

Early Planning Pays in Pro Christmas Gift Selling

By HERB GRAFFIS

December has become one of the biggest months for pro shop sales. With many of the leading businessmen professionals in northern and central states December is second month in sales volume and for these pros the old schedule of winter vacation has changed because of the importance of Christmas golf sales. Instead of heading south or southwest in late October now they wait until after Christmas to travel to the warmer parts of the land.

There were some signs of recognizing the Christmas sales opportunities before the war. A few pros got out Christmas golf gift advertising and made money while the rest of the fellows were spending what they'd earned during the summer. The ball manufacturers offered the Christmas package deals and they were accepted with spotty reception.

But after World War II ended, the golf Christmas gift business which had been mainly in the hands of smart store merchandisers who overlooked no bet, suddenly began to jump in pro shops.

As in the case of the great development of pro shop golf apparel sales in the post-war period, pros' wives had a great deal to do in getting the pro shop Christmas selling drive started. The wives would point out to their pro husbands that Christmas gift buying is one of the most puzzling jobs of spending money that men and women have. "Look at the Christmas gift golf stuff that your members show up with in the spring and see how you missed making a profit that would have carried us through the winter in the black," the pros' wives would tell their husbands.

Christmas Selling Serves Members

"And when you're selling them these Christmas golf gifts you're making your members grateful for helping them solve

a shopping problem," the wives would add. The way GOLFDOM has heard pros' wives talk to them about Christmas business sounded as though the pro wasn't on the job for his members if he let them spend some gift money elsewhere than in the pro shop. And in a great many cases the pros' wives were absolutely right.

Now the pro shop Christmas gift business is so extensively established as one of the biggest selling factors of the whole year's merchandising that the pro who doesn't go after this business with a thoughtful and complete plan, worked out in advance and energetically pushed until Christmas eve, can't consider himself a thorough golf merchant and buying counsellor for his members.

The old idea of selling only in the height of the playing season doesn't go any more in pro merchandising. Numerous pros in college towns have sold enough sports jackets to boy and girl students in September and October to show profits exceeding the prize money won by any except the first 15 or so of the tournament circuit players. Several pros have kids on a commission basis selling rain outfits to people in football crowds. And what fat net profits these pros have made!

But the top sure-fire extra profit for pros is in the Christmas gift golf sales promotion.

Work Ahead of Sales

It's not a campaign to be handled catch-as-catch-can. To really score in net profits the campaign must be planned no later than September and get started by October.

The first step in pro planning of the Christmas gift selling campaign is to make a study of the market possibilities. It's better for the pro if he'll write down just what he thinks is a conservative

estimate of the market. Say he's at a private club, his Christmas gift market will be about like this:

- (1) Gifts bought for men members
- (2) Gifts bought for women members
- (3) Gifts members buy for their children
- (4) Gifts men members buy to be given by their companies or themselves to their customers
- (5) Gifts that non-members buy because of the golf club's prestige, pro expert advice, or pro-only retailing policy.

The first three gift classifications generally are about the market the pro works on as the obvious volume, although the third category hasn't received the attention that some pros have proved it deserves. Sports jackets especially have been going well the past two years as Christmas gifts for members' sons and daughters. Clubs for youngsters are made by some leading manufacturers and the prices put them in the Christmas gift class. Strong promotion of junior golf has given this gift item plenty of a market.

By looking into the Christmas gift market early, pros probably will find that members are thinking of buying clubs for sons and daughters who have grown taller than their fathers and mothers, but who are using their cast-off clubs. The parents may not want to go for top grade clubs for the kids but would be interested if the pros would make available to them good clubs in lower price ranges.

Ball Box Sales Mount

The Christmas boxes of golf balls have steadily grown. The marking of the recipient's name on the balls has been a strong factor in promoting the sales. Here, again, is something that the pro has to work on early if he's going to do the marking in his own shop.

One of the best selling Christmas items at many pro shops has been balls in dozen boxes to members who give the balls to their customers. Usually these are individually-marked balls and time is needed for getting the marking done, or for some special printing that the buyer wants attached to the gift boxes. In some cases pros have sold many dozens of balls with specially printed wrappers around 3-ball units to be used as company Christmas gifts to customers.

Plan Advertising Ahead

The pro who intends to make an effective campaign for Christmas gift business has to do some advertising. He's up against the most energetic and inviting advertising that other retailers do and he

can't expect Christmas gift business to fall into his lap while the competition is going after it.

The pro advertising must feature the highest quality and expert selection of merchandise and at the same time stress the fact that pro prices are standard—or lower—for best quality merchandise. There is more selling appeal than the pro may realize in pro-quality merchandise and in the one who gets the gift being able to say he—or she—got it from a golf professional at a first-class private club. Many people don't realize that the pro at a private club will sell to non-members and one of the problems of the pro's Christmas gift advertising is to reach those people who want to buy golf goods but don't know the pro will sell to them.

There undoubtedly is a good chance for pro co-operative newspaper and radio advertising for Christmas goods along the lines some PGA groups have done in getting early season business, but as far as GOLFDOM knows there has been none of this cooperative advertising done for Christmas business.

In preparing his Christmas gift advertising the pro has to get on the job well in advance and make use of the expert help of an advertising man or printing salesman among his members. The merchandise should be classified in price groups as well as in groups for men and women golfers. In some cases advertising material from manufacturers—either folders or cuts—may be obtained for use by the professional. Often costs for attractive and quite comprehensive gift circulars may be cut by several pros going together for a small Christmas golf gift catalog and having the name of each of the cooperating pros printed on the material he sends to his members or other prospective purchasers.

But, if he doesn't go for extensive advertising he should at least get out several letters, starting in late October, to make known his stock of Christmas gifts. He should remind his customers that with special orders or those requiring expert pro fitting in the case of clubs, the pro should be allowed ample time to get the order handled correctly well before Christmas.

One letter won't do the job. The stores start early on Christmas gift advertising and keep it up until the last shopping day before Christmas. This advertising pays the store richly, just as Christmas gift advertising will pay out handsomely for the pro.

START NOW — on Your Christmas Selling!

Cut out the page opposite. Display it prominently! Extra copies for mailing to your members, folded to 3" x 6". Send \$1.50 for 100 (\$1 for each additional 100) to GOLFDOM, 407 S. Dearborn st., Chicago 5, Ill.

Win Golfers' Hearts

this Christmas

with something for their game!

Here in the Pro Shop

... we've assembled for your inspection an outstanding selection of the very newest in golfing equipment, apparel and accessories. Whether it be an inexpensive accessory, smart apparel, golf balls in handsome, useful Christmas boxes, or complete sets of the latest in woods and irons, you'll find the perfect gift for golfers in our wide variety of the game's most practical and popular items.

We'll help you win the hearts of golfers this Christmas with something *useful and practical*, something sure to *please*, something *they'll remember you by!*

Any of these favorites is sure to please:

BAG CARTS
GOLF BALLS
GOLF BAGS
GOLF CLUBS
(Woods, Irons
and Putters)
GOLF GLOVES
GOLF and SPORTS SHIRTS

GOLF SHOES
GOLF SLACKS
HATS and CAPS
HEAD COVERS
PRACTICE DEVICES
PRACTICE NETS
RAIN JACKETS

SHOES (Loafers)
SPORTS JACKETS
SPORTS JEWELRY
SPORTS SEATS
SWEATERS
WINDBREAKERS
WOMEN'S GOLF APPAREL

I'll be happy to help you get your Christmas gift worries off your mind. Can't we get together soon and go over your list?

Your Golf Professional

1952 Gives Supts. Greatest Test in Turf Maintenance

By O. J. NOER

This season has been a brutal one for turf on golf courses in the region east of the Missouri and north of the Ohio rivers. Troubles started the fall before and continued until mid-August.

One outstanding superintendent at a midwestern club remarked that this has been the worst year for him in thirty years. He never left the course from early June and watched for wilt seven days a week, yet thinning of the grass occurred despite everything he could do.

The mild, equable years of 1950 and 1951 set the stage for a difficult one. Both years were bad for Bermuda in the north but good for cool season grasses. Poa annua never stopped growing and was more prevalent than ever before. When it went this year it was just too bad in the places where there was no other grass. The poa annua spots became bare ground. But, where other grasses were present, there was some cover left after the poa died. The presence of other grass helped poa to survive, especially in shade or partial shade.

Snow mold was bad and much turf was lost from rotting in early spring due to



Injury to fairway turf from ponded water after 2½" rain in two hours followed by sultry, hot weather the next day.

the excessive amounts of snow and rain immediately after it disappeared. Grass took a beating in late March when there was a week of scorching weather with daytime temperatures in the 90° F. range. The water systems on most courses were not ready to operate so it was impossible to stop wilting on greens where root systems were shallow or non-existent. Rain-

fall was generally good until June. After that New England and other parts of the East got no rain for 35 to 40 days, or more, and the heat was insufferable with daytime temperatures above 95° and usually associated with high humidity. In the Middle-West drenching rains during July cooked the grass on many courses. Of the two extremes, too little or too much water, no rain is the choice provided enough water is available to keep the grass alive. Localized dry spots are the worst trouble along with loss of shallow rooted poa annua. Heavy downpouring rains of several days duration are another matter and are sure to cause trouble and loss of grass if there is a weakness of any kind. Then the man in charge is helpless. Play usually continues without interruption when closing for a few hours might be the difference between keeping or losing grass.

Snow Mold Worse

In many parts of the North snow came in November before the ground was frozen and before the grass hardened for winter. When this has happened snow mold has been worse than otherwise. Because snow came so early many greens did not get the usual fall application of fungicide. Besides attacking the greens, snow mold was bad on poa annua around the aprons and on the approaches. Recovery was slow and made for bad playing conditions during the early part of the season.

A high humus content of the soil aggravated snow mold and reduced the effectiveness of fungicides. Humus keeps the grass wet because of its high water-holding capacity. A plentiful supply of moisture makes the fungus flourish. Thickly matted turf is attacked badly for the same reason, and the resulting deep scars delay recovery and makes surfaces bad for play.

In a year like the past one it is wise to apply the fungicide on top of the first snow cover if not used before and use additional fungicide immediately after the snow disappears in late winter or early spring. Further treatment afterwards is good insurance if there is more snow or rain. Corrosive sublimate alone, or a mixture of calomel and corrosive have been extremely good for snow mold. James Boyce at the Dominion Station in Ottawa,

Canada, reports excellent results with Tersan. In experiments conducted here with the active ingredient of Tersan some years ago we obtained control at 4 ounces per 1,000 square feet. This is equivalent to 8 ounces of 50 per cent material, or 6 ounces of a mixture containing 75 per cent of tetramethylthiuramdisulfide.

On some courses large irregular areas, and in extreme cases the grass on an entire green was dead. Usually the injury was worse in the low spots which remain wet. The snowfall in Wisconsin was about 100 inches and even more in south Michigan. The amount there was 130 inches in some places. Greens were sopping wet for a long time due to moisture from melting snow and additional rains. A lot of grass died on greens with shallow or no roots. The surfaces of these greens stayed sopping wet and the grass rotted or was drowned. Overwetness was due to a high content of organic matter in the soil, to an excessive surface mat of stems and leaves, or to exceedingly heavy and poorly drained soil which induced shallow rooting. The basic cause was excessive wetness.

A course in western Michigan which suffered severe loss of grass during the winter of 1949 came through the past winter without a blemish. The greens were drilled several times in 1950 and 1951, the surplus mat was removed by brushing, raking, and the use of a comb on the greens mower. As a result, the greens have been easier to maintain and the surfaces have been vastly better for putting.

Injury from Wilt in March

Desiccation injury in early spring, before growing started, occurred in a few instances where rainfall was scant, but there was more injury from wilting during the hot week in late March. It could have been avoided had water systems been ready for use.

June and August were in reverse this year. They changed places. Had the heat of June and July continued, and had the torrential rains of 2 to 3 inches in several hours continued there would have been no grass left in some sections of the Mid-West by the end of August. The change in weather was a blessing to everybody.

The blow hit Cincinnati, Louisville, and Indianapolis in June, but Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, and western Pennsylvania escaped until July. Just after the middle of that month drenching rains started. From three to four inches of rain fell in a couple of hours, and there were daily showers for the next few days. During the worst week-end some courses were closed on Saturday and Sunday, others stopped play after each rain until surfaces were no longer sopping wet.

This wise precaution prevented a lot of damage, and deserves wider application. The Greenkeeping Superintendent should be the sole judge and should be authorized to close the course when the amount of water from rain waterlogs the greens to the point where play places the turf in jeopardy. The Superintendent should not stop play for any other reason.

A club with well-drained greens might stay open, and a nearby one with poorly constructed greens of compact soil might benefit from closing the course for part or all of the day. A situation of this kind



Bad wilt on watered poa annua fairway. Foot printing and injury from cart wheels is quite noticeable.

makes it rough for the Superintendent where play is stopped but the step can be justified.

Wilting was bad everywhere. The reason is obvious when there are no roots, or where they are confined to the top half to one inch of soil. Yet wilting occurred on some greens where roots were immersed in water. Roots cannot function in a normal manner unless the soil contains atmospheric oxygen. In a waterlogged soil roots cannot utilize water or perform other normal functions such as the absorption and translocation of nutrients such as potassium, nitrogen, etc.

Hoagland of California demonstrated the necessity for soil air. He grew tomatoes in water culture. The plants wilted in some jars and not in others. Wilting did not occur where minute bubbles of air were introduced into the culture solution.


Light Watering Imperative

When the grass on greens turns blue and shows footprints because of wilt, light watering promptly is imperative even in the heat of the day. Those who wait until night may rue the delay. Sometimes a delay of 30 minutes is too long. A course in Ohio had only one discolored spot on all the greens. It was on the farthest distant green in a corner. The lad noticed the wilting while mowing the green. In-

SALE BELLS RING

in your pro shop . . .

new 1953

 golf balls

Here's a handsome utility case filled with one dozen new "MT" golf balls . . . a grand gift that your members will appreciate. No matter whether it's for Dad, Mom, Sister or Brother . . . or a business associate, "MT's" packed in the practical zipper case make an ideal gift.

Order now for early delivery. You pay only for 1953 "MT" balls. Gift cases are furnished without extra charge. Available from branch offices and Cincinnati.

Extra! MacGregor will personalize all gift "MT's" free of extra charge. Orders for personalizing must be in Cincinnati by December 1 to insure Christmas delivery.



MacGregor has spared no expense to make possible this attractive and usable Christmas gift kit. The zipper case is a rich, black lizard-grain leatherette. It's waterproof and scuff resistant. Packed with one dozen 1953 MT golf balls. Comes with colorful Christmas card attached.



in attractive
 Christmas gift package



This 8 1/2 x 14" poster, showing the leatherette gift kit, is being sent to all pro shops. Use it to increase business!



Alternate sand and peat layers were cause of winter injury on this green. Note mass of roots in aerifier hole.



Note in the above illustration how deeply roots grew in aerified holes to help the grass on this green survive.

stead of applying a little water he returned to the barn to report what was happening. The man in charge rushed to the green but was too late.

Too many club officials do not sense the dangers of wilting or realize the necessity for prompt action. They are prone to think daytime watering of any kind in hot weather kills grass. The idea is false. Light watering in the heat of day never killed any grass. Actually, it is the only way to save wilting grass. Pondered water is the only kind that will harm grass.

Continuous rains make grass shallow rooted. Then on hot days it may start to wilt at midday. Sometimes this happens even though there is water in the cup. The presence of water lulls some into a false sense of security. The wise man gets the hose out and applies a little water—just enough to revive the grass and carry it through all or part of the afternoon. Not over 10 to 15 minutes are required to water a green. The hose should be equipped with a good rose nozzle that breaks the stream of water into very fine drops. Such a stream absorbs the maximum amount of oxygen from the air and the small droplets do not have a compacting action on the soil.

When wilting is prevalent workmen should be alerted and instructed how to stop it by light watering. Greens should be checked at midday on Saturdays and Sundays as well as the other days of the week and light watering should be authorized even though it may interfere somewhat with play.

Serious Injury From Mowers

Mowers, especially the power type, cause serious injury when grass is in a wilt at the time of mowing. The bruising action due to friction from the power driven drum is an aggravating cause. Damage is most pronounced when mowers are turned on the green and occurs even when the grass is not wilting. The fact

that footprints from players turned brown in some spots where wilt was extreme supports this contention. In extreme cases of wilt it is best not to mow at all, or wait until wilt has been stopped with a little water. Less frequent mowing and raising the height of cut slightly helped preserve the grass.

Top-dressing when grass is in a state of severe wilt is apt to cause more damage than good. It often shocks the grass or smothers it, especially if the amount used exceeds $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ yard to a green of average size.

Aerifying Speeds Recovery

Cultivation with any one of the aerifiers, or drilling with the Turferator, when the greens were sopping wet and seemingly at their worst received credit at some courses for stopping further injury and for speeding recovery. The green tufts of grass above each hole and the new white roots underneath were impressive and supported their contention. The holes acted as reservoirs for water and speeded drying of the surface. The holes improved the oxygen supply.

Iron chlorosis was bad on some greens, especially after each heavy drenching rain, and was worse on greens where organic matter content of the soil was high. Those who used iron sulfate promptly stopped loss of grass. Some added a little iron sulfate (Copperas) whenever greens were treated for disease. The amount ranged from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 pound per green. Some of the newer fungicides contain ferrous sulfate, which accounts in part for the deeper green color imparted to the grass by their use.

(To be concluded next month).

To Help Your Planning
Golfdom's October
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Don't Let Leaves Discourage Your Golfers — Let Them Play

The balmy days of Indian Summer and late Fall are ideal for golf play but too few courses take advantage of these unusual fine playing conditions by needlessly letting leaves clutter up fairways and greens. Lost balls and time wasted in looking for otherwise open shots soon discourage the most ardent golfers and play dwindles off. Adjoining photos show how greens can be maintained during time leaves are falling and the slackening of play avoided. Fairways can be cleared in the same way. Bert Rost, supt., Park Ridge (Ill.) CC has rigged up equipment that clears 24 ft. swath at tractor speed. Many use new power machines that pulverize the leaves.



*They'll do more to save
you strokes than any
clubs you ever played*

SPALDING SYNCHRO-DYNED CLUBS

see center pages in this issue