

Athletic Goods Sales Census Prompts Taking of Second Look at Pro Market

*Long-Lasting Balls, Trade-In Situation, Close-Cut Rough,
Other Factors Eat Into Shop Sales, Hurt Profits*

By HERB GRAFFIS

Release of the 1960 census of Athletic Goods Manufacturers' Assn. should get pros and golf goods manufacturers looking together at what the score is in the golf business.

The better the pros do, the more money the manufacturers also make, but before either group begins adding up its profits it suffers enough marketing headaches for both. Golf merchandising is no simple, easy feat although golf merchandise outsells other athletic goods by a substantial margin.

Golf equipment (clubs, balls, bags, club carts, etc.) in 1960 accounted for \$86,775,170 (at factory selling price, including excise tax) of total athletic goods sales volume of \$197,447,617 reported for the year.

Other items reported include baseball and softball equipment, in second place, at \$35,737,983; athletic shoes, third, at \$21,788,378; inflated goods at \$18,232,631; Miscellaneous items, tennis, badminton and related equipment, athletic clothing, helmets and pads, then, finally boxing gloves to the amount of \$481,749, follow in order.

The sales volume reported by the census is not the entire amount manufactured. Some manufacturers do not participate in the census. In the case of golf

goods it is generally believed that over 85 percent of all clubs (including putters) sold by makers last year and about 90 percent of the balls figure in the report.

Baseball equipment sales do not present a true comparative picture of American athletic goods manufacturing due to the volume of Japanese goods sold here, authorities point out.

Looking at the golf figures from the pro market viewpoint there are illuminating points that suggest study of pro merchandising policies and certainly show the urgent necessity of market development.

Last Too Long

One trouble with the golf market is that playing equipment lasts so long. Pros often say that about a third of their members are playing with clubs that are outgrown and don't fit the age of the member's swing. The top quality golf ball sales in years shortly after World War II closed indicated that a ball was played one round. Now the figures indicate that the top grade ball has a life of two rounds. The number of golfers has not doubled.

The top quality (the pro quality) of golf balls in 1960 was about 57 per cent of the total reported sales of 4,225,174 doz. The 1960 sale of all balls reported was 289,411 doz. more than 1959 but the top grade fell off about 1 per cent.

In 1950 top grade ball sales were 63 per cent of the total.

The considerable increase in public course play and in women's play at private clubs probably accounts for the slump in percentage of top grade balls sold. One of the pro merchandising problems is to get women buying more golf balls. With the ball cover almost cut-proof and the paint wearing well, the woman golfer does not get the ball looking used after a number of rounds of play.

Cut Rough; Cut Ball Sales

Veteran pro businessmen believe that a mistake that cost a lot of ball business was made when the rough was cut down. They say that the first criticism of rough came from tournament professionals and that yowling gave the rank and file the notion of practically doing away with an interesting and traditional feature of golf architecture that sold golf balls.

Water holes on a course help ball business and temporarily remove from play rather beaten-up balls.

Another sidebar to the ball business is the 1961 Rule of Golf that calls for stroke and distance for out of bounds. Many golfers consider that losing a stroke and the price of a ball adds up to too much of a penalty and they want the 1960 rule of "distance only" restored.

That brings up the moderate increase in the average price of golf balls over the last 10 years. Balls and clubs have been lagging, comparatively, in price increases despite higher costs of material and labor, hence the golfer is getting a bargain, particularly in the high quality items.

Top Quality Percentage Falls

Iron club sales reported for last year was 4,733,227, an increase of 87,962 over 1959.

In 1960 about 33 per cent of the irons were of top grade. In 1950 more than 45 per cent of the irons reported were of pro grade.

Wood club sales reported for 1960 were 1,951,027, an increase of 41,854 over the previous year. Top quality accounted for about 39 per cent of the woods. In 1950 approximately 59 per cent of the woods were top grade.

The reduction in the percentage of top quality clubs sold is not anything to panic pros into going into a price war where they can't win because somebody else always can undercut.

The figure does suggest that pros study what is in their members' bags and, if the results suggest, stock a medium price or open stock line or look for the closeouts and get competitive with lower-priced



Gary Player and his wife, Vivienne, probably died several hundred deaths while waiting for Arnold Palmer to decide what he was going to do in the last round of the Masters, but everything finally turned out as the scriptwriters would have it. Gary's daughter probably doesn't realize what all the excitement is about, but did you ever see a more exquisite expression of triumph?

sources. It's worth a second look.

The pro has an advantage in his trade-in arrangements on high quality club purchases but these are mounting difficulties in the trade-in deals which mean that two sales have to be made to make one profit.

GOLFDOM is working with several pro businessmen on a plan intended to convert part of the trouble of the trade-ins into a valuable market promotion operation.

Obviously market development is the sure and sensible answer to most of the pro, manufacturer and dealer problems in golf merchandising. The pro has not a monopoly of marketing troubles. The dealers gripe about the "discount" and "wholesale" houses cutting golf prices as much as the pros complain about the dealers cutting.

Young Market Growing Big

Joe Graffis, sr., Golfdom publisher, and Pres., National Golf Foundation, in his report at the annual meeting of the Foundation said that there were 190 new courses, 35 additions (mostly 9 hole additions) and 51 new par 3 courses built last year, a record year's growth in golf facilities. About 35 per cent of the new conventional courses were features of real estate developments. There now are 6,118 conventional courses (3,442 of them 9-holes) and 419 par 3 courses of which 313 are 9-hole and 106 are 18-hole courses.

Golf growth in colleges continues to be

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Fine clubhouse with a well stocked pro shop give first class rating to the golf setup at Guantanamo. Below is Jim Dempsey, who runs the 27 holes.



Golf Boosts Morale, Calms Nerves at GTMO

It's part of a big recreation program that's helping to keep the military alert and on its toes in the Cuban crisis

By **BILL McWILLIAMS**

Jim Dempsey was standing on the first tee of the golf course at the U. S. Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, scratching his head. It was a typical Saturday afternoon. Most of the U. S. Navy ships in the area were at anchor for the weekend. The crews, except for the duty sections, were ashore for liberty, some to buy souvenirs from the base exchanges.

But Jim Dempsey, manager of the golf club, had nothing to do with souvenir hunting. His problem was to fit all the fleet golf players to the golf course even though he had 27 holes to work with. American sailors and marines play a lot of golf and it's not unusual to see golf clubs in liberty boats packed with personnel coming ashore.

Guantanamo is a little different now



Tifton 328 is planted on greens. It's said this is the farthest south this strain is used.

from the easy going, pre-Fidel Castro days. Physical fitness here is as important as it is with the rest of the Navy. This big Naval Base with its excellent harbor with depths to 60 feet is of prime importance in connection with our defense in the Caribbean. Guantanamo guards the narrow Windward Passage between the eastern end of Cuba and the northwestern tip of Haiti through the chain of islands that border the Atlantic. It is only 800 miles from vital Panama.

Leased in 1903

Cuba leased the land, first discovered by Columbus on his second voyage in 1494, to the U. S. in 1903 for an annual rental of what now amounts to \$3,676. The original lease was signed by President Theodore Roosevelt. Another treaty was signed in Washington in 1934. It gave the U. S. a perpetual lease on the reservation, to be broken only by mutual agreement of both countries. The lease is still effective and we intend to keep it that way. For all practical purposes it is American territory.

Guantanamo has been used as a home away from home by almost all the operating naval units of the Atlantic Fleet. It primarily is a training area and most of the ships are here for that purpose. Practically every ship completing an overhaul at a shipyard on the Atlantic coast will visit GTMO for a period of intensive training to test new equipment and to train new men. It's a hard working time not only for the men being trained but for the Guantanamo based trainers.

Each week-end the really elaborate Guantanamo sports program blooms again. Every sailor or marine may take his pick from an assortment of activities sites that would make a big city recreation director green with envy. These include 6 baseball fields, 15 softball fields, 6 swimming pools, 8 basketball courts, 8 tennis courts, 20 bowling alleys, 2 riding stables and 18- and 9-hole golf courses. Although the fleet has first crack at these sports on weekends the same facilities are available to the 6,000 Americans living on the base. Many who never picked up a golf club before start swinging here and some have gone on to become really fine golfers.

Golf is important at GTMO. Also at the Army and Air Force bases in Puerto Rico — Ft. Buchanan, Ft. Brooke and Ramey Air Force Base. It's a major sport in Panama. But military golfers like Guantanamo.

First there was only a 9-hole course in the early 1940s built along the rifle range. The clubhouse was half a quonset hut. A second 9 was added in 1947 and the third 9 in 1956. Now there is a first class clubhouse with a well stocked pro shop.

328 on Greens

Greens are being converted to Tifton 328 grass, the farthest south this strain of grass has been used. And incidentally, the completed greens are beautiful.

Jim Dempsey, a retired Lt. commander, runs the course for the Special Services dept. at the base. He was stationed in GTMO, has a real good swing himself and

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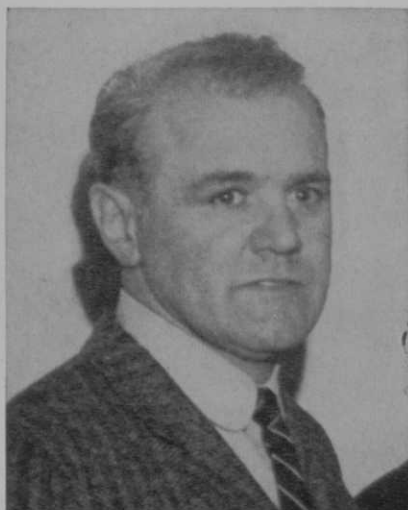
OLD TIMERS



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Safety— It's Something That Is Planned

By Andrew A. Bertoni

Supt. Meadowbrook CC
Northville, Mich.

SAFETY and accident prevention are among the most important tasks of the supt. Accidents are expensive. Course maintenance may be slowed down or stopped completely by them. Valuable workers may be temporarily or permanently lost. The accident may result in a neglected course or even the club's loss of community goodwill. Even more important than the loss to the club is the effect on the worker and his family. Therefore, from this standpoint alone the supt. and the club must make certain that every operation is carried on as safely as possible. Safety equipment required for the job must be adequate and in good working order.

I am a firm believer that personal problems affect personnel. An anxious, fearful, worried employee is likely to become inefficient, dissatisfied, ripe for an accident. In the "Handbook for Supervisors" by Ecker et. al. it is claimed that morale or attitude of a worker towards his job is a significant element in production and safety. He is a hazard not only to himself but also his co-workers if his attitude is negative.

State of Mind

Since safety is a state of mind, these

This article is condensed from a speech made by Bertoni at the 1961 USGA green section meeting.

two fundamental principles are of consequence: (1) Constructive suggestions and positive directions are of more value than a list of "don'ts;" (2) Emphasis should be placed on the promotion of safety and the prevention of accidents as a means of insuring greater usefulness rather than fear of injury. Safety education should develop courage with prudence as distinguished from foolhardiness.

I cannot recall a single employee fatality that has occurred at a course. There must be an unconscious safety endeavor on the part of the supt. Apparently, he is keenly aware of the safety and welfare of his crew. Golf courses can consider themselves fortunate that there have not been many fatal or serious injuries.

Watch Out For Each Other

There are many hazards in course work but, as in any well regulated business, these hazards have been carefully analyzed and safety rules and practices have been established to forestall them. If I relate what we do at Meadowbrook to promote safety it is because, as in all talks of this type, it is necessary to resort to personal experiences.

Our workmen are taught to watch out for themselves and for other crewmen. We ask that they keep track of each other at all times on the course. Since they are in danger of flying golf balls the men wear white pith helmets and white uniforms.

Here are things that are provided or what we try to prevent:

Heat — can cause prostration, sunburn, excessive perspiration, etc. Sedatives, restoratives, creams, ointments, insect repellants in various forms are part of each man's first aid kit.

Cold — frost bites, exposure, etc. We furnish suits of thermal underwear, boots, gloves, uniforms, and coveralls. (These are actually cheap fringe benefits. They more than pay for themselves in increased work output.)

Rain and lightning — USGA has done a fine presentation on this. Our men are instructed to go out in their cars to bring in stranded members and caddies.

Several Regulations

Driving — on the course, club property, etc. — golfers and children are hazards here. We have speed limits. On our tractors and other mobile equipment are mounted multiview mirrors, similar to the type used on busses. Brakes are constantly checked; parking or stopping on steep hills is forbidden. Keys are never left in equipment. Mounting and unmounting can be hazardous; men are taught the correct method. We request all employees to walk around a piece of equipment before it is mounted.

Mowers — these can be treacherous. They should be treated as such. One person only adjusts the reel at a time. Leather gloves are worn when adjusting in the shear area. It is interesting to note that there are twice as many finger amputations for the age group under 18 years than all others. One can readily see why some states will not allow youths under 18 to work with power equipment. An experienced man handles this for us — we put the coolest man on the hottest job. We have one rotary — the man who uses it has safety protective shoes. Common sense safety practices are in effect when work is done in any way, any place, any time, as regards mowers. The danger of burn, hand, finger, or foot injury multiplies in the mower area; therefore, precautions and safety practices should multiply in ratio.

Know How It Works

Electricity — Know where the live wires come into the buildings and on to the course. Alert your crew on switch operation. Motors should be as automatic as possible. Have warning signs, paint danger areas, lock buildings or fences.

Chemicals — these can be the big bad wolf. In general, instruct your crew to

Commuting Pro



Bill Entwistle, Jr. and his wife.

Bill Entwistle, Jr., who wrote the April *Golfdom* article, "Bright Displays Will Never Match the Good Sell," may be the only international, commuting pro in the history of golf. Besides running the shop at Ogdensburg (N. Y.) CC, Entwistle is the head pro at a club in Prescott, Ontario. To travel between jobs, which are about 10 minutes apart, he has to drive across the new Seaway Skyway bridge which spans the St. Lawrence river. There have been quite a few instances where pros have operated shops at two clubs, but it's doubtful if any have done so in two countries. If you know whether this has been done before, *Golfdom* would like to hear about it.

treat all chemicals with utmost respect. Again, we furnish rubber gloves, aprons, boots, face masks, goggles, and protective creams. If not too windy, we want chemicals mixed outside for good ventilation. We have built a platform so that workmen can put chemicals down into a tank rather than hold them overhead. This avoids spilling into eyes, face, and body. Plastic containers and measuring cups are safer. May I suggest to the manufacturer that chemicals be marked in a better manner, including dangers and precautions involved and antidotes prescribed. At my suggestion some manufacturers have pre-

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50 Clubs Report on Operations in Chicago Directory

THE annual Directory of Information, published by the Chicago Golf District, and used by numerous clubs and associations throughout the country as an operating guide, is a typically fine round-up of statistical information that covers bar and dining room operations, course maintenance, golf cars, the pro department, assessments and other club activities. Published for the twelfth straight year, the Directory came off the press in April.

Reports from more than 50 clubs are included in the CDGA compilation and in some cases, comparative figures going back to 1957, are included.

Dining room revenue for 1960, according to the Directory, averaged \$116,000 at 52 clubs, 35 of them within Chicago or located in the suburbs, and the remaining 17 in what is known as "out-of-area" locations. Average gross profit from this revenue was 50.44 per cent. Both revenue and gross profit were very close to what had been reported in the three previous years. Revenue, for example, didn't vary more than \$3,000 or \$4,000 between 1960 and any of the other years listed. The gross profit percentage figure has constantly been around 50.

Gross Profit Down

Bar operations at 48 reporting clubs showed a slight reduction in gross profit from the three previous years although sales in 1960 exceeded all other years except 1959. Last year's average sales amounted to \$72,500 and the gross profit was slightly under 62 per cent. In 1957, the gross was pegged at 65 per cent. Included in the bar report are high, low and average charges for various drinks, service charge percentages and number of bartenders employed.

Average hourly course wage ranged from \$1.58 to \$1.80 at clubs in the district. Approximately one of three clubs provided supts. with living quarters and about half as many gave them one meal a day. About one out of ten supts. were provided either with automobiles or auto-



The eighth hole at the new Port St. Lucie (Fla.) CC has been dedicated to Cary Middlecoff, (r), one of golf's all time greats. The plaque designating the Middlecoff hole is shown by Chick Harbert, executive golf dir. for General Development Corp., which built the course.

mobile expense allowances. Clubs in the city or suburbs had a ground crew of 12 men during the playing season, reducing this to an average of four in the off season. Out of area clubs reported an average of eight summertime employees and three in the winter.

Salaries for laborer take about 45 per cent of maintenance budgets with chemicals-fertilizer-seed and new machinery also making quite an appreciable dent in the greenmaster's funds. Allocations for construction of new greens and course rebuilding projects also were very much in evidence in reports from many clubs for 1960.

More than 60 clubs reported that a total of 1,596 golf cars were used on their courses last year. More than 40 per cent of the vehicles were privately owned with the balance largely belonging to the clubs or being leased through them. Restrictions applied mainly to green areas. Monthly service charges ranged from \$10 or less to \$40 with most of the clubs reporting that \$20 was the predominant charge. Servicing was divided fairly evenly among the clubs, professionals and contractors.

Pro Salaries Up

Salaries paid CDGA pros were reported to be approximately 20 per cent higher in 1960 than they were three years ago. More than four out of five head pros continue to pay the salaries of their assistants. Clubs provide lodgings for about one of seven pros, and meals that are provided are either outright or on a discount basis. Pros

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PHILLY *warms up with a* GOLF SHOW!

If they weren't a bunch of rabid golfers, you'd say it was because Spring wasn't far away . . . Anyway, 3,000 of them showed up

By **JOSEPH W. DRAGONETTI**

The great interest shown by more than 3000 visitors at Philadelphia's fourth annual golf show at the Sheraton Hotel, Apr. 4, indicated that there is no recession in the golf business.

This was the largest crowd in the history of the show, according to Leo Fraser, pres. of the Philadelphia section of the PGA which sponsored the event. The crowd reaction was enthusiastic, especially in response to the free instruction by experts, free golf clinics, golf driving nets, shotmaking exhibitions and displays of the latest golf equipment and accessories. Admission to the show was \$1, plus tax.

Forty-one equipment and accessory firms had booths in the gallery and main ballroom of the hotel. This was the greatest number of exhibitors since the show started. More than \$250,000 worth of equipment was on display, including a large group of cars. An increasing assort-

ment of golf clothes for women, indicating a trend toward smart styling with free-swinging ease, was in evidence.

Expressing the feeling of most of the distributors, James G. Hogg, pres. of the Plymouth Golf Ball Co., said, "There is no recession in the golf business." He pointed to a 30 percent increase in his company's sales in the first quarter of 1961 over the same period last year. Moreover, he said sales in 1960 increased 22 percent over 1959 and sales in 1959 increased 20 percent over 1958.

Reaction Encouraging

"The crowd reaction at this show," Hogg added "was the most encouraging I have seen. It indicates that golf continues a fast growing participant sport. Notable, too, is the increasing number of women who are taking up golf."

The pro-shop suppliers paid \$75 each for booth space to help defray the cost of the show. The Philadelphia shows, however, are not designed for profit but to stimulate interest in shop merchandise.