

SEPTEMBER • 1951

Pros Tell Successful Ideas for Late Season Selling

Many professionals who are rated as first-class pro businessmen tell the score in pro merchandising in statements made in response to a GOLFDOM survey of the prevailing pro department business situation. Responses reflect pro policy in dealing with varying factors of club and fee-course merchandising and clearly present the pros as canny and resourceful merchants in adjusting their operations as circumstances demand.

Two points were stressed in the survey. One was the element of used club sales in encouraging and supplying a growing market that might be handicapped by higher playing equipment prices necessitated by wage and material price increases. The other was to what extent and where pros could use the clearance sale idea in converting inventory into cash, especially near the close of the season in central and northern territory.

Statements from the pros, in this and future issues of GOLFDOM, plainly show merchandising ability that accounts for the pros being by a long way the dominating factor in golf goods merchandising.

An interesting example of successful use of every possible selling force is the newspaper advertising of Jimmy Thompson, at Timpanogos GC, Provo, Utah, fee course. Jimmy uses 10½ inches on four columns to advertise "mid-summer golf bargains" for "two weeks only." Prices of sets of woods, irons and bags, and of separate sets of clubs, bags and balls are prominently displayed. The advertising moves merchandise.

Promote Golf; Increase Sales

Thompson says:

"Those of us that have seasonal jobs, certainly have to apply 'late summer selling pressure'!

"As to disposal of trade-ins; I have used several methods, i.e., cutting clubs down for juniors, also, I have displayed within my shop a large barrel, attractively painted as, "Jimmy Thompson's Bargain Barrel", in which I place odds and ends of

clubs, with each of them tagged for price. (Always, in my shop, I have every club, both new and old, well marked for price.)

"As to wearing apparel, shirts, caps, jackets, etc., I periodically place a table in a good location within the shop, displaying various specials. I believe that at all times, if an item is not moving, one should immediately convert the item into cash, and restock with a more standard item.

"I feel the best method any pro can use toward selling, is his promotion of golf! 'Educate the public to the pleasure of playing'. You were never so right with any statement, than your recent one, wherein you state that 30 to 35% of a pro's time is spent gratis, because promotion certainly costs the individual pro time and money!

"Each summer I offer a three week course, consisting of two lessons each week, to all juniors, wherein I furnish all equipment, including balls, with no charge whatever. This year, as well as last, I had some 60 to 70 youngsters in these classes. Upon completion of the course, I run a tournament, offering numerous prizes. These youngsters are certainly our members of tomorrow.

"As to promoting women's play; I have given free group lessons every Wednesday morning, during the entire season. We now have a group of some 45 to 50 women, which does not include the experienced players.

"It seems some of these methods were never attempted previously, at this Club, and it has cost me considerable time and money, however, it is the only solution for increasing play and selling.

"This season we have had the Utah State Men's Amateur and the Utah State Women's Amateur meets here, also, the Provo City Open, which carried an entry list of 162, which was an increase of 85% over last year. Too, it was the first time the Men's Amateur had ever been held in any location other than Salt Lake City. Other tournaments are the Junior Tour-

namement, Caddie Tournament, Monthly Directors' Cup Tournament, Shriver's Hi-Lo Tournament, the Utah County Tournament and the City Women's Tournament, also, we have league matches twice a week from the steel plant located here.

"You can see for a community this size, there has been considerable activity.

"Also we run a Mixed Scotch-Foursome once a month, at which time a pot-luck supper is held afterward, this being done since we do not have facilities for a grill, to date.

"I further have the full cooperation of the radio stations, wherein they elaborate on the various activities, as well as explaining the merchandise available within the shop. I sincerely believe all this promotion is essential toward selling and building up memberships of any Club.

"This late summer I am not too heavily stocked with clubs, etc., however, I do have far too many golf balls, as do many of the other boys."

Sales Policies To Please All

Harry Todd, Lakewood CC, Dallas, Tex., says:

"We notice that the sales begin to drop off in the middle of July. At this time we are already buying the merchandise for fall and winter. By checking the records of the past years, we have a pretty good idea on how strong to go. With this merchandise coming in from September 1st on, it is then necessary for us to make room for it.

"A year ago last Spring we had a sale and cleaned out our Winter merchandise 100%. Last August we completely cleaned out our Summer stock, and again in the Spring, we sold out the leftover Winter stock.

"I personally think that any Pro that does not put the remaining merchandise on sale is making a mistake.

"We find that our best customers do not wait for the sale, and yet the members who do look for bargains are the first to take advantage of it. So in the long run, it seems that all the members are happy, and above all the entire membership is patronizing the golf shop.

"We carry a very large stock of sports wear for men and the ladies, and with the turnover complete at least once and sometimes more each season, it is very gratifying not to have to pack most of the stock in moth balls for the next season.

"As for trade-ins on clubs, we have another way that has been most successful for us. We very seldom sell a used club or bag to a member. All the sales are to persons who are not members; mostly from players of the public courses.

"Our members leave their old clubs with us when they purchase a new set

and we charge them the full price and then tag the old set. We tell them what we think they are worth and when we sell them, we then credit the member with the full amount of the sale. Practically every time the member applies this amount on other merchandise. In this way we make a profit from both the sale of the new clubs and also from the old.

"The reason we are so fond of this system is that we very seldom have any inventory of old clubs, yet we can give bargains that pays non-members to come by to see what we do have, and this means more sales. You can see from this that we are not restricted to sell only to the members."

Hunter Keeps Capital Working

The astute Willie Hunter, Riviera CC, Pacific Palisades, Calif., is one of the most successful pro businessmen. Willie has been using an inventory control system similar to the one recently set forth in GOLFDOM, for years. He keeps his operating capital working.

Hunter says:

"In S. California we have no end-of-season problem. My business runs uniform all the year round with the biggest month coming in December. I confess I was asleep to Xmas business for many years and altho getting quite a bit extra it amounted to very little compared to what I get now by sending personal letters to members—one to the man and one to the little woman. In this letter I stress my shop men as far better able to pick the right merchandise because of our intimate knowledge of their game and their ways of dressing.

"I have no great problem with trade-ins as the majority of my sales are clean without trades. I have a perpetual sale sign on all trade-ins and if they do not move fast enough or when the amount of capital tied up becomes what I think too much when considering the small margin of markup I sell to a public course professional; frequently at a small loss. I like to keep my capital in new up-to-date merchandise and do not hesitate to sell at cost or even less if the merchandise hangs.

"I keep a big inventory of fast moving merchandise so no possible sale is lost thru inability to supply when the buyer is in the mood.

"No high pressure selling is permitted, but timely suggestions and insisting that the buyer try out clubs before buying makes selling on a friendly basis. Business this year is up for every month and I believe this has been accomplished by dignified service with the selling.

"My volume has been greatly increased by shoes and top class haberdashery.

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Clubs Reap Benefits by Supts. Attending Turf Meetings

By JOE GRAFFIS

Not one golfer in a thousand realizes what's behind the vast improvement in golf course condition that has taken place during the past 20 years. The old-timers, pros and amateurs, know that tees now generally are better than most greens used to be. Fairways at the modernly-maintained clubs are so much better than fairways were 20 years ago there's no comparison.

Despite the fact that course labor wages have increased in the past 20 years the increase has been far short of the increase in unit and total wages in American industry. The costs of U.S. golf turf advance have been kept under remarkably tight control by a combination of technical developments that will compare very favorably with the progress made in almost any other business in the nation.

Behind this notable picture of progress are factors of research and education that any golfer who is an executive in industry would learn, upon investigation, almost unparalleled. Rarely is an executive in industry lucky enough to have his factory superintendents devote the time, money, brains and enthusiasm to betterment of plant operating methods that the golf course superintendents devote to the intensely practical and valuable education of the superintendents' national and sectional conferences.

Turf research has been exceedingly well planned and coordinated by the USGA Green Section with Director Fred Grau and state and other sectional agricultural school experts in close expert collaboration. Participation in this research and application of it is extensively and capably done primarily through the medium of the superintendents' organizations.

There often are heavy handicaps to the progress of this research and its use. Lack of money is the main one although there probably isn't a golf course in the United States that hasn't received from the turf research and the greenkeepers' meetings far more direct cash benefit than the club ever spent in these operations. Only within the past few years has it become common practice for clubs to pay expenses of their greenkeepers or superintendents to the annual meeting of the superintendents' national organization or to the regional annual conferences. Even now when superintendents take their Mondays off to go to sectional meetings the men often have to go at their own expense to learn what's

new and discuss with their colleagues problems of their respective courses.

The club official who compares the salary of the golf course greenkeeper or superintendent with that paid to men of like responsibility in the official's own business must especially appreciate that the golf course boss in devoting his off day to the good of the business is doing something most uncommon in American industry.

Specifically, what has this accent on education meant to golf course maintenance?

GOLFDOM asked representative superintendents to tell instances of benefits their clubs had received as results of these meetings.

The replies will be found to make most informative reading for anyone who qualifies as a green chairman of decided value to his club.

The frank answer of **Bert Rost, supt., Park Ridge (Ill.) CC** makes an instructive opening. Rost writes:

"Thanks for the opportunity of expressing my views on the benefits received by clubs and club officials through the superintendent's exchange of experiences and study of turf research at our personal, sectional and national meetings. I have added personal to your inquiry as I believe this to be the most important and informative phase of our many meetings. You can easily remember when one Greenkeeper (as we used to be called) would hardly speak to another for fear of letting his competitor (and that is the way most of us acted) find out one of our secrets. In reality we were probably afraid the other fellow would find out how much we didn't know.

"This afternoon Bob Williams, Ray Gerber, Oscar Borgmier and I are playing at Ridgemoor. Playing together is just a means for us to get together and talk grass, as you know. I will venture that our club will benefit a few hundred bucks by my taking the afternoon off if you want to put it that way.

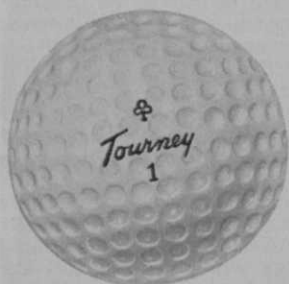
"Among the many ideas I have got at local and national meetings, probably the one that has helped our course most is the use of the aerifier. We use it spring and fall and have for the past four years. Before we had a hard time to find enough grass to warrant cutting the fairways twice a week although they were fertilized three times a year. Now in a season like we have just had they almost require daily cutting with the same amount of fertilizer.

"I think club officials should insist that

do golfers hibernate in winter?

You can make every month of the year Profitable
by year-round promotion of MacGregor Tourney
golf equipment. It's preferred . . . and easier to sell.





• Of course golfers don't stop living during the cold months. Today, many golf enthusiasts go right on playing all winter. Many others take southern vacations . . . and others do plenty of planning for the next golf season.

So why limit your selling to just the regular season? Buying time is any time to a golfer. It's up to you, the golf pro, to go after sales. There are always birthdays, anniversaries, and Christmas gift-giving time to give you reasons for calling attention to preferred MacGregor Tourney golf clubs and balls.

You don't have to take a back seat to any other type of merchant in your territory . . . you can make December as big a selling month as June. Keep Tourney equipment before your members every day of the year and you'll find golf business doesn't have to be seasonal!



MacGregor
THE GREATEST NAME IN GOLF

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their superintendent attend all meetings. If he isn't willing to do this then it is time for them to start looking for a progressive head of their business. If the reason is he doesn't have the time or is short of labor on the course I'll bet he can, by discussing it with a member or two, find a few labor saving machines or ideas that will give him time to get away.

Engage U. of Ill. in Turf Research

"I am chairman of the Turf Research committee of the Midwest Assn. of Golf Course Supts. We have the task of getting the University of Illinois engaged in a turf research program and that means a campaign on the state legislature for funds to enable the university to engage in the needed work. We have a good start in the experimental garden at Lisle.

"The scope of this proposed work will be wide although the primary application will be to golf courses. Few realize that there is more spent annually for grass seed in Illinois than is represented by the value of the state's apple crop. Despite the great volume of fertilizer sales for home lawns in Illinois I venture to say there are more lawns ruined by improper use of fertilizer than have been helped.

"Our own courses come first but the home lawns, parks, cemeteries, roadside turfing, airfields and industrial areas have benefitted to the extent of many millions of dollars by turf development and maintenance methods first presented by golf course work."

"What do I get from meetings of golf course superintendents?" asks **Chet Mendenhall, supt., Mission Hills CC, Kansas City, Mo.** "Just this. Here in the heart of America, the golf course superintendents hold a meeting once a month the year around. This has been going on for eighteen years. Golf is played only on special occasions. There is no card playing so there has to be an exchange of practical golf course maintenance ideas to support the fine attendance we have enjoyed during these years.

"A member tells his experience with some new crabgrass killer; maybe his experience has been disappointing. Some one else tells him where he made his mistake in time or method of application, and before long all types of weed killers have been thoroughly discussed and I have some ideas regarding materials I haven't had the occasion as yet to use.

"At one of our meetings there was a discussion pertaining to the keeping of cost records. A very simple method of cost accounting was presented by one member which I have partially adopted. This has saved me several hours each month in the distribution of labor costs.

"At local meetings the superintendent gets more practical information that he

can apply immediately to his own work. While at the national meetings, turf conferences and short courses attended by manufacturers and research men as well as superintendent, one gets a look into the future with first hand information on the development of new grass strains, new chemicals and new equipment that is being developed to speed up and cut cost of maintenance.

"The maintenance of a golf course and the country club grounds isn't a job that can be done efficiently by the superintendent alone. First, he needs the whole-hearted support of his committee and club officials. Then, he needs the helping hand of research, the USGA Green Section, colleges that are carrying on recognized fine turf research work, manufacturers who make machinery, fertilizer or other chemical products used in turf maintenance. Last, but not least, he needs the publications which bring the results of this work to the golf course superintendent, — *Golfdom*, *The USGA Journal*, *The Golf Course Reporter*, and a number of local publications.

"Indeed, the maintenance of a golf course requires the help and advice of a great many people and it is indeed unfortunate that some club officials don't see the light and set aside funds to send their superintendent to attend such local and national meetings where he can get the help he and his club can wisely use."

Leonard Strong, supt., Saucon Valley CC, Bethlehem, Pa., says, "From Prof. John Schread's lecture at the 20th National Turf Conference at Los Angeles in 1949 on "Control of Insects Injurious to Turf" I gained a great deal of practical knowledge in regard to the use and subsequent results of chlordane. I have since used this new insecticide with its three modes of action and found it most effective. One of the items for which it was used and on which it did a swell job was the extermination of ants on the borders of several of our greens."

"Probably the most important thing I have gotten out of attending association meetings is that it has given me an opportunity to get away from my own course and visit other courses and get together with other supts.," reports **William Stupp, supt., Exmoor CC, Highland Park, Ill.**

"This I believe," he continues, "is of the utmost value to all of us. The practical experiences of others and the knowledge gained from listening to others is down-to-earth, practical know-how that one can never get out of a book. It's the on-the-spot discussion that one learns from most.

"Probably one of the most valued experiences I have had was at an association and Green Section meeting at Laskers when Dr. Monteith came out with his treat-

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Pro Department Tunes In Profits for Resort

By HERB GRAFFIS

Six years ago after Fred Waring and his business staff had sifted Harry Obitz as the leading candidate for the pro job at the Shawnee CC the financial end of the deal came up for discussion. The Waring management named a figure that was thought to be in line with pro arrangements on a resort job.

Obitz said no. "The kind of a job you want done, and need done calls for a lot more money," Harry added. Waring believes in doing things right. He's made a fortune with his Pennsylvanians by having the right direction, the right personnel, the right music and the right staging. When Fred acquired the historic Buckwood Inn and golf course at Shawnee-on-Delaware, Pa., he was determined to do the right thing in reviving the delightful golfing atmosphere and conditions that Shawnee had when it was the property of the late C. C. Worthington and his sons.

Then Shawnee tournaments were world-famed as events that drew sparkling pro

and amateur talent and enthusiastic galleries on golfing holidays. Much of the PGA organization inspiration and encouragement came from the ardent amateur golfers who came from Philadelphia, New York City and points much further away to enjoy golf where the game was at its most pleasant intensity.

Restoring that mood and fitting it into different times and conditions was a challenge to Waring and his canny business organization. It was a job that needed unusual promotion work. Obitz got the deal because he wouldn't agree to going along in the customary manner. At that time Harry needed a job but he took a chance of losing out by asserting that the job wasn't one that could be handled as just another resort job. Waring and Obitz got together on a pro operation and promotion deal that meant quick and profitable action for all concerned.

The tournament schedule at Shawnee includes the Waite Memorial invitation for star amateurs, the Philadelphia Dis-



The golf professional staff of Fred Waring's Shawnee CC makes a business of being well groomed at all times. Harry Obitz (L), head man of the staff, finds this fastidious effort directly effective in registering more apparel sales. With Obitz (L to R) are assts. Jack Ryan, Dick Farley, Frank Minch, John Bove, Milt Ross and Rocco Cocco.

trict PGA, the Shawnee Invitation, the National Old Masters', pro-women and pro-member championships, a Golf Week and events every week-end during the season. An important part of the Obitz staff's duties is to get adults and the juniors who come with their parents engaged in frequent, friendly competitions as the matches not only bring together congenial people who form lasting friendships (and the habit of returning to Shawnee) but gets them all interested in improving their games.

The lesson business is a major promotion and sales angle with the Obitz staff. With Harry are: Jack Ryan, John Bove, Milt Ross, Frank Minch, Dick Farley and Rocky Coco. Stan Dudas of the Obitz corps recently went into the Army. The usual individual and class lesson procedure is only part of the teaching program. What makes the Shawnee teaching something all the guests talk about is the Sunday afternoon clinic.

Clinic Makes Business

By staging the clinic Sunday afternoons the guests at the Shawnee Inn stay over Sunday night and leave, mostly for New York or Philadelphia, early Monday. To warrant this extra charge at Shawnee the clinic has to be so good the guests are highly pleased that they stayed.

The clinic is conducted by Obitz and all

his teachers working the first part in unison, demonstrating shot-making details with the close harmony of a Waring musical number. After this demonstration "by the count", deliberate hooks and slices are played with explanations of their causes.

Then the viewers are brought into the show. Obitz maintains that the demonstrations and instruction generally put on by pro groups are not properly clinics in the way the medical profession conducts a clinic. The dictionary definition of clinic is "Instruction of a class by treatment of patients in the presence of the pupils." Clinical is defined as "Occupied with investigation of disease in the living subject by observation, as distinguished from controlled experiment."

Commonly the so-called golf clinics are merely demonstrations by pros who are the "healthiest" golfers and the "sick" golfer looking at them doesn't get the cure he expects from expert treatment.

Giving The Treatment

The Obitz staff takes the patients, tees up balls and has the patients take the treatment with 5-irons. The cure works so often that the ailing golfers who stay over for the clinic go away feeling much better. It isn't treatment that will make an entirely "well" golfer but Harry main-

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The Shawnee professional staff keeps an eye on the future by starting the members of tomorrow off right at an early age. Lessons and play are a regular feature of the services offered by Obitz and his boys.



Merry Christmas and Good Golfing

FOR THE 1951 HOLIDAYS WE'LL SUPPLY

Sweet Shot Golf Balls—personalized in lots of one dozen only, and packaged in a handsome, utility gift box.

Personalized—each ball stamped in red with the name of the recipient.

Gift Box—a real innovation—a sturdy red, black and gold box, lined with cork, so it may be used as a cigarette box—has dozens of other possible uses around the house.

For Prompt Delivery—We are accepting orders now for delivery starting in September.

**GIFT PACKAGE OF 12 PERSONALIZED
GOLF BALLS FOR \$12.00**

THE WORTHINGTON BALL COMPANY
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WORLD'S LARGEST EXCLUSIVE GOLF BALL MAKER

The Rough As a Factor in Golf Architecture

By WILLIAM B. LANGFORD

Many factors have contributed to produce the low scores made today by our leading golfers. Among them are better implements, better putting and fairway surfaces, and easier rough. In this short article I intend to write only of the rough—that important section of a golf course that is not even mentioned in the rules.

A course may have no sand traps, no trees, no severe natural hazards and still be a fine testing, interesting layout if the rough is properly placed and sufficiently rugged.

To function properly the rough should not be a hayfield robbing the game of precious minutes spent in search of the errant ball, nor should it be an unsightly weedpatch. It should be maintained as carefully as the fairway and cut to a height—varying with the nature of the turf—which will prevent the indiscriminate use of wooden clubs for recovery shots, and still not slow up the game unduly by prolonged searching bees.

Modern weed-killing compounds have made easy the maintenance of a rough free from clover and broad-leaved plants in which, when not watered too much, bluegrass and the fescues will supplant the lush bents and afford an area where the ball can be readily found, but demanding a highly developed technique in recovery shot play.

Rough A Fair Hazard

The rough in general is a much fairer hazard than trees, water courses or bunkers, although I do not consider this unadulterated praise since the charm of golf lies in its uncertainty and a test of a champion is his ability to take bad breaks with equanimity. The rough is a fairer hazard because it is so extensive and, if properly kept up, homogeneous.

Lies in well-kept rough are much more apt to be uniform than they are in sand traps, and because of their limited size, bunkers are frequently missed altogether by atrocious shots, while they penalize severely shots only slightly misplayed. Trees, especially isolated specimens, are greater offenders in this respect than bunkers, and small ponds and creeks are just as uncertain ball stoppers with the added disadvantage of failing to offer the opportunity for recovery play.

Play from the rough, to be successful, calls for fine judgment in the selection of the proper club, offers a wide variety of interesting shots and demands confident, cool, steady concentration. The player who derives more satisfaction from the execution of a tricky shot than he does from his medal score will not be cast down by a lie in the long grass, but rather exhilarated by the opportunity presented for skill and finesse. Walter Hagen's colorful exploits in the rough show what can be done by the fellow who keeps trying to develop required skill.

The man who is consistently down the middle should be rewarded for his accuracy, a reward he does not collect if the erratic shots of his slugging opponent find lies comparable to his.

On many courses the fairways are ribbons of uniform width stretching uninterestingly from tee to green and utterly disregarding the fact that there are nodes of play on every hole, and that a properly designed fairway should meander to suit the scheme of play and vary in width to accord with the range, the terrain and the character of the hole. Fairways so constructed will not only provide more interesting golf but will avoid artificiality

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Many Green chairmen, superintendents and professionals who become aware that players on their courses are finding certain holes very uninteresting or unfair, may well consider Bill Langford's article on the function of rough.

Although Langford and other leading architects have stressed rough as an essential and interesting phase of good course design, it's surprising how many holes have had excellent architecture

nearly nullified by failure to maintain fairway-rough borders according to the architect's original design. One course in a mid-western town has been made about as uninteresting as a practice fairway by lack of care in maintaining the original rough line.

This fall, if you're thinking about course alterations, you might study the rough as a possibility of making holes more exciting and better tests of golf.