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Over The PRO SHOP Counter

This comes from a pro in central Ohio:

I don't like discount houses any better than the next fellow. They're cutting into my living, but that doesn't mean I'm going to lie down and die without trying to compete against them. I visit discount houses every time I get a chance, study their displays and selling methods and generally look around to see how they operate. In addition, I study their ads, and promotional material, too, when I get a chance to see it. Some of these houses are junk shops, but others are real merchandisers. It's surprising the ideas you can pick up from the latter and, I might add, turn against them if you apply them.

An up-state New York pro, who always does well in the shop sales volume says, "The one thing that helps sales is to get the confidence of your members so they seek your advice as to their needs."

A pro in Pennsylvania, rated by manufacturers' salesmen as one of the best businessmen in golf, says:

It usually takes a smart young pro three or four years before he learns to run the job the way the members would like to have it run instead of the way the pro wants to run it.

After learning that, and diplomatically educating members to want the job run in a way that gives the pro a chance to make a good living, the pro is in position to do well for members, club and himself.

Often members don't notice that their clubs have been cleaned or repaired by the pro shop staff. Calling it to their attention can sometimes be rather awkward, or may look like you're courting favor with them. But there is a way of insuring that this service won't go unnoticed. When clubs are cleaned or repaired at our shop, we tag the bag. The tag (made out in duplicate so we can retain one copy for our records) shows what has been done and, of course, is dated. Members invariably notice the tag and thank us for performing what is unsolicited service.

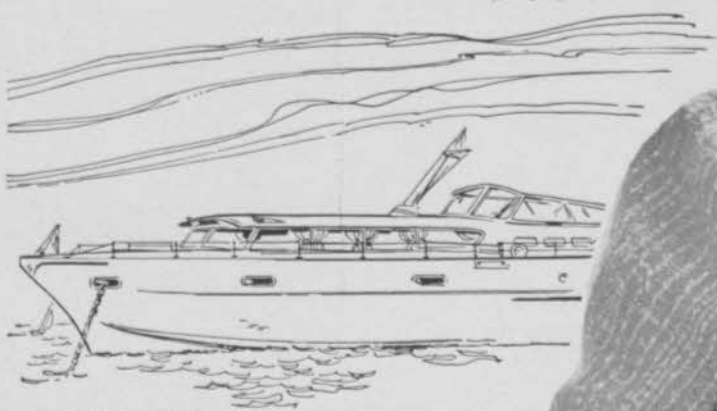
Howie Atten, pro, Dubuque (Ia.) G&CC

There is a lot of room for improving golf club sales promotion at the lesson tee, according to pros with long and successful experience as teachers and businessmen. Jack Mitchell of Essex County (N. J.) CC outlines lesson tee value in club fitting by remarking: "The fine art of fitting clubs to the users is one of the most important services a competent pro can give. There are no rules for making the correct fit. The pro knows that from his own trials with clubs. There are very few tournament specialists or other fine players who have been able to get exactly the clubs they want without trying several sets. Hence, we professionals realize we are up against a delicate problem in determining just what clubs will be best for each of our players.

"We all have had cases of pupils whose trouble, we suspected, was to a marked degree caused by ill-fitting clubs. It's a good thing sometimes to suggest trying a club that we think might be the right answer and have the pupil use it. No damage is done to the club by the few shots that are taken. If the club turns out to be the answer a whole set may be bought."

Electric cars are one of the best potential profit items that have been offered to pros in a long time. At least one manufacturer that I know of offers these vehicles to us on most liberal terms. He gives us a chance to make real money through rentals, or a very reasonable margin on resales to members. If the pro is willing to see that the cars are kept in A-1 condition if put out on a rental basis, or will stand back of the cars he sells to the limit of his ability, then I think he is going to do well with them. Cars may not bring "quick dollars" but I believe they'll bring the pro a lot of long-range benefits.

Ron La Parl, Battle Creek (Mich.) CC



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Make Your Course New Again

By LOUIS BERTOLONE

Unfortunately, too many of the older country clubs have taken on a worn look prematurely. Contrasted with the good courses which have been built within the last few years, they are so uninviting that it is a wonder that members still pay dues to belong to them. Remodeling a club costs a lot of money these days; yet, in many cases, it is not remodeling that is needed. Many older colonial club houses have as much, and in some cases more, appeal than low rambling modern buildings with their figure eight, two-toned, lighted swimming pools.

It is the little neglected things that bring on the appearance of old age. Cracks and stains in sidewalks, buildings, fences and benches detract from the surroundings. Doors are great offenders if they are marked by finger prints, dirt and scuffs from rings. It's the small, neglected things that set the mood of a club.

Appearance of the entrance way is so important that tremendous energy has gone into the making of this area the sesame of appeal. Thick, soft carpets, fringed and scalloped canopies, a doorman dressed in the blue and gold befitting a monarch all are intended to impress members and their guests.

Pruning Helps

Contrast this with the club whose driveway is littered with leaves and dirt, overgrown with shrubbery. Nothing is more depressing. What a change could be made here merely by pruning and shaping trees and shrubs and cultivating the ground under them. The same can be said for occasionally washing the entire parking area and hosing down the clubhouse. Painting faded and worn out lines in the parking area also does wonders.

Overfilled and unkept refuse containers are particularly distasteful. Containers should be emptied frequently and washed as often. They should be painted every year, replaced on level ground and moved now and then to prevent wearing of the turf around them.

Worn carpets and floors, faded drapes, scuffed furniture, scratched silverware, torn linen, chipped and cracked china, mottled table tops don't give a club the mark of

prestige. All these reflect age and neglect. Dirty windows, worn door knockers, dusty plaques and scratched showcases are great offenders.

Out on the course it's wise to guard against signs of old age. Worn turf is probably the biggest culprit. You see it around the pro shop, bordering the walks, at the first tee, on much traversed pathways, and in these days of golf carts, on approaches around the greens.

Clean Ball Washers

Ball washers not only often look dirty, but secrete unhealthy odors. They should be cleaned often and filled with fresh water and soap. Dirty towels should be removed and replaced with clean ones two, three, and sometimes even four times daily. The poles on which they stand occasionally should be scrubbed and kept well painted. Flag poles should be kept in repair, and flags themselves should be replaced as soon as they become faded or worn. Every golfer who plays your course looks at every flag at least once during his round.

Equipment such as mowers and tractors look new and well maintained if they are painted at regular intervals and washed every week or so. Caddy carts should get the same treatment.

The maintenance shed usually shows what kind of a supt. you are. Unsightly oil drums littering the premises and pipe fittings, sprinklers, parts and machinery scattered around aren't going to add to your prestige. Broken fertilizer bags cast a ghastly glow. Slovenliness here breeds old age.

Even if the supt. develops something akin to housemaid's knees, some courses still show their age. Courses constructed 30 years ago are pretty much out of date today unless constant remodeling has kept them modern. A golf course with round, flat greens is as out of date as hickory shafts. The old "Punch Bowl," "The Island," "The Circus" were picturesque names for greens 30 years ago, but today they are antiques.

The modern course has its greens setting in the midst of shoulder contouring.

(Continued on page 92)



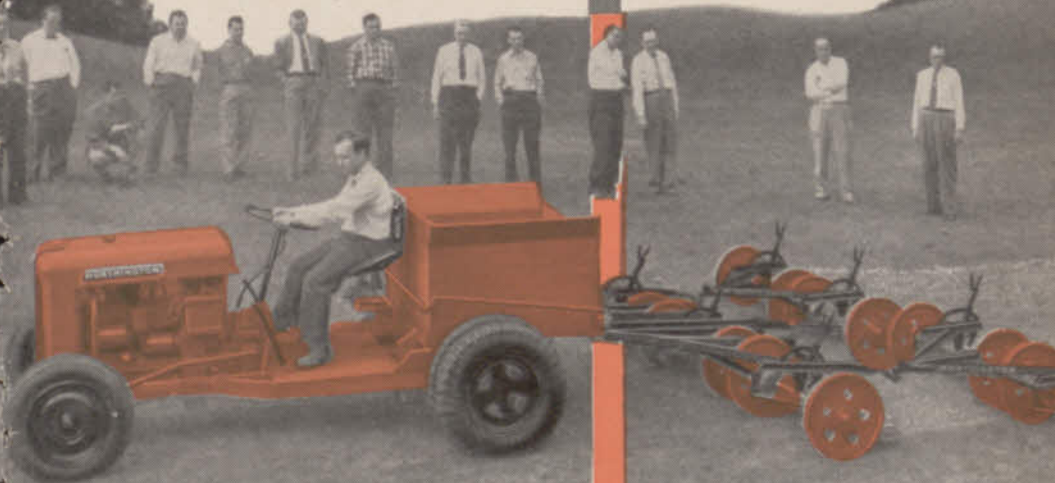
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Taylor Designs Spreader, Mower Assemblies

Here is a homemade spreader for use on greens and tees designed by T. T. Taylor. He uses a cyclone seeder, old caddy cart, and discarded metal container. The drive mechanism (at lower left) consists of a V belt and two pulleys of appropriate size. He attached one pulley to one wheel and the other to a shaft extended from original seeder mechanism. Before making machine, Taylor used a cyclone seeder. He says homemade spreader saves time, is more convenient.

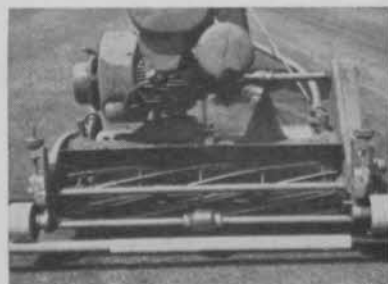


T. T. Taylor and Spreader



Spreader in action

Front end assembly on a power-driven putting green mower as designed and built by T. T. Taylor. Narrow center roller is placed there to prevent scalping (it is one of three conventional rollers furnished with machine, but cut in two). On tight turf, marking by the side casters never has been objectionable. Purpose behind the front assembly is to reduce front-scalping roller width to absolute minimum, and by doing so reduce or prevent mat formation.



Front Mower assembly



Rear roller assembly

Homemade rear roller assembly, placed behind power driven drum of a green mower has been used by T. T. Taylor for years. Caster wheel brackets carry the set of rollers. In making the turn on the apron of the green, operator presses down on handle to lift the power drum off ground. He makes turn on homemade roller without "throttling down" or disengaging clutch. Supplementary roller has fulfilled its original purpose, which is to prevent burning of the grass in hot weather. Injury then is due to slippage or friction of power driven drum.



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Boost Thompson's Sales

Jimmy E. Thompson, professional at the Stockdale club, Bakersfield, Calif., believes in "spoiling" his members by giving them more than they expect in pro department service.

The members like to be "spoiled," according to the increase shown in Thompson's records that cover play and pro department business. The increase is not estimated in round figures. Jimmy keeps records that show exactly at the end of each day how play and shop business have been.

Here are a few examples of Thompson's statistics:

From Jan. 1 through Sept. 30, 1955, there were 21,757 rounds played on the Stockdale course. In the same period in 1956 there was an increase of 3,301 rounds over the '55 figure.

Included in the total of 25,058 for the Jan. 1-Sept. 30 period of 1956 were 6,063 rounds by women. Thompson keeps accurate records of the classifications of play — men, women, passes (clergy, etc.), juniors and guests.

Private Club Record?

Junior play at Stockdale has increased greatly. In 1953-54-55, Jimmy had between 40 and 60 juniors in his classes. Last year 113 youngsters regularly attended Thompson's junior classes. Jimmy thinks this may be a private club record. If any pro at a private club has more kids regularly attending classes, GOLFDOM would like to get his record to pass it along as news to other pros.

Attention given the juniors and development the kids are showing under Thompson's tutelage have Stockdale members keenly interested and bragging about the kids. This applies even when the members aren't talking about their own children.

There is lively and genuine personal interest in all of Thompson's operations. One purpose of his records is to make certain that he will be reminded of what he wants to do for each member.

His birthday gift service is a great help to members. It works this way: If you're a member whose birthday is April 15, Jimmy takes it upon himself to send your wife a letter suggesting some golf item you might need. The letter is mailed 10 days before your natal day. Then, on April 13, he mails you a birthday card.

When Thompson learns of a member's illness he sends a card or flowers.

Each new member at Stockdale gets a letter from Jimmy welcoming the new teammate to the club and to the pro shop. And when a member resigns or moves out of town, Jimmy sends that person a graceful letter thanking him for past patronage and expressing the hope that Jimmy will get a chance to serve him again soon.

Members of Family

Thompson does these things without being prompted by mercenary motives, although he will concede the thoughtful details mean substantial pro department revenue. The Stockdale master sincerely thinks of members of his club as members of his family. When he says: "We have a wonderful club, the best in the west," he isn't merely giving his job lip service; he means what he says.

Members think of Jimmy as one of the family, too. Buying of golf goods outside the club has been greatly reduced at Stockdale in recent years. Members have been persuaded to buy in the pro shop because of Thompson's thoughtfulness, his mailings, including the now famous "What Is Expected of A Member" article that appeared in March, 1956, **GOLFING**, and his cheerful and thorough service to adults as well as juniors.

Old Farmhouse Will Be Hub of New Pequot Course

By OWEN GRIFFITH

Wendell Ross is in the midst of an interesting job, carving out Connecticut's new Pequot GC course in Stonington.

The former pro at the Stonington Manor GC designed the 18-hole course. Nine holes are expected to be ready this summer. As Ross tells it, Pequot will have a championship course. It is being laid out on ideal terrain on property that for nearly 130 years was the Stonington Town Farm. The 125 acres include a 32-room Colonial type farm house which will provide a restaurant and bar, locker rooms for men and women, a spacious dining room, pro shop and lounge rooms. Pequot will be a semi-private club.

Fairways will have an average width of 55 yards and greens will average 4,000 sq. ft. Last winter, Ross worked on designing the layout and location of many of the

(Please turn to page 53)