

When it comes to new nine-gang mowers, here's where we stand.

Meet Bob Snider, of Moon Equipment Company, the Jacobsen Distributor in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was one of the first customers for the big news in mowing tractors from Jacobsen.

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GOLFDOM

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TIMES MIRROR A PUBLICATION IN THE TIMES MIRROR COMPANY'S FAMILY OF SPECIAL INTEREST MAGAZINES

SLOW PLAY STOPS PROFITS slow play is "costing" golf courses, and some refuse to tolerate it/by don curlee	16
THE JAPANESE IN THE U.S. GOLF MARKET: WHERE ARE THEY NOW AND WHERE ARE THEY GOING? american golf manufacturers express realistic attitudes in the face of a possible japanese "invasion" into their market place/by douglas lutz	21
RETAILER OR TEACHER: WHICH IS THE PRO'S PRIMARY ROLE? although lesson income is contributing less to pro revenue compared to merchandise sales, there still remain two schools of thought on the importance of each function/by joe doan	28
THE PROFIT PRO SHOP /by chuck cumming	33
GETTING PROFESSIONALS FOR THE PROFESSIONALS in an interview with golf-dom, duff lawrence, secretary of the northern ohio section, explains why his section hired a management firm to run its activities	35
THE UNDEFINED ROLE OF ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT the quality of tomorrow's golf courses depends on properly trained assistants. this responsibility rests squarely with today's superintendent and club officials/by warren bidwell	39
WHAT ONE SUPERINTENDENT CAN DO the lyons den gc embodies scores of valuable ideas for superintendents and club administrators/by jerry a. olson	43
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LAWS: IS YOUR CLUB EXEMPT? clubs that are thinking about giving up their non-profit status should consider the ramifications of this move—not the least of which are the equal opportunity statutes/by jack janetatos	49
THE HIGH COST OF GOLFING golf has always been an expensive sport. but country clubs are pricing their memberships out of reach of younger members, thereby creating a showdown in the near future/by jerry claussen	53

SPECIAL PRO SECTION

THE PROFESSIONAL APPROACH /by patrick d. williams	32G
HOW TO BEAT THE COMPETITION WITHOUT SLASHING PROFITS craig shankland tells how the multiple sales technique helps him combat competition without drastically reducing his profit margin/by stephen w. byers	32H
DRESSING UP FATHER or how to turn a sparrow into a peacock	32K
THE PATH TO PROFITS allotting selling space and plotting traffic patterns, based on customer buying habits, is as important as the merchandise you stock/by dick farley and harry obitz	32L

DEPARTMENTS

COMING EVENTS	36	CLASSIFIED	63
NEW PRODUCTS	55	ADVERTISER'S INDEX	64
NEWS OF THE INDUSTRY	57		

VIEWPOINTS

SWINGING AROUND GOLF /by herb graffis	6
ACCENT ON MANAGEMENT /by ken emerson	11
TURFGRASS RESEARCH REVIEW /by dr. james b. beard	12
GRAU'S ANSWERS TO TURF QUESTIONS /by fred v. grau	15

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WHY A UNIFORM BALL?

The *United States Golf Assn.* by returning to all match play for the amateur champion returns golf to the people from the television networks. So there won't be millions watching a TV program of the National Amateur. Those millions will be playing golf, which primarily is a participant's game, not another exercise in sitting on the fanny.

The USGA's Green Section has been more effective than any other sports organization in arousing the nation to the urgent need of protecting natural beauty.

Now, with the complex problem of trying to agree with the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews on the specifications for a worldwide golf ball, the USGA is at the potentially most dangerous period in its history.

As one of the few who has observed for many years USGA's nervous efforts to control the distance of the golf ball, I continue to wonder why. That fear of Nicklaus, Palmer and a few others hitting the ball too long for my course is something I survived when Jimmy Thomas was the longest hitter. Those who hit the ball too long for courses I've paid to play can stay off. If they want to play a different game than my kind, okay with me. I am representative of at least 90 per cent of the world's golfers and I've yet to see a ball I could hit too far.

The unfortunate previous experience of the USGA in legislating a new ball—the short-lived “balloon ball”—was the result of one of its older officials aging past the stage where he could out-hit opponents. He still could finesse the approaches. He was an honorable and persuasive man. He cost American golf millions and didn't do it any

good by his ball obsession.

Now I am afraid the USGA and R&A in their striving for a uniform worldwide golf ball aren't going to do a bit of good for anybody except the Japanese ball makers.

For them the change of specifications will virtually destroy the golf ball market for American and British ball makers.

And who would the proposed new ball help to enjoy golf more?

Not me or the vast majority of other golfers the world around.

So why a new ball?

Last year during the PGA I heard the USGA officials tell of the concessions the R&A had made to satisfy the USGA's ideas for a new ball. The R&A had come along with the USGA on the steel shaft, the center-shafted putter, the moderately-ribbed faces of iron clubs and the abolition of the stymie, but I couldn't see the “why” of the uniform ball and I, like USGA and R&A officials, had grown up asking first, “Is it good for golf?”

I grew up in golf as a customer with professionals telling me what ball to use for the game I played. Then came the compression ratings that were presumed to substitute for pro advice on balls, but the compression ratings didn't generally work. The ignorant and solvent hopefuls wanted to play the same high compressed balls the hard-hitters played. The soft-patting ordinary golfers hitting high compression balls is like trying to drive a croquet ball.

Is the golf ball played under the same conditions in New Jersey and New Zealand, in Carnoustie and Calcutta, in Tennessee and Tokyo?

I don't think so. And I am one of many millions who has bought golf balls in many countries. And that's

continued on page 8



Photographed at Mission Lakes Country Club, Desert Hot Springs, California

Beautiful drive! Just par for the course for us.

High-fashion elegance isn't the main reason Harley-Davidson golf cars are the most popular in the world. But it doesn't hurt.

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requirement at low speeds.)

That's our story and we're stuck with it. Happily. Gas or electric golf cars. Three wheels or four. The most popular name in the game is Harley-Davidson. Why not get in touch? Make us prove it. AMF Harley-Davidson Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201



more than can be said of professional playing specialists who haven't spent as much for initiation fees and dues as I have.

Whatever the USGA and the R&A do in fooling around with changing ball specifications will be right for a few, wrong for many millions more.

The R&A has a trustworthy precedent in Queen Elizabeth I, who created an empire by side-stepping in a crisis and letting nature take its course.

The costly cast head irons have given professionals the merchandising awakening jolt many of them needed.

Players are buying these clubs in surprisingly larger numbers.

"Buying" is the correct word. Quite often the golfer would come into the pro shop and tell the professional to get him a set of these new irons. The professional didn't do any selling. He didn't have any idea the customer wanted new clubs and sometimes was dazed that the customer didn't faint when the price was mentioned. The profes-

sional may have thought the buyer was too tight to buy expensive new clubs. It turned out that the professional was the one scared by the higher price.

The spurt the aluminum shaft gave club sales was, to a large extent, another case of the aluminum-shafted clubs being bought rather than sold.

Pro salesmen say there is a big lesson in the quick sales surge of the aluminum shafted and cast head clubs. They declare the lesson is that too few professionals and their assistants really know how to sell clubs or even try to sell them.

During the past three or four years I've asked pro salesmen what percentage of professionals they regard as being good at selling clubs. The highest answer I've got is 20 per cent.

"Good at selling clubs. Hell, half the pros I see don't even do a good job of displaying clubs so they'll attract buyers and sell themselves," a pro salesman in one of the central states told me. "They don't seem to know that eye-catching display of clubs will get buyers just as buyers

respond to the appeal of a well-displayed golf apparel."

Remember 15 years ago when you'd go into a pro shop you'd always see one or two golfers inspecting clubs. Now you seldom do.

Why not? The professional had better find out.

About a quarter of golf clubs now probably don't fit the player, but the player seldom knows by any means other than accident that his game could be improved by new clubs with a "feel" that in itself is a lesson.

Club fitting is a service to golfers that is pro-only and the courts can't put you in jail for boldly displaying new clubs and offering a valuable and unique pro-only club fitting service to buyers.

John Gerring becomes golf director and co-owner of 27-hole Holly Hill CC, near Greenville, N.C., which will open late this year. . . . *Bill Delk* goes to Deer Track GC, Surfside Beach, S.C., being built, from his pro job at Pineland CC, Nichols, S.C. . . . *Bill Vach* now professional at Lehigh

continued on page 32

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