



Spalding clubmaker, John St. Clair (r), checks with Bill Duncan on custom set that is being made up for Paul Leming (center). Duncan has been in charge of forging operations at Spalding for 25 years.

A Craftsman Suggests

Four Principles to be Followed in Fitting Clubs

By ED TOOLE

John St. Clair of Spalding and Bros., Inc., has made clubs for golfers ranging from the touring pros to the highest handicap golfers. He has made them for U. S. Open, PGA, and Masters champions. He has made custom clubs for Dwight Eisenhower. He has been and is still consulted by all the golfing greats, no matter what their professional or amateur affiliation.

It is St. Clair's sound pronouncement that a golf club must be designed to perform a specific function in the easiest and most efficient manner. Confidence at address is of utmost importance if clubs are to meet the player's requirements — beauty is a by-product! The well designed, well fitted club must encourage a smooth, uninterrupted followthrough without built-in compensating factors.

Quick Service

It took Bob Jones many years to gather together his "perfect" set of clubs. Today, however, topflight competitive golfers, discriminating professionals and low and high handicap amateurs alike can obtain perfectly matched sets by being "fitted" to precision-made, perfectly fit-

ted and designed custom-made clubs in a matter of weeks. Furthermore, these can be exactly duplicated at any time.

In years gone by, woods used, say for 72 holes in the rain, were far from the same clubs used in 85-90 degree humid weather. Actually, they became two different sets of clubs, where swing weight was involved, in a mere matter of a few days. As a result, consistency in play had to suffer.

Pick Up Very Little Moisture

The hydro-sealed process used in the manufacture of clubs today prevents woods from picking up as much as a quarter of an ounce of moisture that results in no more than a four-point change in swing weight. Modernization and standardization of all the features of golf clubs have led to vastly improved play by the masses.

St. Clair points out that all golfers do not require custom-made clubs. Many golfers' playing requirements can be satisfied with registered clubs available from regular stock. However, the player whose physical characteristics do not fall into the category of "standard" should be guided to a "golf-doctor" for fitting. In fitting a player, St. Clair says the pro should be guided by these four principles:

1. An evaluation of the golfer's physical characteristics — such as — "Hand-height" (distance from extended fingertips to the ground) plus the distance from the end of the club shaft to the ground surface when the golfer is in hitting position.

2. Determination of the golfer's status as either a swinger or a hitter. Does he "fly" the ball or does he have trouble in getting it airborne?

3. Evaluation of the golfer's strength, size of hands, wrists, forearms and age — all having a direct bearing on correct specifications for clubs that will be playable for him.

4. After ascertaining the swing weight requirement, length of shaft, type of shaft and grip size accurately, the head weight required to properly position the club's center of gravity is determined.

Ideal fitting conditions prevail, says

St. Clair, when information from the pro details shaft flex, exact grip size, lie of the club and swing weight, and thus provides a complete picture of the requirements of the individual. It is very important to determine whether the golfer being "fitted" hits from the outside-in or inside-out. The person being fitted may not want to change his swing and, at times, this must be taken into consideration, especially if the golfer has been playing for many, many years and is middle aged or elderly.

St. Clair emphasizes that when a pro is ordering "specials" for his customer he must be specific in all respects. As an illustration, he points out that some orders received for custom-built clubs may read "undersize . . . or oversize grips," requested. But no indication is given as to at what point measurement was taken, nor is there any given degree of adjustment specified in fractions or decimals with a slide caliper. Too, some pros request "flat lie . . . or upright lie" with no indication of the degree of flatness or uprightness required by the individual.

Uses Layout Table

The Spalding clubmaker uses a "classified" layout, in table form, of head weight, shaft weight, shaft length and grip weight so that when all data is put together after the fitting an absolute and accurate swing weight is available at a glance. This enables St. Clair to locate the center of gravity for the complete set of clubs.

John St. Clair points out that a short person with low hand height, using a standard lie club, is certain to hook his shots. The golfer's deep divot, taken at the heel of the club, and the resulting "light toe" causes the hook. Therefore, short persons, and most women, need a flatter lie club.

He explains that a driver, with a D1 swing weight and 43-inch shaft is changed to a D5 by increasing the length by a half inch to 43½ inches. The increase in swing weight reduces club speed through the hitting zone and also changes leverage due to the increase in length.

Head Speed Slowed

By lengthening the shaft one inch, swing weight is changed above the proper
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Sarazen's Advice Heeded by LoPresti

So, Tom headed west . . . and if you don't think he didn't become an outstanding pro, read what he has done at Haggin Oaks in the way of merchandising and teaching and training assistants

By **DON CURLEE**

In establishing Haggin Oaks Municipal GC in Sacramento, Calif., as the "public course with the country club touch," Pro Tom LoPresti has carried out the advice given to him 35 years ago by Gene Sarazen, who said: "Quit the tour, go west and become the best darn club pro in the business!"

After 32 years at Haggin Oaks, LoPresti, who was named pro of the year by the PGA in 1962, is in a position to give some advice of his own — about the operation of both public and private courses.

Whether golfers are members of your club or just fee-paying players, the key to successful merchandising, LoPresti contends, is a desire to please them. "It's a kind of worn-out phrase but the completely satisfied customer is the best public relations your shop can have," he says.


In the photo above, Tom LoPresti leans, but not wearily, against a rolling rack in Haggin Oaks pro shop. He carries average inventory of around \$50,000 but doesn't permit shop to have a cluttered and overloaded look.



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Morgan Barofsky (center) and Bob Love, rival Salesmen, try to convince LoPresti that their firm's wares should be spotlighted. They are seen with a mobile putter display rack Tom designed.

"You begin simply by expressing an interest in the golfer's game. To him it's the most important thing in the world," LoPresti says. With an average of 600 golfers turning out each day to play at the 36-hole Haggin Oaks complex it takes a ton of interest, but LoPresti obviously enjoys the challenge.

Tom admits that remembering the names of all his players and customers is too much, but that doesn't keep him and his staff from expressing personal interest. "How's your game?" or "How did you like the course?" LoPresti will ask. When they reply, he listens . . . and looks and waits for an opportunity to suggest ways and equipment that may make their enjoyment even greater the next time they play.

Three on the Floor

An extremely outgoing person, LoPresti always finds time for anybody who wants to see him. What's more, you get the impression that he enjoys every minute of it. He has a ready welcome for everybody and has stamped his friendly personality all over Haggin Oaks.

He's the first to admit that running the shop is more than one person can perform alone. On weekends Tom assigns three assistants to floor duty in

the pro shop, with no other responsibility than to greet each person who shows an interest in the merchandise.

Operations of the pro shop, a club and cart repair service and a daytime driving range requires a payroll of almost \$60,000 annually at Haggin Oaks. Even though LoPresti's is a big operation it's built on the little things that public fee golfers long for, but don't always find.

Among the little things that count are minor club and pull cart repairs, a lost-and-found for clubs and personal articles (*with a special bin for head covers*), and custody of ladies' handbags or men's coats or street shoes while they are on the course — all without charge.

Head Start Comes Here

Atmosphere alone doesn't make the cash register ring! It takes heads-up merchandising and careful buying. LoPresti is a master at both, but he insists that the atmosphere created by personal interest in his customers gives him a head start. He believes that traffic is so heavy at many many courses that pros neglect to



Ken Morton, Haggin Oaks assistant who installed women's department in shop, discusses merchandising ideas with Bud Werring, golf sales rep.

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You can't sell bananas from an empty wagon

express enough personal interest in their customers.

His merchandising premise is simply stated: "You can't sell bananas from an empty wagon." He adds that his average inventory is from \$35,000 to \$60,000. In the fall his stock is increased sharply and then levels off after the Christmas season. He picks it up again in the spring.

Although December normally is gloomy in Northern California, the Haggin Oaks shop is bright and bustling. Every purchase during December, from 50¢ to \$500, is gift wrapped without charge.

Uses 1,000 Shopping Guides

LoPresti sells golf bags specially imprinted with the Haggin Oaks identification during December. He mails 1,000 copies of the GOLFDOM Christmas shopping guide each year and credits this with increasing his holiday traffic "tremendously!"

When the Christmas season is over, customer service goes on with the same enthusiasm as before. Refunds are granted for as long as three or four months after a purchase is made. LoPresti and his crew always try to make an exchange, but they never balk at giving a cash refund if that is what the customer prefers.

Borrow for A Discount

"Always take your cash discount on purchases," LoPresti advises, "even if it means borrowing money for a short term. The amount of the discount over your interest can buy you a new suit of clothes every year, and maybe in a good year, a new automobile."

Being an interested listener, he has learned that the putter is always at fault when a golfer's touch on the greens is lost. So, he carries at least 200 putters in stock.

With clubs it's a slightly different matter. A member of one manufacturer's staff for more than 25 years, LoPresti avoids what he calls, "shoving this company's equipment down my customers' throats."



Tom LoPresti is all over the place. Here he is rummaging through a bin in what may be the world's busiest pro shop repair section.

He keeps a wide selection of clubs in stock. "I carry enough so that 90 percent of my customers can buy from stock," he says.

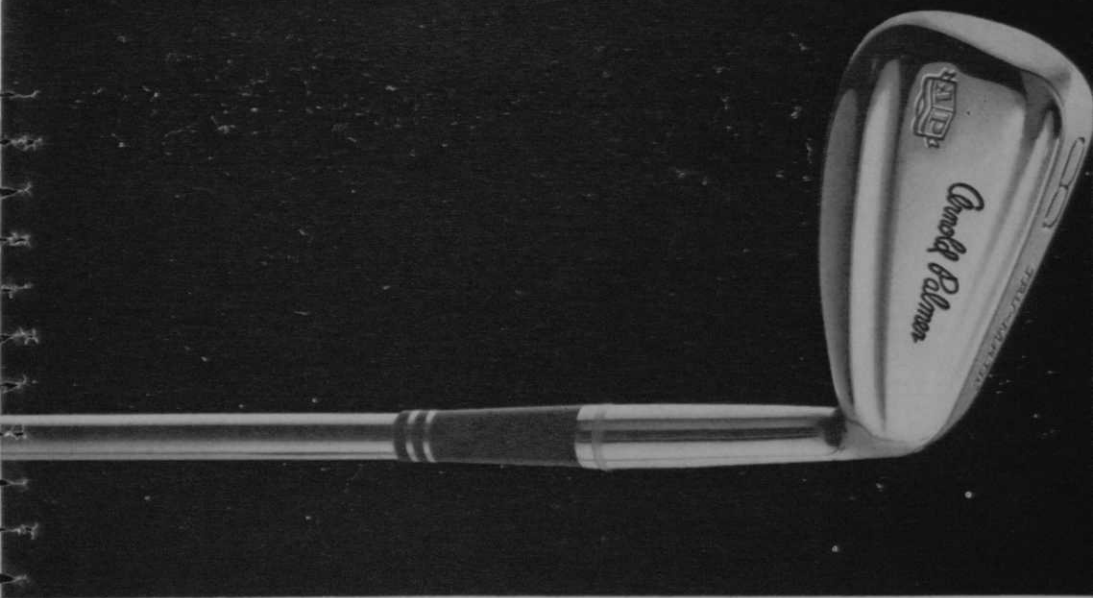
LoPresti drills his assistants in the fine art of knowing their customers. He insists that they avoid overloading a beginner with too much equipment. Rather, they may steer him toward used clubs or a skeleton set that can be filled in later. The assistant pros are taught to point out to customers the mis-matching that occurs when they buy clubs elsewhere simply by taking them to the swing-weight scale. "Don't stand around crying that the discount and department stores are taking business away. Stand up and fight with alert merchandising," is Tom's advice.

Arranges Financing

His customers have a choice of three types of accounts — 30-day open, 90-day with 1 percent per month charge on the unpaid balance, or outside financing for longer periods. This LoPresti arranges. By working with a finance company payments can be extended for as long as 24 months.

If golfers are dissatisfied with clubs they purchase, LoPresti goes out of his

(Continued on page 102)



In a word: class.

ARNOLD PALMER is an amiable man, but he has firm ideas about equipment.

Last year he decided to have his own clubs manufactured in his own way. And golfers ever since have been asking their golf professionals: "What makes them special?"

There's a long answer and a short one. The long answer is: "Everything."

Take the matching of sets. It's so exact that all nine different clubs *feel* identical in your hands.

The engineering of heads and shafts is special, too. It's calculated to give each club a flight pattern as predictable as that of a guided missile.

And there are dozens of little perfections you might not even notice. Like the subtle beefing up of the *top* of the blade, where most clubs are thin. Or the studied simplicity of the back design. Even the depth and luster of the chrome work is deliberate; it may not influence the ball, but it makes *you* feel good.

Arnie's whole idea is to place in your hands a set of tools so mechanically flawless you can forget about every-

thing except your form. "After an hour," wrote one golfer, "the clubs began to feel like part of my own arm."

What about the short answer? It's in one word: class. If you have a touch of it, nobody needs to explain it to you. You'll just go to your pro shop some sunny Spring morning, and you'll fondle these beautiful weapons, and a bell will ring inside your head, and you'll do what comes naturally.

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Torture Testing

This specially designed ramp, with 50 per cent grade, was used to test hill climbing ability of prototype 1965 Cushman models. This test indicated need for improved drive unit.

Here is how a golf car builder imitated the automobile industry in an effort to develop models that will hold up under the slam bang driving of some golfers

The most direct — and costliest — way for a golf course operator to determine how well and how long a golf car can survive the bruising pace of daily use is to drive it to death.

It's imperative to know the survival factor because paramount among economy considerations in selecting and operating a fleet of golf cars are longevity and freedom from downtime and maintenance.

Major manufacturers have long relied on laboratory testing of parts, materials and components to determine life potential and ruggedness of their cars. Course operators know from costly experience that there's a tremendous difference between examining parts and components under controlled lab conditions and subjecting a vehicle to the grueling, day-to-day punishment administered by drivers with widely divergent skills and sense of responsibility.

Design Improvements Indicated

One manufacturer, Cushman Motors of Lincoln, Neb., has taken the golf car out of the lab and into the field for exhaustive, multi-stage testing under actual "combat" conditions. In just a few months of accelerated, "time-lapse" testing, it has obtained scientific data that accurately charts the wearability of its golf cars over several years of normal use on a golf course. Equally important, the tests have indicated invaluable design improvements which have been engineered into the 1965 line.

"Our program is a new and significant step in the golf car field," says Curtis T. Morris, vp and division manager of Cushman. "The automotive industry has established the validity and importance of road testing. Since the average golf car is subjected to more abuse than an automobile, we regard it an essential responsibility to prove our vehicles' performance under the most trying field conditions."