and fee courses in metropolitan districts. Green bases his conviction on possibility of strike wave receding and many thousands of workers again having security of income to spend more money on greens fees and equipment. During World War II Green worked in the Mathis shipyards at Camden, N. J. and in free time conducted golf tournaments for the shipbuilders. He says workers' golf still has to see the combination of income and leisure time that will set the stage for a tremendous growth of golf among middle-

aged as well as younger workers. Joe started in golf at the old Hyewood GC, North Plainfield, N. J., and caddied for Johnny McDermott and Alex Findlay as a kid. After World War I he was active in the Salesmen's GA of Philadelphia. During 1946 he was with Bruce Coltart at Seaview, Atlantic City.



Joe Green

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