

Tree even though they play most of their golf somewhere else.

One membership category, which might wind up being called "super membership," will cost \$1,000 a year. Gerring's label for it is "charter membership." For that category, the member and every member of his family will get all their range balls free. They will have use of all facilities. It will even cover club storage, locker rental and that member's share of any electric car usage and allow him one free guest each month."

Other membership categories include juniors (ages 21 to 32) and seniors (over 60), each at \$50 annually and \$15 a month for golf; and non-resident memberships at \$25 a year, with activities paid for on a per use basis.

As Gerring sat in his office this spring discussing his plans, the first formal invitation for membership had not yet been extended. Nonetheless, he had a file of projected figures, months in the preparation, which he describes as conservative.

"Based on those," Gerring says, "we expect three-fourths of our course budget to come in through renewals."

That will make each May 1 a very

large day for Holly Tree, particularly as those \$1,000 checks from charter members arrive in the mail.

It will be some time, Gerring discloses, before the club knows how many members it will permit. He is determined to keep the size of the membership comfortable so that the club will not be crowded to the point of jeopardizing the pleasure of those who use it.

QUALITY AT LOW COST

From its inception, Gerring wanted a "27 hole membership" and a 27 hole course. "I have made some studies," says Gerring, "and found out that you're so close to taking care of the same amount of play on 27 holes as you do with 36, that 27 seems to be what we should have. On 27 we can give good service, have a super golf course and a quality staff at inexpensive rates." The third nine holes are included in the original land plans, and they will find a place reserved for them when the times comes for them to be built, with very little addition to the maintenance staff, adds Gerring.

Gerring is certain that even at the club's low prices, his club can "be a class operation," and he is deter-

mined that it will.

"We'll have a guardhouse at the gate and there will be a guard in it," he emphasizes. "Members will be issued stickers for their cars. We will have starting times for Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesdays. We are going to install a telephone from the ninth and 18th tees to the clubhouse grill, so players can order their food while they are playing those holes.

"We will designate a special table for quick service for those making the turn. We'll serve breakfast on Saturdays, on Sundays and on holidays."

Gerring believes food should be served only during daylight hours, based on his belief that most country club dining rooms lose money. Holly Tree, therefore, will not serve at night. Besides, as he points out, "There are so many fine restaurants in Greenville, we don't want to ask our membership to subsidize a dining room. If the members want to rent the club for special occasions, they can arrange for their own caterers and pay only a nominal fee for its use."

REVENUE THROUGH USAGE

Gerring, whose previous responsi-

continued

The indefatigable Gerring discusses the nine and 18 double greens with one of his new assistant professionals.



PLAY *continued*

bilities have included management, has given a lot of thought to which aspects of a club are assets to the member and which are liabilities, and he has fashioned his master plan for Holly Tree accordingly.

The availability of caddies will be one Holly Tree feature, which Gerring plans to encourage by prohibiting the use of pull carts until 3 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays and possibly Wednesdays when the youngsters are not in school. (Electric cars, of course, will be available.) Gerring plans to combine a golf training program with his caddie program, limiting the caddie roster to those who are sons of members or residents of Holly Tree Plantation even if they aren't members.

"I believe our members will like the caddie program. It will give their sons a chance to earn money, while they are learning about golf," he adds.

Gerring holds definite ideas about member policy making. At Holly Tree, "members will participate in the running of the club and in setting policies. That is unusual for a corporate club." Gerring has expanded that idea to avoid the confusion that often can result when committee members serve only one year. "I would like to try having committee men serve three years," he says.

Gerring's home is only 60 miles from Greenville in Union, and his exposure to the ways of South Carolina golf and golfers includes growing up as the son of golf professional Al Gerring. He has seen enough to make him cautious about idle dreaming, but also enough to help him think big.

The package for Holly Tree that he is designing will allow him to realize several of his ambitions. He has for years wanted to take what he describes as a "quality golf program" to the age and income group he visualizes as Holly Tree's membership. And he is convinced that his program can be achieved without sacrificing pro shop sales.

"The people in the income levels and age groups who will be attracted to Holly Tree are the backbone of the game today. They have fine automobiles, fine houses, good

careers and they want the best in golf equipment and conditions." These are the people, comprising a large market, who have sizeable recreation budgets and who could make up a good club membership, but who are not anxious to lay out \$3,000 or more at one time for a club membership. These people are investing in communities, not just in Holly Tree Plantation, but in other areas of the United States, in which the focal point is the golf course.

Another advantage of Gerring's approach to Holly Tree is his emphasis on a prodigious membership, which increases member enthusiasm in tournament play. The more participants for these events, the more, he believes, the members enjoy competing.

"The ultra-rich member is not, it may surprise you, the best revenue producing member for a golf club. He has so many other things he can afford to do—travel to Europe, extended vacations—that he does not spend as much time playing at his home course as the younger people with less money.

"Mr. Skinner's philosophy was revenue through usage, and our information and experience indicates that couples in their 30s and 40s are the ones who will use these facilities the most."

Equipment purchases in Gerring's shop can be made on the installment plan in cases where the price of the purchase would suggest it. But, he interjects, he has done that at other, more expensive clubs.

"We will let a man buy a \$300 set of clubs and sign 10 \$30 tickets. Each month, one of these \$30 tickets will be added to his bill. I might add that I have never yet lost a cent in one of those deals," he relates.

MERCHANDISING TO SERVE THE MEMBER

Turning to the subject of service to members through sales, Gerring will retain many merchandising ideas that have served him well at other courses.

"We will mail information regularly to our members. They like to hear from their pro shop," he says. One holdover from the past, which has been particularly effective, and which Gerring will ob-

viously retain, is his habit of mailing thank-you notes to those members whose purchases totaled more than \$15. The appreciation that this personal touch has created is summed up by one of Gerring's admirers: "I bought a car for \$7,000 and didn't get a thank-you note, so it was nice to get one for buying a few golf gloves."

Another successful practice of long-standing that will be incorporated into Gerring's pro shop merchandising plan is the giving of baker's dozen golf balls when a member buys a dozen balls.

Although Gerring dislikes the salesman image, he realizes the necessity of making his merchandise attractive. "I like to take the role of counselor rather than seller," he maintains. "I make suggestions when I'm asked, but I try to let my assistants actually finish the sales when it's not inconvenient."

Although he avoids the discounteer role, he keeps an eye out "for anything that stays in the shop over three months. Everything seems to depreciate after three months, and I've always believed that one's first loss will be the smallest, so we put things on sale that haven't moved well."

The prestige and integrity of the pro shop, Gerring has long believed, is essential to creating that first-class quality he believes he can achieve. That integrity is compromised, he maintains, when it carries non-golfing items, such as watches or clock radios, solely for profit. Gerring has made a practice of operating attractive and well-stocked pro shops that serve only the golfer and his needs.

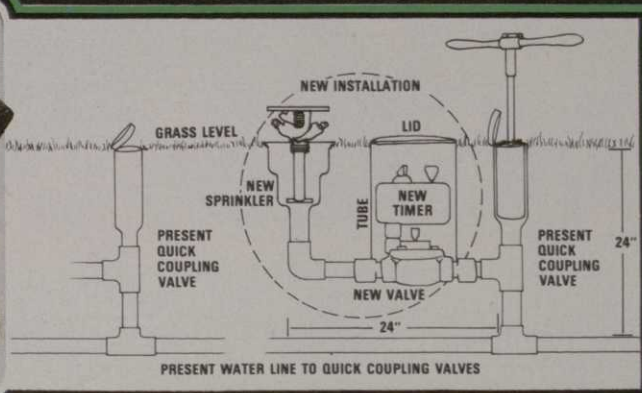
The way Gerring expresses it, the soundest business practices are those that best serve the member and his game.

One of his most successful, involved promotions was his "Swing and Slim" exercise golf lesson classes for women. (This particular service was cited by *GOLFDOM* as one of the 10 best ideas submitted for its "Buy It At the Pro Shop" contest October/November issue, p. 34A.) He retained an instructor to conduct the class in light exercises. After a hour on the exercises, "we worked on their golf swings. We

continued on page 51

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BUILDING UP MEMBERSHIPS



Youth Programs:

INSURANCE FOR THE FUTURE



by STEPHEN W. BYERS

GOLFDOM looks at youth programs and young adult incentives at country clubs across the nation as a way to ensure clubs an involved future membership and as a way to perpetuate the success of the golf industry as a whole

A major concern in the golf industry in recent years has been how to perpetuate a continuing interest in golf and golf club life among juniors and young adults, the absence of which would amount to a death warrant for the future of the industry as we know it today.

The 1967 survey reported by the Wall Street Journal showing a 514,000 increase over 1960 in the number of youths under 18 who play regular golf, has not allayed the fears expressed by golf club officials, feeling the empty spaces on their membership rolls.

The celebrated chasm separating the values of youth of the 60s and 70s from those of their inevitably more conservative parents, involves myriad ramifications bearing on virtually every aspect of life for both generations.

It should not be the purpose of this article to proclaim the virtues of one generation over another. These points of contention have been, are being and will surely continue to be fully aired by spokesmen for each side.

Suffice to say there are fire-works in the chasm, and if clubs are to survive the reverberations they must find some sturdy bridges to gulf these ideological differences.

MOTIVATING YOUNG ADULTS

Just as necessary to the future of golf as juniors and more immediately convertible to full-club member status, are young adults between the ages of 21 and 35.

In the recent past, this age group served as a "hype" to outmoded club doctrine and injected pizzazz, urgency and vitality into sluggish club programs.

This continual resurgence of fresh blood or the lack of it usually determines the survival of any social institution.

The apparent lack of interest expressed by this age group in country club life has already begun to take its toll. For every club like the Scarsdale CC, N.Y., which boasts a surfeit of eager membership applicants, there are three clubs struggling for survival in the wake of higher property taxes, runaway inflation and the specter of a dangerously depleted membership

as the *coup de grace*.

Amazingly, GOLFDOM's poll on how clubs are bearing up under the above triple threat, showed that clubs, which were reticent about offering incentives to young adults in the form of dues and initiation fee breaks, were invariably the clubs in the worst financial shape, and judging from the age of their average member, future improvement appears a slim hope in the absence of policy reform.

Most of their spokesmen felt offering less than full paying memberships was a demeaning (to the club) "ploy," tantamount to door-to-door solicitation, or they were not appraised of or not convinced of the success of such "ploys" at many other clubs. Some of them seemed to be relying on the passage of time to cure their sagging membership problems.

The most successful clubs were those that offered special rates to members under 35 and presented the widest variety of membership activities.

The Lakewood CC, Denver, found it could add 50 new members a year if needed, with a "special membership plan," which provides that at 21 years of age, a young member is eligible for club membership for a fee of \$800. He is charged another \$800 at 26 and again at 31. On his 39th birthday he pays \$2,000, making the total of his four payments \$4,400, which is the amount of the bond required for normal full membership.

Normal monthly dues are \$50, but under the "special membership" this fee is graduated also, starting at \$15 when the member is 21 years old and so on until he reaches age 39.

Under this plan the benefits of full membership are afforded the "special member" at age 21 even though he pays less than a quarter of the bond and monthly fee as a full club member.

The Pinehurst CC, Denver, under the supervision of Laurice T. (Bud) Hall, offers a variety of memberships ranging from a \$16 a month social membership to the \$38.50 a month regular membership fee, with a refundable \$1,500 initiation fee.

"Pinehurst is not just a social club with athletic facilities," says Hall, "nor are we just in the food and beverage business. We are in the people business and enriching the lives of our members, employees and our community is our goal. People and pride are the important ingredients."

The extras offered at Pinehurst besides the regular golf and tennis tournaments, swimming meets, dinner-dances, bridge parties and fashion shows, which stimulate the interest of young adults, include a boating academy periodically coached by marine experts, a fishing academy, scuba diving lessons, charm classes for young girls, swimming and tennis classes taught by physical education instructors, teen dances, hairstyling and wig fashion shows, travelog adventure film series, art classes, culinary classes (running double sessions because of demand), water skiing classes, a mental cybernetics lecture series, a great decisions discussion paneled by four university of Minnesota professors, and club sponsored trips to the Orient and Africa.

SUCCESS: AT LEAST AN INDICATOR

The manifold avenues for channeling member interest at Pinehurst are stupefying to most club managers and impossible to completely duplicate unless the club enjoys the 60,000-square feet of roofed floor space, as does Pinehurst.

But many Pinehurst programs are possible for any club, and as Hall is a former president of the Club Managers Assn. of America many managers feel his would not be a bad lead to follow.

MOTIVATING JUNIORS

Unanimity of understanding between juniors and their seniors is a very tall order and certainly too much to hope for, but failing that, a few people in the golf industry have dedicated themselves to communicating to young people what is good in the game of golf.

One such man is Frank Emmet, director, Junior Golfers, of Wash-

continued on page 27

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YOUTH from page 25

ington, D.C. Emmet realized 46 years ago that mere coexistence with youth in the hope that the passage of time will supply the impetus for golf enthusiasm was not enough. He knew that simply building a short link course for juniors separate from the adult course and saying "go play" was not the kind of motivation needed to satiate the golf club membership rolls of the future.

COMPETITION: A KEY TO ENTHUSIASM

Since 1927, Emmet has worked to encourage high school golf programs and the establishment of national and international golf tournaments. The Williams Cup Tournament that he worked to establish 10 years ago, in which eight teams of young American and Canadian golfers compete, is one of many successful Emmet efforts to motivate young people, through competition, to embrace golf as a life's profession and avocation.

Emmet stresses that, though much can be accomplished in high school and municipal golf programs, country clubs could provide a great service to the industry by developing and vigorously supporting junior golf programs, clinics and summer golf camps.

Emmet's efforts to promote the joys of golf and golf club life have not been singular. More recently, the names of Mike Hebron, coordinator for the Met PGA Junior Championships and head professional of the Smithtown Landing GC and Jimmy Jackson, head professional at New York's oldest municipal golf course, Van Cortlandt Park, have been added to the growing list of professionals "getting involved."

Before Hebron was approached three years ago to be junior chairman of the Met PGA, the Met was the only district that didn't sponsor a junior championship golf tournament. Now they do. Professionals donate prizes and take ads in a Junior Journal, which lists tournament winners and provides some written golf lessons. The Chemical Bank in New York City was persuaded to provide scholar-

ships to juniors suffering from financial hardships and the YMCA donates trophies along with other civic-minded municipal groups.

Hebron says, "Junior tournaments are my way of giving back to golf what it has given me. Junior golfers formerly came from the caddie ranks, but with the advent of golf cars and the movement of golf courses to the more remote suburbs, the caddie system can no longer be counted on to supply young golfers. There were formerly many municipal and private courses located in the city or on its near periphery that young caddies could get to on foot or with a short bus ride. This distance problem, combined with the advent of the golf car and the fact that suburban kids that live near courses don't need the money as badly as city kids, has cut into the caddie system. It's just a lot tougher to keep kids interested in golf without tournaments."

Hebron's golf clinics are held every Saturday at 1 p.m. for ages 6 to 14. The size of the class, he says, determines the number of instructors. He doesn't recommend private lessons for the young kids, even if they can afford them, because he feels golf is more fun for them when they are surrounded by their peers.

This is a tip that country clubs should note, because the fun in playing golf is surely the prime motivation for playing it. With older children or kids who have developed expertise at the game, private lessons are more applicable, because the motivation is more intrinsic and honing their game to a fine edge becomes a more personal experience.

Hebron gives the learning of etiquette and safety an equal priority with learning expertise in his lessons, stating that "consideration for rules on the part of juniors is the biggest factor in getting adults interested in playing golf with the young people."

He emphasizes the advantage of a club having a short nine-hole course on which the very young and beginners can make mistakes without curtailing the play and enjoyment of adults on the main course. But he does not feel that making a special place for youth to

(continued on page 56)

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7/73 GOLFDOM MAGAZINE 27

COUNTRY CLUB LIFE FOR EVERYONE

by JERRY CLAUSSEN

Through a great variety of economical plans, Heather Ridge CC is putting the "good life" within the reach of more people—and profiting from it

Heather Ridge as a "new" image of country club has caused a stir in Denver. Says Heather Ridge golf professional Dick Hartman, "Lots of people are moving here or joining the club who never played golf before. Now they can and at a cost they never thought they could afford. It's the atmosphere they have always wanted."

A golf member, pausing between nines on a frequent midweek round with friends, enthuses, "I spend more time on the golf course than I do in the office and once in a while make more money here, too."

As of last May, the club had signed up about 2,000 members (1,400 non-resident). That included about 300 non-resident golf and 400 non-resident tennis members. The goal is 1,500 golf and 750 tennis.

Residents pay \$12 a year for club membership, plus golf and tennis fees, when they use those facilities. Heather Ridge has four non-resident membership categories. As the living units fill up, non-residents will be dropped, and early joiners will have the longest option.

The choices for non-residents are: golf-tennis-social, \$300 for one adult or a couple, plus \$50 per child under 21 years; golf-social only, \$200 plus \$50 per child; tennis-social, same as golf; social only \$25 plus \$30 annual dues, no extra for children. Annual fees do not include use fees for tennis and golf. Those charges are the same for everyone.

A "FUN COURSE"

The golf course itself is one of the strongest of Heather Ridge's many drawing cards and is different than anything else in Denver. All 27 holes were available for play this year and golfers loved it.

The main 18, playing out of the clubhouse, is a short hazard filled par 70. Length is just 5,879 yards for men from the middle tees and is 5,585 yards for women.

It covers only 93 acres, while winding through apartment buildings and townhouses, over and around five lakes and 50 traps. It starts with a par-three of 190 yards, finishes with a narrow 318-yard par four, has four other par fours under 320 yards and two par fives. Greens are large and difficult to read.

Denver Post golf writer Ralph Moore, who briefly held the back nine course record of 37 on opening day, July 4, 1972, reported the course "treats the player's ego much like the attention a pampered lap dog receives."

His counterpart at the Rocky Mountain News, Dave Nelson, views it as "a fun course which will present a distinct challenge without the demoralizing dimension of length."

Both the front nine of the 18 and the adjoining Heather Gardens executive nine (par 32, 2,220 yards), officially opened Memorial Day this year. The short nine, operating from a separate clubhouse, covers 42 acres of the rolling, sandy terrain overlooking Denver. It is, incidentally, Denver's first executive length course.

VARIED GOLF PROGRAM

The golf program under Hartman offers something for everyone.

For tournament play and a computerized handicap, men may join the Men's Golf Assn. for \$20; women pay \$16 for their association.

Men are grouped into three handicap classes (0 to 10, 11 to 17 and 18 and over). Tournaments go on every Saturday and Sunday. In one recent month, events included three point pars, an 18-hole medal gross and net and a best 18 of 36 net over one three-day weekend. The women are divided between nine-hole and 18-hole players, four handicap groups and compete Tuesdays and Fridays.

Hartman also had extensive group lessons scheduled this year for beginners. Men's and women's



classes, up to 10 at a time, worked on fundamentals in series of five one hour sessions. The fee was \$15 apiece.

The always smiling professional takes a great interest in juniors, too. He conducted two junior lesson series to open the season. One offered six one hour lessons plus six tournaments on Saturday afternoons for \$15. The other consisted of eight half-hour lessons, no tournaments, for \$10. Age groups were 10 to 12, 13 to 15 and 16 to 17.

His individual lessons are priced \$6 per half-hour for members, \$7 for non-members. The practice tee is large and located directly in front of the pro shop next to the number 10 tee.

All golfers, resident, non-resident members or guests, pay green fees of \$1.75 for nine holes on weekdays, \$2.50 weekends and holidays, \$3.50 for 18 holes on weekdays, and \$5 on weekends or holidays.

A member may bring an unlimited number of guests; but each guest may be invited only twice a month. Young people may play any time, the only restriction is that those under 13 years must be accompanied by an adult. Otherwise, there are no time blocks reserved just for men or just for women, except tournaments. Reservations are encouraged by phone before 4 p.m. the day before.

Hartman holds a standard PGA-sanctioned contract with Environmental Developers, Inc., owners of Heather Ridge. He runs the pro shop and club storage, which has room for only 125 bags, rent free. He gets a percentage of the fees from the 45-car electric fleet, all driving range and lessons income and profit from sales in the pro shop.

ACTIVITIES NON-STOP

The clubhouse at Heather Ridge is a modern, two story brick-and-glass structure of 25,000 square feet. The dining room is upstairs and has a capacity of about 225, lounge seating 70, kitchen and offices.



Pro Dick Hartman, above, practices in front of the pro shop. The entrance, below, of this "new image" of country club.

Downstairs are the swimming pool, saunas, locker rooms and golf shop.

Activities are coordinated by General Manager James Gatewood; the new Heather Gardens clubhouse has its own general manager, Wayne Bishop. They both report to EPI Vice President Norman Sheldon.

Food and beverage operations are leased out to a concessionaire. Club manager is Jack Fishburn, formerly at Lakewood (Colo.) CC. He and Chev Joseph Thurston came from Lakewood to Heather Ridge when the clubhouse opened in November, 1971.

Food service for members and their guests is available from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5:30 to 10 p.m., everyday except Monday. Volume runs about 2,000 covers a week, Fishburn reports. Reservations are requested. There is no monthly minimum use charge.

Sandwiches and à la carte items are available in the afternoon. The menu offers variety—30 selections for lunch alone. Wednesday is buffet night, with themes such as Polynesian Nite and Fiesta Nite. Sunday brunch is served 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. There is live music and dancing in the dining room on Friday and Saturday nights, and nightly entertainment in the lounge.

The club does not solicit outside party business. Members may arrange for private events Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights or weekend mornings or afternoons. Minimum size of such an event is set at 100 persons.

All tabs must be paid in cash, by personal check or through one of three specified credit cards. No signing for later billing is allowed.

Along with golf, tennis is a major attraction to a growing membership. Near the clubhouse is a complex of 10 lighted outdoor courts surrounding a large

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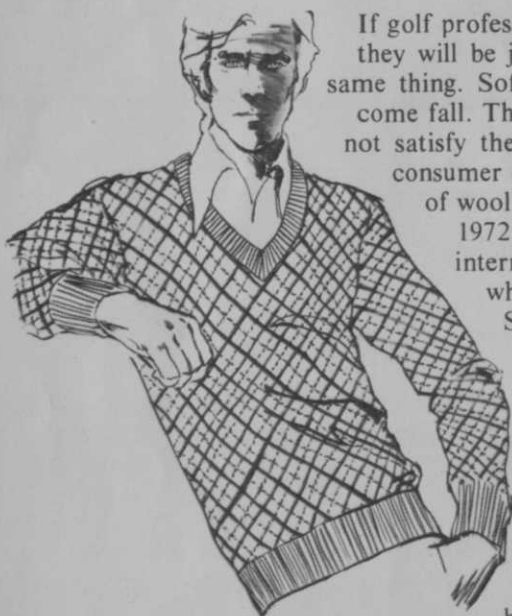


pro's par

by JEAN CONLON

MORE ON FALL FASHIONS . . . GOLFDOM's preseason shopping last month for fall fashion items in the golf industry went on and on. Our editors did not know where to start looking since there are so many exciting designs now being produced for pro shop distribution this fall. Then, once out in the 7th Avenue market, we did not know where to stop, the never-ending fashion manufacturers always ready with just "one more." So we've decided to carry the Pro's Par of last month over into this month, once again previewing for the golf professionals the active sports-wear fashions being shown now in showrooms for fall delivery to pro shops.

ALL ILLUSTRATIONS BY
VIRGINIA TERLEMEZIAN



If golf professionals begin to complain about the escalating prices of golfwear, they will be joining the thousands of department store buyers shocked by the same thing. Softgood prices have risen, noticeably so, and will be rising again come fall. The reason, according to the Wool Bureau is basic: the supply cannot satisfy the demand, especially this winter when there will be an expected consumer demand for natural fibers, primarily wool. The mill consumption of wool has had a 4 per cent increase all over the world between 1971 and 1972. But, unfortunately, production has declined 2 per cent. Actually, international mill production has been declining since 1969, which is why fashion prices today are up so sharply. Wool costs in the United States have increased because of both the decline in production and the dollar devaluation. Such financial insecurity has caused the price of natural fibers to escalate from supplier to mill, from mill to manufacturer, from manufacturer to consumer. Within these guidelines, costs will continue to grow, making natural fibers infinitely more valuable, as they become far more in demand. Although consumer buying of natural fibers appears to be increasing from every market indication, pro shop buyers can serve their customers by stocking softgood items made with man-made fibers. The wholesale buyer will then be able to keep the ultimate retail price reasonable. A perfect ex-

ample of "reasonable pricing" is the IZOD, LTD., sweater, shown here, which retails for \$20. It is made of 100 per cent acrylic and is an easy care item for the active sportsman. Merely throw the soiled sweater in a washing machine and tumble dry. It will retain its color, shape and style. Maybe that's the answer: going back to synthetics to keep wholesale and retail shopping within budget reason. . . .

FOOT-JOY is calling a match play! They have come up with some very snappy belts, shown here, to be a color coordinated accessory matched up with the famous Foot-Joy golf shoes. The designers have combined patent and leather into one handsomely tailored look. The color combinations available: brown patent, blue patent and washable leather; black patent, gray patent and white washable leather; blue patent, red patent and white washable leather; white patent and white washable leather; brown patent, beige patent, beige patent and white washable leather. All belts are

packaged singly in even sizes 32, 34, 36, 38, 42 and 44. Each has a suggested retail of \$20. (The professional, however, may want to cash in on a buyers bargain: the wholesale price per belt for orders under six units is \$11 each, but the price drops \$1 a belt on orders for more than six belts.)

