

Should you go public or private?

The author feels the latter offers the best chance of success and details why

by Lee Blauner

The rapid growth of the number of golfers, along with higher incomes and more leisure time, emphasize the need for more golf courses.

A group of individual investors that has bought land and built a golf course, clubhouse and other country club facilities involving over \$1 million, is then faced with the immediate financial strain of organization and operation.

To meet these heavy financial needs, the group must decide whether a public or private golf operation (assuming the zoning permits either) will give it the best chance for success.

The "private" club, in my opinion, will be the best revenue producer. The private golf club should produce a minimum of \$225,000 gross income yearly. This figure is based on membership of 225 families @ \$750 (\$168,750); locker fees (\$11,250); guest fees; "outside" golf affairs; etc. This gross intake can be improved by more members, higher dues, initiation fees, etc.

In contrast, the "public" golf course will probably take in around \$100,000 yearly, from daily green fees, locker rentals, etc.

I contend that, contrary to popular belief, relatively few public golf courses (run by individuals) fully succeed. These reasons exist:

1. Short golf season (6-8 months) particularly in the northern section of U.S., which limits income. Furthermore, rising operating costs, taxes and mortgage expenses run for 12 months, good weather or bad.

2. Competition from attractive, conveniently located, low-fee, city, county and state public golf courses.

3. Growing desire for a broad, family recreation and social combination offered only by the private golf and country club.

How, then, can a group of owners organize a new, "private" golf club and get it off the ground?

First—File your membership club corporate papers and prepare the by-laws, etc.

Second—Staff the clubhouse and hire a greenkeeper and crew for the golf course. Get a "name" golf pro (PGA) if possible.

Third—Get the membership! The lifeline of a private club is membership of good quality and quantity. This very important matter also concerns existing golf clubs that wish or need to bolster their membership. The approach might vary somewhat.

How to get the members.

1. Fix your membership classes and dues, allowing for new, immature golf course and clubhouse, etc.

2. Prepare membership applications.

3. Prepare brochure and literature about the club to present concisely the main points of its facilities, types of membership, etc.

4. Get the prospects to the club.

(a) Personal following of organizer, owners and golf pro are good sources.

Continued on next page

SAMPLE SOFT SELL

Dear Sir,

There is now an opportunity to apply for membership in XYZ Club -- if you are interested in joining a fine private golf club placed in an uncrowded area and with an attractive dues schedule.

XYZ Club has all the important facilities, and more, of a superior golf and country club:

1. Our clubhouse has been incorporated into the famous Bill Brown's Health Club situated here. It has modern men's and women's lockers and showers; indoor and outdoor dining; cocktail lounge; etc.

2. A 6470 yard championship golf course created by the internationally famous golf architect Dick Wilson. It's a treat and a challenge.

3. Swimming Pool and sun terrace.

4. All weather tennis courts.

5. Regulation indoor squash court.

6. Nearby Marina facilities.

7. Overnight sleeping accommodations.

There are two other features we wish to point out. First, is the Beauty of the Club's setting, nestled besides the Hudson River -- never to be forgotten. Second, interlaced thru and around the golf course and participating in the panoramic view are desirable homesites, available to members.

The Committee of XYZ Club cordially invites you to consider membership. There may be some detail or personal question that interests you. Please feel free to call or visit us. You will enjoy the friendly and informal atmosphere.

Cordially yours,

Leonard Blauner
Chairman, Special Services

Public or private?

Continued from preceding page

(b) Advertise (one or two discreet advertisements) to "get on the map."

(c) Generate a news story with pictures about the club in the local newspapers. New golf clubs are news.

(d) Use commercial lists.

(e) Throw a cocktail party, properly organized.

5. "Sell" memberships. Some helpful tools are:

(a) Soft sell preferably over hard sell. (See illustrated examples).

(b) Emphasize the positive; the golf course, clubhouse facilities, convenient location, beauty of the area, etc.

(c) Offer "charter" memberships. This impressive term simply means first year and not a partial ownership, unless a bond purchase is required.

(d) Remind prospect that membership is limited to 200-250.

Yet, so perverse is this "business" of golf club development, that one of my best successes, fortunately, occurred when I ignored most of these rules.

At Loch Ledge Golf & Country Club in Yorktown Heights, N.Y. in 1967, the opening year, with no advertising, no mail or phone solicitation, no cocktail party and with only 9 of 18 holes of mediocre golf available, we signed up 276 golf and pool family members by June 25th, starting from zero. We played it cool, no chasing or promoting.

Let me emphasize, however, that this was an exception to the rule. Furthermore, part of the success was because, in all fairness, we did lower the membership rates that first year in view of the sub-par conditions.

A rule unto itself in starting a club is public relations. It turns up in many forms, and one can never tell what the results will be. Here are some examples:

At one club, two years old, I learned that it had been unable to get any newspaper coverage. I looked through the files and found a picture of a member in a helicopter hovering 30 feet above a two-some putting out. The golfer putting was a pretty girl who was only concerned with her stroke, and didn't even notice the helicopter,

SAMPLE HARD SELL

The LOCH LEDGE golf course was designed to take advantage of the natural beauty and rare scenery of this unusually beautiful area. In clearing the land, architect left each fairway divided by stately cedars and lofty pines. We believe this to be one of the most outstanding golf courses in the entire metropolitan area. Its 6500 yards of gently rolling fairways, lakes, brooks and waterholes make this 71 par layout a test of skill and accuracy for both the expert and the duffer alike.

The 9th and 18th holes bring you back to our magnificent modern clubhouse which is highlighted by a forty-four by eighty-eight foot dining room. The clubhouse facilities include both men's and ladies' locker rooms with sauna baths, rest rooms and massages rooms.

Our Cocktail Lounge is both spacious and intimate --

Thirty guest rooms have been furnished to satisfy the most demanding clientele. All rooms have oversized twin beds, television and tub showers.

A number of fully equipped seminar or meeting rooms are available for large and small groups.

Needless to say all our facilities are completely air conditioned.

The clubhouse overlooks our most unusual cloverleaf swimming pool, complete with scientifically designed filtering and vacuum systems.

despite the wind and noise it generates.

I subtitled the picture "The Acme of Concentration," and sent it along with a little story, to several local newspapers. Result: The picture and numerous paragraphs appeared on the sports pages, and new members developed quickly.

At another club, the "name" pro golfer was a big factor in public relations. He faithfully greeted prospects in his pro shop on weekends. Prospects, however, couldn't book golf lessons with him unless they were members. The dual arrangement worked out well for club and pro.

All isn't always "peaches and cream." At a new club, a good golfer loved the course and filed an application, with a deposit, for membership. His wife came with him the following week, but just didn't like the club. (She was a non-golfer). As a result, he asked to withdraw. His deposit was quickly refunded. True, we lost a member. But he had no bitter taste, and if asked about the club, he would not hesitate to recommend it.

The members will come in, if you exercise patience and perseverance. The first 100 members are the hardest.

When you have about 100 members, throw an open house "get acquainted" cocktail party for members and guests. It's a great ice-breaker and the additional members will come in quicker.

Then organize a golf committee and a social committee and hire a good chef—and away you go. All your problems aren't solved, but you're off the ground!

Speaking of the chef, I recall one who saved the day at one club. The new owners had taken over an old golf club and tried to get by with the old kitchen equipment. The members and prospects weren't too happy with the food, so the owners ordered new kitchen equipment.

In the interim, I suggested to the chef that on Saturdays and Sundays about 1:30 p.m., the busiest time, he walk across the grille and dining room from the kitchen to my office in full regalia with white coat, white apron, white shoes and high chef's hat. The diners were somewhat awed. This show bridged the gap until the new kitchen equipment arrived. A good chef is not only a necessity, but can be a psychological boost.

Within a year or two, you probably will have the opportunity to sell or lease the golf club, if you

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GROUND'S GROOMER

Keeps large turf areas in tip-top condition



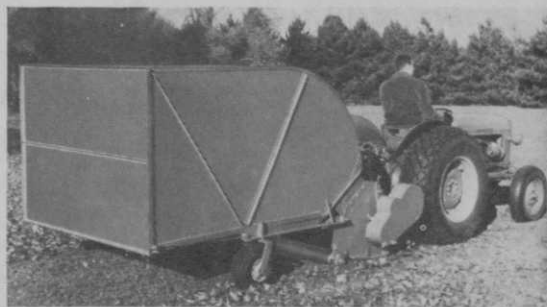
Renovates, removes thatch, sweeps and flail mows in one operation

The Ryan GROUND'S GROOMER attaches to a tractor equipped with a 3-point hitch and PTO. The operator can adjust blade height or depth, as well as empty the 5-cubic-yard hopper without leaving the tractor seat.

The hopper has a double steel door. At the top of the hopper is a wire screen to prevent stones, etc., from being thrown out.

Its 5-foot-swath reel is equipped with four rows of combination mowing and slicing blades. The reel can also be easily changed to all mowing blades, making it a "flail" mower.

Blade cutting ranges are from 2" into the ground for vertical slicing — to 3" above ground for rough mowing. All blades are "free-swinging" and rotate in reverse. This design creates air turbulence which blows leaves, thatch, clippings, etc., into the hopper.



The GROUND'S GROOMER picks up thatch, clippings and debris in a 5-foot path.



The operator easily empties the 5-cubic-yard hopper from the tractor seat.



Write for more information

EQUIPMENT COMPANY

2055 WHITE BEAR AVENUE, ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55109

Manufacturers of the world's finest turf-care equipment

For more information circle number 271 on card

Installing a good drainage system

The first, and most important, part of eliminating surplus water on the course is to determine what the cause is. From there, careful work on main and lateral lines, joints, and catch basins will do the job

by Sherwood A. Moore

Property Manager, Woodway CC, Darien, Conn.

Good management of turf means good management of water. Certainly your drainage system will work if you have good soil structure, if you contour the surface to take care of rains and melting snows, and if your underground construction has been properly engineered.

However, because of the extended dry years prior to 1967, we have tended to neglect the important role drainage plays in turf management. We have been more concerned in applying water, than removing it. In reviewing five previous proceedings of the International Turfgrass Conference I could find only one article devoted to drainage, while there were at least eighteen talks devoted to some aspect of irrigation.

This past season, no doubt, many of you experienced "wet areas" that never existed before or were never a real great problem. And this past year was not a real wet summer, more like a normal one. I'll wager that a great many drainage projects were undertaken or in the planning stage this fall than ever before.

Just how does the drainage system work?

To begin with, you must plan the drainage system well, install it properly, and check it regularly.

Since it is the surplus water which causes trouble, it becomes necessary to remove it. Several factors may cause this excessive water:

1. The soil may be water retaining.
2. The area may be landlocked. (See photo 1).
3. The area may be contained upon an impervious layer of shale or compacted clay.
4. Low areas may receive flooded water from high ground. (See photo 2).
5. The areas may have natural dams or dyke-like barriers due to glacial action.

So an important consideration in attacking a drainage problem is to make every effort to ascertain the cause.

The cause naturally will determine the remedy.

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1. This area is poor for drainage because it is landlocked and has impervious soil.



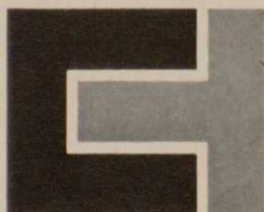
2. In this photograph you can see the low area has received flooded water from high ground.

"The Grass Is Always Greener"

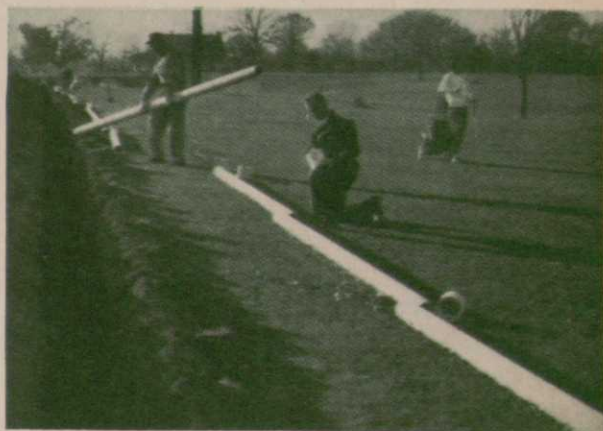


NEW 16-mm FULL COLOR SOUND FILM AVAILABLE FREE FOR CLUB SHOWINGS!

See how your club can "beat the drought." Select dates for showing, fill out and send in coupon. Allow at least two weeks for delivery of film. For further information write to Certain-teed Products Corp., Pipe Division, 540 Pennsylvania Avenue, Fort Washington, Pennsylvania 19034.



CERTAINTEED



Public Information Dept.
Certain-teed Products Corp.
540 Pennsylvania Avenue
Fort Washington, Pennsylvania 19034

Club Name _____

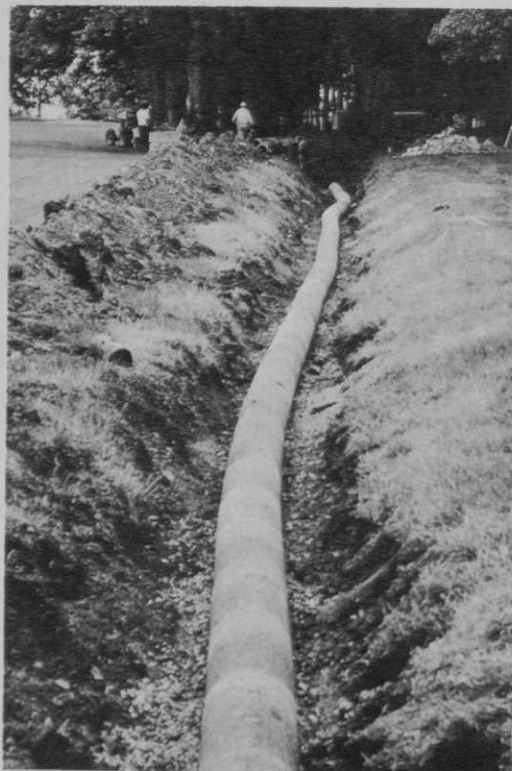
Club Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

My Name _____

Preferred Date _____ Alternates _____

Signed _____



3. Photo at far left is a good example of an open ditch, which is objectionable. 4. Photo beside it shows the same open ditch, graded, with tile installed, and ready for backfill of gravel or bankrun. 5. Picture directly below illustrates an intercepting line on a slope, near a green. 6. Bottom photo is an example of a drain line in clay soil through a wet area.

Drainage system

Continued from page 44

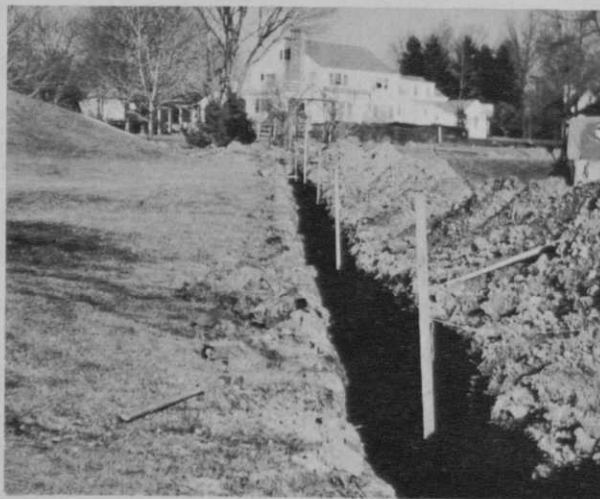
OUTLETS

The key to any drainage system is the outlet. Its selection must be carefully made. A single outlet is highly desirable, even though large tile is necessary to carry the column of water, rather than many small outlets. It is cheaper to construct and care for the single outlet than many small ones.

A good outlet needs protection, and concrete or stone should be used to build proper bulkheads. Should conditions indicate that the outlet is to be very near the ground's surface, a fill of earth mounded over the tile will protect the line from drainage.

If no suitable outlet can be located, the so-called dry wells can be constructed, where excess water is led to drain away in gravel-filled holes or a sump pump can be installed to lift water to a natural outlet.

Once you have found a promising outlet for the source of water to be removed, then the ditch can be dug according to topography of ground, providing sufficient slope is secured. (Open ditches have many disadvantages. They do little towards correcting a general wet condition; will not remove sub-surface water from nearby areas unless deep; they cut up an area removing it from use; make it difficult to operate machinery; necessitate construction of bridges; cause compaction to occur along the edge of the ditch and by bridges; and they need occasional cleaning. See photos 3, 4). Brush and stone ditches have many disadvantages also.



Continued on page 56

Daconil 2787[®]: the **ONE** fungicide

Now you can control many plant disease organisms with the **ONE broad spectrum fungicide.**

Here is the ONE fungicide answer to many plant disease problems. Daconil 2787 from Diamond.

Daconil 2787 non-mercurial fungicide is as hard on disease organisms as it is safe on turf. It's the long-lasting fungicide that reduces frequency of application. And it does its job, every time.

Ornamentals benefit from Daconil 2787, too. It has shown outstanding effectiveness in use on roses, geraniums, chrysanthemums and iris.

And Daconil 2787 can be used effectively with many wettable powder insecticides. Test usage shows no evidence of plant damage or root injury due to soil residue. Protect both turf and ornamentals from many disease organisms with the ONE fungicide, Daconil 2787. For

full color brochure, write Diamond Shamrock Chemical Company, a unit of Diamond Shamrock Corporation, 300 Union Commerce Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio 44115.



Diamond Chemicals



Two great ways to take the trouble out of turf.



The more beautiful your turf, and the more you feed and care for it, the more anxious you are to prevent weeds and disease. Diamond offers some great ways to do just that.

For weeds in fairways use **DACTHAL®** herbicide. It's the most effective crabgrass killer you can buy. Controls many other weeds as well. And it's gentle to turf.

For diseases, get **DACONIL 2787®** — the **ONE** fungicide. Now, using this new product, you can control many turf disease organisms effectively and without damage.

Of course, you'll want facts. That's why we're offering two colorful booklets **FREE** for the asking. Just fill out the coupon and mail — today.



Complete application information on DACTHAL herbicide and DACONIL 2787 fungicide, as well as DACAMINE® broadleaf weed killer.

Daconil 2787®
the
ONE
fungicide
for turf

Beautiful full color folder on the unique advantages of DACONIL 2787 fungicide.

Diamond Shamrock Corporation
Agricultural Chemicals Division
300 Union Commerce Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio 44115

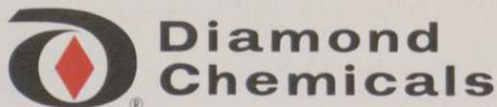
Please send me information on how to take the trouble out of turf.

- ☐ "Healthier, more beautiful turf" featuring three products for weed and disease control.
- ☐ "The ONE fungicide" detailing the advantages of DACONIL 2787.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____



Diamond Shamrock Chemical Company, a unit
of Diamond Shamrock Corporation, Cleveland, Ohio

Prizes can boost sales

One manufacturer knows this and is offering 3 promotions, each with instruction kit, give aways and incentive specials

At least one manufacturer is going all out with a new promotional program designed to boost golf pro shop sales this year.

DiFini Originals and Knitwear is aiming its Pro/Motion 68 program, three separate promotions, a Lucky Locker Sweepstakes, a Mother's Day Prize Tournament, and a Father's Day Prize Tournament, at every pro. The merchandising promotions will offer prizes to the customers while providing complete kits with step-by-step instructions and incentive specials for the pro.

Lucky Locker Sweepstakes, the first contest, involves simply putting a numbered flyer that says you may already be the winner of a valuable prize, in every locker. The member takes the flyer to the pro shop and compares the number with those on prizes that are on display. If the numbers match, the prize is his.

The Mother's Day Prize Tournament can be run also with matching numbers or in conjunction with a Mother's Day Tournament if you have one at your club. Low scores could be the winners of the prizes in the latter case. In order to get the gal customers into your shop however, the contest will state that they have to sign in at your shop, and then come back to get the prize if they win.

The Father's Day Tournament is the same as the Mother's Day promotion, except it's for men only; fathers, husbands, brothers, etc.

DiFini will provide complete outfits for the promotions as prizes. The pro can add to the list of giveaways from his own inventory. The company is also providing outfits for the pro at special discounts and additional outfits at greater discounts based on sales made.

Included in each kit: free shop layout and display service; coordinated hangers with every outfit; specially designed prize tags; wall-type display hooks, and a certificate proclaiming your participation in the promotion.

The kit costs \$10, but is free if your orders total \$1,000 or more.

The promotion was designed by the company's agency, Alden Advertising Agency. □



LUCKY LOCKER SWEEPSTAKES

HERE'S YOUR LUCKY NUMBER

AND YOU MAY ALREADY BE A WINNER!

A drawing already has been held and valuable prizes selected.

They're on display at your Club Pro Shop NOW!

Prizes like nationally-famous *DiFini* Fairway Fashions and a host of others!

IF THE NUMBER SHOWN ABOVE MATCHES THAT ON ANY PRIZE - IT'S YOURS, FREE! THERE'S A WINNER FOR EVERY PRIZE!

COME DOWN TO YOUR PRO SHOP TODAY... NO PURCHASE NECESSARY... NO OBLIGATION!

REMEMBER - YOU MAY ALREADY BE A WINNER! IT'S PART OF

ProMotion 68

...and it's your Pro's way of saying, "Thank You!"

THIS CONTEST CLOSSES (Date) _____

Prizes are awarded by lot, and the drawing on the basis of a random drawing - and are awarded immediately. Please see your Pro Shop and check your name against the list of winners in the kit.



ProMotion 68

FATHER'S DAY PRIZE TOURNAMENT

JUNE 16, 1968

REGISTER HERE

Illustration of golf balls and a golf club.

Retailers, suppliers show pros how to sell

Enthusiasm high on one-day seminar by Ernie Sabayrac Associates and PGA

By Desmond Tolhurst

Senior Editor

The one-day golf shop merchandising seminar put on in New York by Ernie Sabayrac and his suppliers* in cooperation with the national PGA turned out a smash hit. Held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, the recent affair attracted 325 professionals, who came in from as far afield as California, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois. The pros' enthusiasm to attend such business meetings augers well for their becoming fixtures on the golf business calendar.

After Max Elbin, president of the PGA, gave the welcoming address, Vincent Draddy, president of David Crystal, Inc., talked about the supplier's viewpoint. Draddy pointed out that the pro's best interests are also the supplier's best interests. "Never forget," he said, "that the supplier is there to make money for you."

Harold Krensky, chairman of the board, Bloomingdale's, then exhorted the pros to carry the same professionalism they employ on the teaching tee into the golf shop. There is no great mystique about the art of merchandising, he said, but like every other occupation, it must be carried out with enthusiasm to succeed. If you're really interested, you'll quickly learn what is necessary to buy and sell successfully.

The pros' ace in the hole, Krensky maintained, was that their customers—the club members—are already pre-sold on buying in the pro shop. They are a captive audience that, in today's affluent society,

will enable the pro to enjoy many years of good sales growth. In contrast, stores have to spend millions in order to gain the confidence of their clientele.

The topic of "Open-to-buy" was tackled by Edward Martin, vice president, J.P. Maguire & Co. This system enables you to avoid over or under-buying in any department of your shop, plus it helps prevent being out of stock of that fast-selling item.

What you do, Martin said, is get together with your accountant and, by reference to your past years' sales figures, work out upper dollar limits on desired inventory in all departments of your shop, such as clubs, balls, shirts, hats, etc. This guides your buying so that you open the season at the inventory level you think best for all items. During the season, it also serves as a warning to you on when current inventory is low and when it's time to re-order.

Martin also emphasized the importance of establishing and protecting your credit rating. Making a personal friend of a banker who is a member of your club is the ideal way to do this. After all, a club member is in an excellent position to see the business potential of your shop. Just as vital is to keep in contact with your creditors. If, for any reason, you can't pay a bill right now, write a letter explaining the reasons for this.

Ernie Sabayrac covered the topic, "The executive professional." Don't try and do everything yourself, he said. Analyze your job in terms of the functions to be performed, such as lessons, shop management, public relations, golf promotion, committee work. Then, see to it that you have the staff to fulfill them.

For instance, you must have an

accountant, a banker and a staff second to none. You will sell clubs, of course, but you should take the executive approach to apparel. Most pros must have an expert in apparel on the floor of the shop. Selling apparel is not a job for an amateur and, in relation to this, consider getting a mature, experienced gal to handle this for you.

As regards clubs, Ernie pointed out that no member will buy a set of clubs unless he thinks that it will improve his game. Here, the professional approach to selling is vital. Take the member out on the practice tee and bring along a bundle of clubs of different shaft flexes and swingweights. Let the member convince himself that the clubs you prescribe enable him to hit the ball better with less effort.

Selling clubs from the profes-



Ernie Sabayrac was instrumental in making the seminar the success it was.

* Ernie Sabayrac Associates are: Brockton Footwear, Inc. (Foot-Joy and Ben Hogan Shoes), David Crystal, Inc. (Izod and Haymaker), Coberknit Corp., Croston of Boston, Esquire Sportswear Mfg. Corp., Fabergé, Flip-It, Inc., Liebert Cravats and Varela Slacks.