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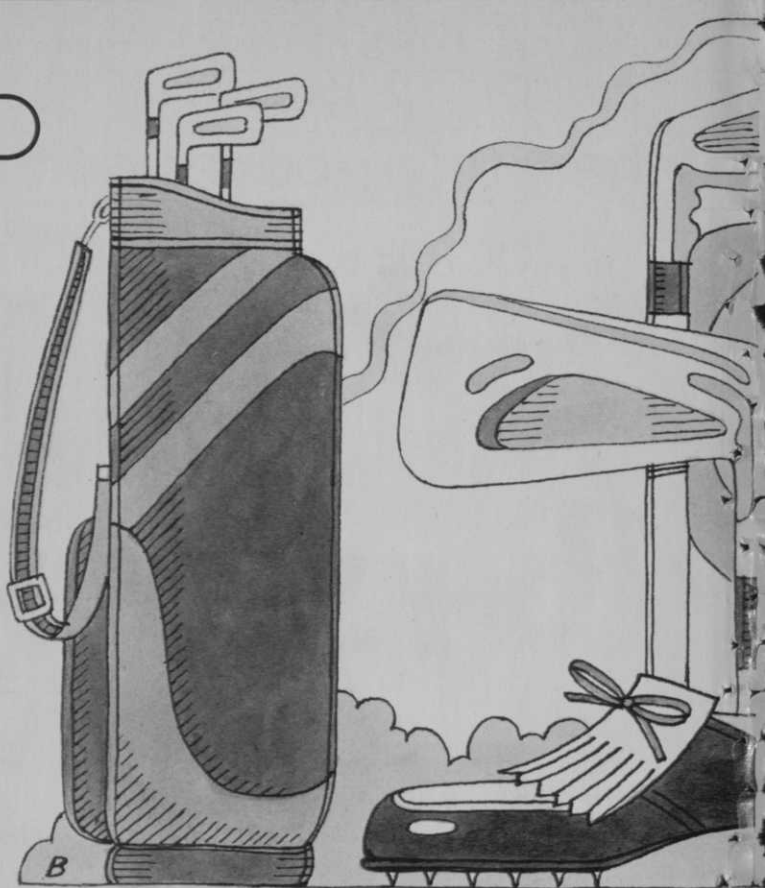
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PRO SHOP CANVASS: WHAT'S IN STOCK FOR 1973?

Equipment innovations lead professionals across the nation to predict a boom year in '73. Doubleknits dominate soft good sales; the classic look coming on strong



WEST

by DON CURLEE

SAN FRANCISCO—Golf professionals in Northern California are investing in investment casting, the current rage in iron manufacturing, and expecting it to build even greater interest in clubs in 1973 and greater sales and profits for them. As one professional says, "Any manufacturer who comes out with a funny looking iron this year can't miss."

They also expect to continue riding the wave of buying interest driven by the winds of change in ball manufacture—new dimple shapes and patterns, new covers and new construction.

In soft goods the agreement is not as complete, but generally they are planning to increase their stocks, banking on a trend toward a more classic look, in men's golf attire, continued colorful touches for both men and women and a greater emphasis on color coordination between tops and bottoms of golf outfits.

Although every professional has his favorite line of higher-priced golf shoes, not one failed to mention the popularity of the waterproof shoe and its significance in his

merchandising plans for 1973. Because as one says, "They make a heck of a second pair of shoes," the bone-drys are not considered threats to the sale of traditionally higher-priced footwear.

Only in the area of golf bags do professionals fail to express enthusiasm, although the replacement of stays with a liner by a couple of manufacturers was mentioned as a notable sales point.

The professional at one large private club in San Francisco says that he expects greater sales because of the emphasis on heel-to-toe balance and other features in the parade of irons with the new-old look.

He is particularly impressed with the potential of the soft goods market and is just beginning a golf shop remodeling that will result in 400-square feet of additional space. Part of it will be a separate department for women's wear, distinguished from the rest of the shop by a step up and its own bright decor.

The women are not the only ones on a pedestal at his club, however, for he will offer street

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CENTRAL

by JOE DOAN

CHICAGO—Professionals here are looking ahead to the 1973 season as potentially the best many have ever experienced, but still they are not doing it with what can be called freewheeling confidence. All the favorable ingredients for a boom year are present—rising consumer spending, a definite upturn in the general economic picture, as of early January a surging stock market, a relaxed and euphoric feeling among members and players—but once flooded out, as so many professionals were in 1972, everything that is said about the outlook for the new year is prefaced with allusions to the weather.

No really radical changes in golfwear styles are in evidence for the new season. Women's pants suits and culottes will continue as top sellers; it is expected that shorts may make a fairly substantial comeback; matching sweaters and tops, casual evening wear and similar items will sell as well or better than they have in the past. Chicago area professionals, it seems, are either very strong on women's sportswear or no more



EAST

by STEPHEN W. BYERS

NEW YORK—Recent changes in style and design of golf equipment have Eastern golf club professionals looking for bumper sales in '73'.

Even professionals with conservative memberships voiced great expectations on such subjects as investment casting, balls with new patterns and styles and tough new Surlyn covers, and the rising momentum in women's soft goods sales is not far from the tips of their tongues.

There are few exceptions to the general feeling among professionals that the new investment casted clubs are better for the average to high handicap player, and even professionals who don't agree are screaming that they can't keep them in stock.

One professional stressed that the new heel-to-toe weighted irons provided him with an incredible selling lever. He says, "To be able to show a member how I can tailor the weight on the clubhead to offset the affect of his hitting the ball with the heel or toe of the club has been a big advantage."

"Selling points have never been

so clear cut for me before," was the way another Mid-Atlantic professional summed up his enthusiasm for the new clubs, "but most of them are going south. I can't buy enough to really take advantage of the boom."

Some professionals attribute the cast head boom to the extensive manufacturers' advertising, which has educated the golfer better than ever before on the significance of clubhead weight distribution. One professional quips "They've almost made the phrase 'the sweet spot' a household expression."

A professional near Miami Beach feels the advertising, not only for golf clubs but for balls, has made golfers more quality conscious. He says, "Everybody seems to be going to the cast head. Members who used to buy clubs at three-year intervals now buy in two, and I sold three new sets of clubs this year to guys who just bought new clubs last year."

Many professionals are predicating their high hopes for golf ball sales on more than straight conjecture. They say they are even having good luck in

than casual about it. There apparently is no middle ground. With very few exceptions, nobody made any money on women's soft goods in 1972 and a few professionals say they took a bad beating on it. Generally, professionals who employ a woman to specialize in selling to women are quite enthusiastic about the profit potential in women's attire. But a large percentage maintain that the volume isn't there to justify hiring a woman to handle this end of the business.

More than one professional contends that women's golf attire is priced too high. Most women will pay from \$15 to \$20 for an outfit to wear while playing, but regardless of style or label, they won't go twice this high for playing apparel. At clubs where there are courts, tennis is siphoning off golf players, especially among the younger women. And, as more than one pro points out, women haven't yet forgotten the late recession. They aren't spending as freely as they did five years ago. Or, at least, they weren't in 1972.

On the men's side, doubleknits

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The new challenger



Sam Adams



Dave Collingwood



Shelley Hamlin



Dick Hendrickson



Bunky Henry



Mary Dwyer Horner



Mike Kallam



Ben Kern



Dwight Nevil



Robert Nichols



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Ben Hogan

WEST

wear and shoes for men, stocking blazers, sports coats and slacks for the first time.

For both street and course wear he sees men returning to a preference for solid colors, usually in shirts or slacks and sometimes in both. And he expects doubleknits to dominate the market. Because bermudas and pants are not allowed on the course, most of the women members will be buying culottes, perhaps slightly longer than the past year or two, with bright, but well-coordinated colors setting the pace.

A professional at a large inland public course expects irons to continue their strong sales performance, along with "any of the woods with wide sweet spots."

In balls he is expecting outstanding golfer interest in the new designs.

He also expects a preference for culottes among his women players, with bright colors, but closer coordination, and slightly longer hemlines. In men's wear he feels professionals are suffering from too much emphasis on "fancy tops and bottoms." Now, he predicts a return to solid colors for at least one half of the outfit.

Although he sees knits taking 90 per cent of the clothing sales, he plans to stock some cottons for the 100-degree plus summers.

At one of Northern California's resort-type courses, the professional expects the lost-wax casted clubs to attract most of the sales.

In apparel he expects the polyesters to continue to rule, with polyester-rayon blends and polyester-wool blends making new appeals. He sees no significant style changes, but a slight reversion to more conservative tastes. In other words, "Men's clothing will look more like men's clothing," he says.

He doesn't see much change in the order of the leaders in ball sales, but acknowledges the boost resulting from the new patterns, covers and construction.

Waterproof shoes account for 90 per cent of his shoe sales, and he finds little market for either men's or women's shoes in the \$50 range. Early morning dew and heavy irri-

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CENTRAL

haven't begun to diminish in appeal and popularity and will again carry the shop from the soft goods merchandising standpoint. Golfers who tend to be stout appreciate the wider waistband on the slacks. Another firm is bringing out a cotton and rayon slack that has great promise, and for hot, summer wear, the cotton shirt is going to be in great demand.

Generally, professionals don't foresee that their 1973 sales of men's wear will be much better than it was in 1972. Rain may have kept a lot of players off the course last year, but it didn't seriously curtail men's sales. In many cases, rainwear and umbrellas made up for discrepancies in the sales of slacks and shirts.

The big changes for 1972 are not so much in soft goods as in playing equipment. The latter is what the professionals are talking about. In many cases, their enthusiasm is restrained.

A quote concerning the new clubs from one professional reflects the tenor of many: "The idea of shifting the weight from the heel to the toe or redistributing it along the perimeter of the clubhead undoubtedly is good," he says. "So is opening up the sweet spot and, as one company is doing, reinforcing the back of the irons with a tungsten disk. We've discussed the changes among ourselves and most of us agree that the new clubhead should help the high handicap player. Some companies are also doing something about trying to counter the torque in the shaft. That's not going to hurt anyone. But we all agree that it still depends on how the player swings the club."

Continuing, this pro says, "From a sales standpoint, you have to look at it realistically. I sell X number of clubs a year, and for the 12 years I've been a head professional, my club sales have run in two-year cycles. I had a good year in 1972 and expect to have another in '73. When new club styles come out, some of my members switch brands because they want to try the new. There's no doubt they have been influenced by the advertising or what they've heard from oth-

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EAST

determining which brands will be the biggest sellers in '73 by sending out advanced preference request cards to be filled out by members who want personalized balls.

A majority of professionals interviewed indicated strong member preference for the new balls with the seemingly indestructible Surlyn cover. This is not to say there were no differences of opinion among pros about which ball is superior. One swears by the wound centers, another is partial to solid centers, as long as there is still enough compression to get the ball airborne quickly—and so it goes, but about one point there is unanimity: Members are not as bargain conscious in buying balls as last year. Quality is a must and cheap balls that smile after 18 holes are out. This trend, say several professionals, should carry even more weight in '73 because of heavy consumer advertising.

Culottes and doubleknits are still the big noise in the soft goods department, with little style changes evidenced, other than an ever-so-slightly lower hemline.

Colors remain relentlessly bright, manifold and daring, with color coordinated prints and checks, with red, white and blue as the preference leaders.

One professional says he has noticed a trend toward a general active sportswear look as opposed to a strict golf look. This had been exploited in the Long Island area with great success. Several astute professionals expanded their women's soft goods inventory by 50 per cent, stocking many non-golfing items, and sold store merchandise at discount prices to members. Others noticed that women were buying, in the pro shop, clothes they wear on the tennis court, such as freedom giving culottes, and were shying away from the more restrictive pants, both on the tennis court and golf course.

Another professional found he was swamped with member requests for the tic-tac-toe embroidered shirts and pants in polyester and cotton lyle.

In the South, the cotton lyle shirts

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TURF MATERIALS: **ARE YOU BUYING**

A review of the United States Weather Bureau records reveals that most of the cool humid and warm humid climatic regions of the United States experienced precipitation levels well above the long term averages. The large scale flooding and localized standing water in depressional areas during 1972 are now history, but a number of hidden problems remain to be faced. The excessively wet soil conditions have created a number of problems that golf course officials and superintendents must take into consideration in planning their 1973 maintenance program.

SOIL COMPACTION

Excessively wet soil conditions during 1972 have most probably resulted in greater soil compaction under turfs than would normally be experienced during a growing season. Wet soils approaching field capacity are more prone to compaction than drier soils. Also, clay soils are more prone to compaction than coarser textured soils, such as sands. This

means that deep soil cultivation, in the form of coring or slicing, will have to be increased during 1973. Preferably this should be accomplished during spring. Also, the golf course maintenance budget should be adjusted upward to cover the added costs of these cultivation operations. Greater problems can be anticipated in maintaining adequate turfgrass quality and density during the 1973 midsummer stress period, if the increased soil compaction is not corrected.

WINTER DISEASES

Wet soil conditions entering the winter dormancy period usually favor increased disease development on turfs. Spring dead spot on bermudagrass turfs is frequently a greater problem under wet soil conditions.

The two snow mold diseases, *Typhula* blight and *Fusarium* patch, are also enhanced by wet soil conditions during winter periods when the soil is not frozen. This increased winter disease activity means that snow mold fungicide applica-

tion rates, which would normally be effective under drier conditions, may fail to give adequate control. Thus, golf courses that attempted to economize by using marginally low fungicide rates may suffer above-normal damage from snow mold diseases.

LOW TEMPERATURE KILL

Winter injury caused by direct low temperature kill may be greater during the 1972-1973 winter. The bermudagrasses and annual bluegrass are particularly prone to this type of kill. Standing water at the soil surface, which increases the water content in the turfgrass tissues, particularly the crowns, will greatly increase the proneness to direct low temperature kill. If the wet soil conditions persist throughout the winter period, and the proper combination of low temperatures and frequent freezing and thawing occur, a significant increase in golf course turf damage caused by low temperature kill can be expected.

Not much can be done at this time to minimize

this problem. Golf courses that have invested in improving their drainage systems, in the form of proper surface contours and the installation of tile drains, French drains and catch basins, will most probably have less winter injury problems should winter low temperature kill occur.

RESTRICTED ROOTING

The excessively wet conditions during the 1972 growing season resulted in many golf course turfs entering the winter dormancy period with a drastically reduced root system. This means that the over-all health and vigor of the turf is below the desired standard. If the winter season has been characterized by a lack of snow cover plus increased atmospheric desiccation and soil drought, the turf will also be more prone to injury from winter desiccation. Golf course personnel should be alert to this possibility and should initiate procedures to minimize the degree of winter moisture stress should this condition develop.