

“Since 1971, every pound of bluegrass mixture we use at Merion Golf Club contains 75% Baron Kentucky Bluegrass.”

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Richard Valentine, Golf Course Superintendent at Merion Golf Club has some interesting ideas about turf management. Here are some experiences he has shared with us.

“I don’t believe in heavy feeding, and that seems to suit Baron just fine. I never use more than three pounds of nitrogen per 1000 square feet per annum. Baron doesn’t seem to need those high nitrogen applications that some people are using on bluegrass. And, less fertilizer means less fungus and thatch. . . I like that.”



“We have a tradition to uphold here at Merion and, by golly I’m going to make sure we use nothing but the best. Baron Kentucky Bluegrass belongs here at Merion.”



“I used to have much more thatch before I started using Baron. And it comes up fast too. I cut-in Baron and it germinates in 10 days . . . one half the normal time.” Rich discusses Baron’s quick growth with Peter Loft and Andy Sweeney, local supplier.



“Merion has lots of hillsides and slopes . . . here’s where Baron really stands out. We use a Jacobsen Seeder and cut seed into the soil. You have to plant grass seed . . . you can’t just throw it on the ground. The only place I don’t use Baron is on the tees and greens, which are bentgrass.”



Richard Valentine, Golf Course Superintendent at Merion Golf Club, Ardmore, Pa. is the second superintendent in Merion’s famous 79-year history, succeeding his father, Joseph, who held the position for 54 years.



“We cut our fairways to one inch all year long. During our regular Fall renovation program on approaches and drive areas, we use a mixture of five bluegrasses . . . 75% of that mixture has been Baron. We’ll use the same mixture next Fall.”



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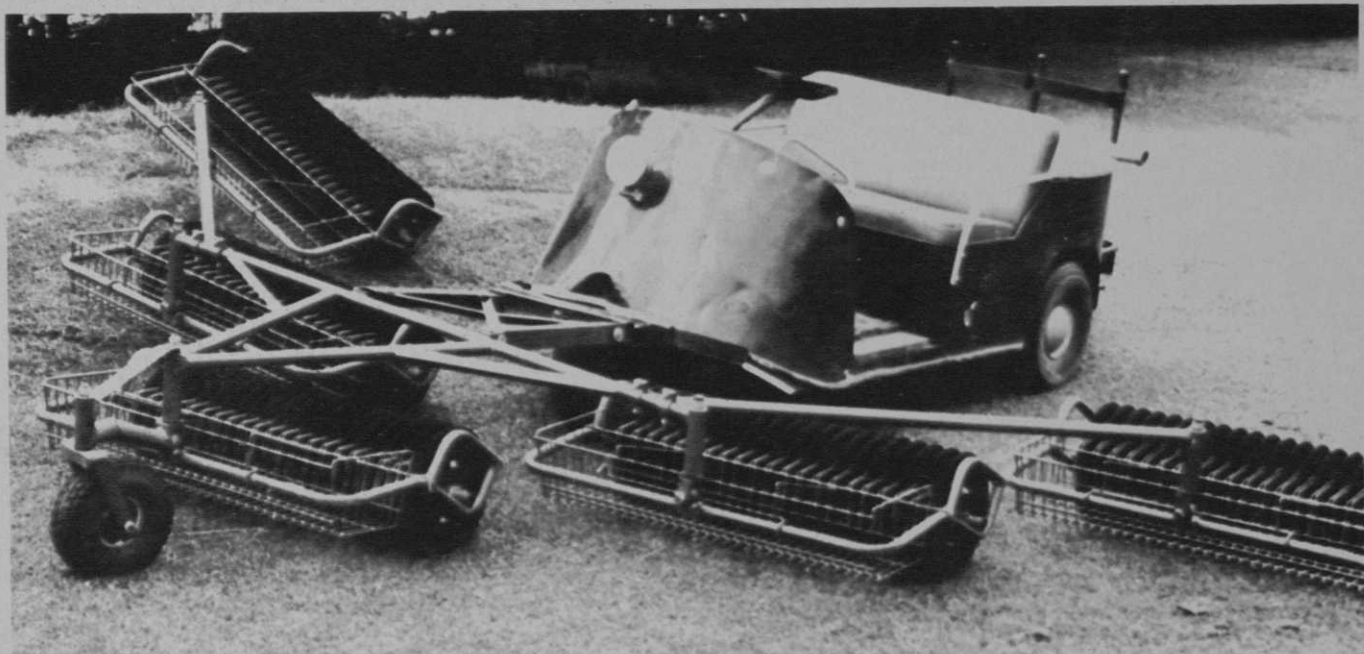


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GOLFDOM

THE MAGAZINE OF GOLF BUSINESS

Vol. 49, No. 9, SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1975, INCORPORATING GOLF BUSINESS

ARTICLES

ON THE COVER

Ten major ball manufacturers are vying for a piece of a \$70 million dollar pie. The market is currently slanted toward the East with Acushnet holding on to at least a 45 percent share. Pros are finding more and more of their shop customers moving toward the Surlyn cover ball and away from Balata. Durability might win over the heart of the golfing public, as the average golfer searches for the ball that will last longer. Pros and manufacturers alike response to GOLFDOM's questions on the market, beginning on page 8.

PRO BALLS: THE MAKERS, THE MARKET, THE FUTURE A \$70 million market, the golf ball business has prospered over the last few years and offers more success for its participants in the future. GOLFDOM surveys the industry, asking manufacturers their thoughts on the state of the business, then goes to the shops to see what the pros think. The report covers everything from Surlyn's surge to competition from discounters _____ **8**

KEEPING MEMBER INTEREST HIGH Denver Country Club has set up an active winter program for its members including indoor tennis and ice skating. Jerry Claussen reports on the high pitch of member activity all year round _____ **12**

LICENSING: WILL IT HELP OR HINDER THE PRO? The Florida PGA Section has put together a bill that has been introduced in the state legislature. If the bill passes, every golf club in the state will have to hire a golf pro licensed by the state. A lobbying firm has been hired to usher the bill through, and the Teamsters have even taken an interest in the outcome. _____ **16**

MASTER PLAN: CHANGING A COURSE'S COMPLEXION Looking to remodel your facility? Golf course architect Geoffrey Cornish offers some good arguments for a switch to the new look on greens, tees and fairways and it might save you more money than you think _____ **21**

CAN PROGRESS REPORTS WORK FOR YOU? Chicago-area superintendent Paul Voykin has been keeping his members and committees informed of his activities on the course for years with a series of progress reports spaced throughout the season. He explains the plan he recommends especially for young superintendents and those superintendents having trouble communicating with their club _____ **24**

THE ENEMY WITHOUT Vandalism is on the rise at courses all over the country. An assortment of damaging visits to the club are being made by non-golfers and owners are turning to security plans to put the odds back in their favor. GOLFDOM looks at the problems facing clubs from thieves and vandals and attempts to solve the costly problem _____ **28**

WINTER BATTERY CARE Golf car batteries stored at 0°F self-discharge very little over a four-month period, while the same batteries stored at 80°F need to be recharged once a month. More on winter battery care is included in this byline piece by industry executive Joseph Garvin _____ **34**

NEWS PGA's return to Orlando for the merchandise show draws favorable response . . . Foot-Joy majority interest acquired by General Mills . . . managers plan conference, negotiate a new headquarters site . . . credibility with employers will upgrade the superintendent . . . GCSAA profiles the average course and its costs . . . Georgia and Chicago check in to the growing divot controversy . . . Ohio Turfgrass Foundation gives \$19,000 for research . . . minimize turf compaction, turf researcher says _____ **38**

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GOLFDOM, Incorporating GOLF BUSINESS; Published 10 times a year; monthly January through August and combination Issues i., September-October and November-December. Copyright© 1975, by The Harvest Publishing Company, a subsidiary of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. Printed in the U.S.A. For advertising rates, apply to Advertising Sales Manager. Editorial and Advertising offices, 9800 Detroit Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44102. Address manuscripts and other editorial contributions to the Editorial Office. Unacceptable contributions will be returned if accompanied by sufficient first-class postage. Not responsible for lost manuscripts or other material. Controlled circulation postage paid at Cleveland, Ohio. Please send change of address notice to GOLFDOM Magazine, 9800 Detroit Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44102. Subscription rates \$7 per year U.S. and Canada. Foreign \$10 per year. Single copy price: \$1.00 for current and all back issues. Foreign \$1.50. New subscribers are advised that it takes six to eight weeks to receive the first copy of GOLFDOM. A similar period is required to effect a change of address.

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GOLFDOM

THE MAGAZINE OF GOLF BUSINESS

PUBLISHED 10 TIMES A YEAR;
MONTHLY JANUARY THROUGH AUGUST AND
COMBINED ISSUES FOR SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER
AND NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

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Cleveland, Ohio 44102

Telephone: (216) 651-5500

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HERB GRAFFIS

SWINGING AROUND GOLF

Forgotten superintendent: Herbert Heinlein, superintendent at Indian Spring Country Club, Silver Spring, Md., recently asked his fellow members of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents if it occurs to them that everybody takes the superintendent for granted and expects miracles from him every time a player steps on the course. Many golfers think a fine golf course just happens.

That is strange. A golfer will spend hours and many dollars, get his wife and kids busy and hire outside help trying to keep a yard of 60-foot frontage in good condition. Yet the same man will go to 180 acres of golf course and raise hell if a couple of square yards are not in perfect shape.

As long as I have been reporting on golf course maintenance, men, methods, machinery, problems, results and costs, I was for the first time hit with a new and painful slant a few weeks ago. I sat down and figured out what my home yard maintenance had cost me in 1974. Then I looked at the cost of maintaining the golf course to which I belong in the American tropics. The brief research showed me that if it had cost as much per acre to maintain my golf course as it did my yard, the course budget last year would have been an appalling \$467,543.60. Most golfers should realize what a bargain they are getting from the unsung superintendent.

The USGA tests: Tests conducted by the Implements and Ball Committee of the USGA give me a hunch they are going to be more useful to the great majority of golfers than any tests in the past.

The good sound sense of the USGA testing program is demonstrated by the fact tests are being made in different classes of clubhead speeds. Obviously, the 15- and 30-handicap men and women play

golf under different conditions of shafts, clubhead weight, swing weight and ball compression than the equipment used by the strong and adept specialists who do little else than play golf. The tests should develop some interesting arguments and perhaps some new construction and instruction ideas.

But of course the tests in the new and bigger area of golfers won't be conclusive. After all, in the matter of tests in an art, you have to remember the story of Ben Hogan being asked by Bob Rickey to play a fine new MacGregor ball when Hogan was a star of the MacGregor staff and Rickey a sales executive.

"But Ben, the machine tests show our new ball is longer than any other ball," pleaded Rickey.

"OK then," replied the wee Ice-man, "enter the testing machine in the Open."

National Golf Day: There are a number of important golf turf programs at state agricultural stations being financed by money golfers contribute in their competitions on National Golf Day. The USGA Green Section's nationally coordinated research program includes the continuance of important projects developing highly desirable strains of golf grass, the prevention of diseases, and studies having useful effects on course maintenance budgets and the cost of golf.

This program will be continued due to the supply of National Golf Day money under the direction of Al Radko, the USGA Green Section's coordinator of research. This money buys time. If research on promising new strains were to be halted, all the previous years of research would be lost. This golf turf research must continue. Again let us remind you that no other sport does what golf does through the USGA Green Section in beautifying this country. □

DEDOES T.C.A.

TOTAL COURSE AERATION

Today your profitability depends largely on your equipments productivity. And to be profitably productive your aeration equipment must be Ultra Fast, Versatile, and Convenient. These and other features are built in quality aspects of all DEDOES "Total Course Aeration" systems.

Consider the profitability gained when you aerate any Tee or Green in 15 minutes or less. Regardless of conditions, the Dedoes Tee & Green "T.C.A." unit removes 180 5/8" plugs per revolution. There's even a model that collects the plugs while aerating.

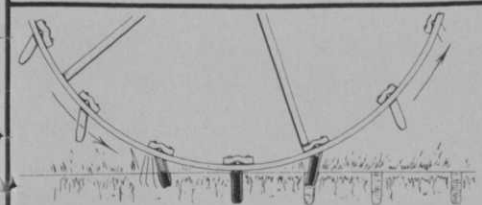
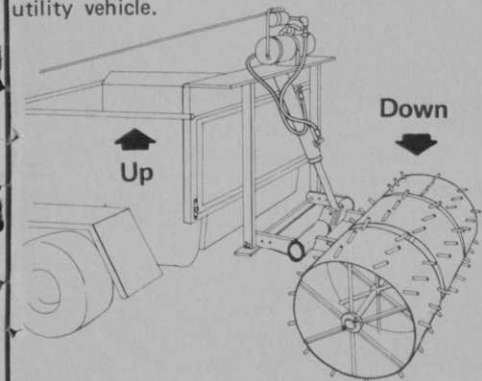
The "T.C.A." Fairway aerator provides one day course aeration. Like the Tee & Green unit the Fairway aerator removes 180 clean plugs per revolution and also operates in forward or reverse. That's Productivity creating Profitability!

Another benefit with all Dedoes "T.C.A." aerating systems is the new dimension of Versatility they add to your utility/maintenance vehicles. The Fairway "T.C.A." system accomodates any LCG tractor.

Another factor always considered in any equipment purchasing decision is a products durability and maintenance free aspects. One look at a Dedoes "T.C.A." product tells you we build quality and in so doing reduce maintenance requirements. We have to be good because the only golf equipment we build are aeration related products.

One final point to consider in all equipment purchases is initial cost, but we will let your Turf Expert listed below deliver the good news. Call for a demonstration today... tomorrow you'll be more productive and profitable.

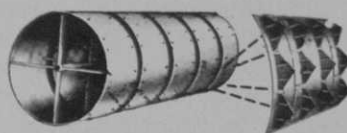
The hydraulic power system lowers the unit and transfers the vehicle's weight & capacity creating the down force. Where additional penetration is desired, simply add weight to the utility vehicle.



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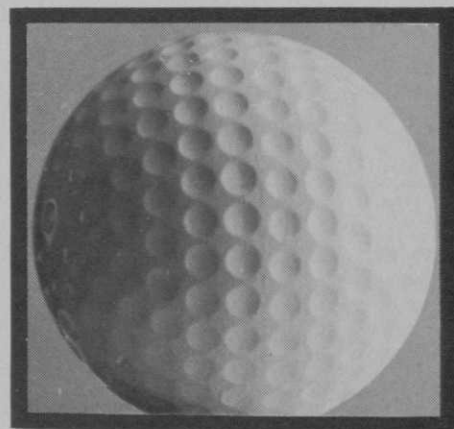
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Indiana	Ft. Wayne	Summit Power Equip't.	New York	Hamburg	Eaton Equipment Corp.	Wisconsin	Chippewa Falls	Northern Turf Equip't.
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PRO BALLS The Makers, The Market, The Future



Golf balls are becoming one of the most important pieces of merchandise in the shop, as prices continue to rise on clubs and softgoods and pros attempt to keep profits from sagging.

From the manufacturers' viewpoint, the ball market is an important part of the entire equipment scene. Pro shop sales account for over \$50 million a year. Acushnet Co. holds onto the lion's share with at least 45 percent of the trade, although Acushnet vice president of marketing Dean Cassell says the figure is a "conservative estimate."

The current market shapes up with Acushnet leading two other top companies, Spalding and Dunlop, and a scramble for what's left over. There is little doubt but that the ball industry is probably in its most competitive phase in history. Advertising campaigns have been cranked up by many of the manufacturers as they try to get a better market share and catch Acushnet.

Caught up in the search for the durable ball, many of the manufacturers are turning their production schedules for the future toward Surlyn. The thermoplastic ionomer resin produced by DuPont has revolutionized the industry and developed a race with the distance-related balata cover. Estimates from industry watchers indicate though, that Surlyn will probably make up 85 percent of all balls manufactured in the next couple of years.

Surlyn's rise has apparently been aided by an uneasy economy during the past year. Golfers are looking for the ball that will last longer and absorb more punishment. Controversy is rampant. Balata makers

stress that if golfers want distance, they have to live with a destructible ball. Surlyn proponents vow average golfers can do just as well with the durable ball.

Even as Surlyn and balata differ, marketing philosophies for the makers differ. At the top, Acushnet's Cassell. "We attempt to do the total job for the consumer. We try to make a product with value. We try to provide different types of balls for the varying needs of the public," he said from his Massachusetts office.

Two years ago, Acushnet took a gamble with the dimple configuration on its Titleist balls and the switch has paid off. Reducing the dimple number to a final 324 from 336, Acushnet spent over \$500,000 on extensive testing. Cassell admits the change has benefited his company's continuing growth.

Servicing the pro has been the most important factor in Acushnet's climb to the top. The firm has 65 field salesmen, giving it one of the most formidable forces in the business. Standing staunchly by its pro-only policy, Acushnet, according to Cassell, has proven its dedication to the game.

Through the years, Acushnet has developed its product to the point where it has the enviable position of not paying touring players to use its ball. Oddly enough, it was a quirk of fate that put Acushnet into the ball business in the mid-30's. The firm dealt in specialty rubber parts alone, until founder Philip E. Young came home miffed at his performance in a golf tournament and knew in his mind that it was the ball and not him that had failed to perform. Young convinced a doctor friend to

X-ray the ball to ascertain if it was round. It was not. At that point, Acushnet began its quest for the better ball.

For the future, Acushnet sees added sales in '76, if the economy stabilizes. At Dunlop, though, vice president Paul MacDonald tempers his optimism on the market.

"The pro ball market right now is flat. The growth is not as dramatic as in the '60's. Acushnet dominates the U.S. market, but we are the biggest producer of golf balls in the world," MacDonald said. From two plants in the United States; Westminster, S.C. and Hartwell, Ga.; two in England, and one each in Japan, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, Dunlop's world production is impressive.

Dunlop's Surlyn ball, the Blue Max, has enjoyed success both here and abroad and MacDonald reports his firm's balata balls are also selling well.

Asked to comment on possibly confusing advertising claims among several competitors, MacDonald thinks many are misleading and are a clue to the fight currently going on in the industry over market share. The Dunlop executive looks at the future of the industry positively, but thinks there will be casualties along the way within the competition. With costs for materials and labor escalating, some of the smaller firms may drop out of the market.

In the ball business 10 of its 27 years, Ram Golf Corporation was one of the first companies in the industry to come out with Surlyn and marketing manager Larry Woolsey admits the material has helped establish the company's Golden Ram product.

"Being a pioneer in Surlyn, we realize the future is bright for the durability ball," Woolsey told GOLFDOM, "We are striving for a ball with the feeling of balata, but with a Surlyn cover."

Ram, also, is concerned with the ad claims of its competition and the fact they may tend to confuse consumers. In '76, Ram will begin its own campaign. The ads will emphasize the fact that most balls on the market are good, and manufactured much the same.

With a rising amount of sales

'Any company can rig any test to show what they want. Today's ball advertising is going beyond credibility'

— Tim Scott

Marketing Manager, AMF/Ben Hogan Co.

over the last five years, Ram has been able to double its size in the market, thanks to its ball business. The profitability of the company was recently reflected in its purchase by Colgate-Palmolive.

Like other manufacturers, Ram is aware some of its merchandise is being bootlegged into discount stores and golf specialty shops, but according to Woolsey, there really isn't much the manufacturer can do, since he can't police every pro his firm sells to.

Logging nearly eight years in the ball business, the AMF/Ben Hogan Company is one firm that has made great strides in the market in the last few years with a distance ball accepted by a large number of touring pros. According to Hogan marketing manager Tim Scott, many touring pros are using the ball.

As a new entry into the market, Hogan figured the best way to get its ball in the consumer's eye was strive for play on the tour.

Scott is adamant in his attitude toward the ad claims currently being made by his competitors. "Any company can rig any test to show what they want to show. These tests and challenges are detrimental to the industry. Today's ball advertising is going beyond credibility." Scott believes that some ground rules need to be set up on advertising and the claims some com-

panies make.

Speaking of recent litigation against pro equipment manufacturers to get pro line merchandise into discount stores and golf specialty shops, Scott sees these suits possibly winning in the future and causing the death of retail line balls produced by Hogan competitors. Hogan itself only makes a pro shop ball.

"This market is highly competitive at this time with companies trying a variety of things to get an edge. We are experimenting with a durability-type ball, but for the moment, think performance balls are the best way for us to go," Scott added.

Price stability is a big question mark for many of the makers and Hogan is no different. Scott admits with the increased overhead and production costs, it won't be long before costs go upward. There are indications that the price line of several years standing will quickly become a thing of the past and the economy's ups and downs may begin to have a bigger influence on the price of the ball in the future.

One of the oldest companies in the business is Royal Golf Equipment and its national sales manager Bill Neuguth says the ball market is getting tighter with black marketing to discount stores on the rise. "This year has been a tough one on us. The economy has had an influence on things and the distribution of the balls in general is changing."

Neuguth would like to see pro line balls restricted to golf facility

'The pro ball market right now is flat. The growth is not as dramatic as in the '60s'

— Paul MacDonald

Vice President, Dunlop Sports Division

shops only and halt bootlegging to the discount competition. "There just isn't anything anyone can do to control the situation," Neuguth conceded.

Royal is currently moving its ball production facilities to the parent Uniroyal plant at Farmville, Va. The old Providence, R.I., plant has been sold and all corporate offices will now be in Naugatuck, Conn.

'I'd like to see pro balls restricted to golf facility shops. Too much black marketing to discount stores is going on right now'

— Bill Neuguth

National Sales Manager, Royal Golf Equip.

Royal's decision to move its plant was based on better proximity to major markets and a more efficient operation. Golf ball finishing operations and golf club assembly operations had already been moved to Farmville. The move should be completed by the end of the year.

Viewing the market differently than some of its competition, Royal is going after the average golfer in the biggest way and through Surlyn. "We aren't interested in tour pros playing our ball. Average golfers are the people that buy most products and they are the ones we are interested in," Neuguth added.

Through its Royal +6, the firm has made some inroads into Acushnet superiority, but Neuguth knows there is a long way to go.

As one of the first companies to bring about ball testing claims in its ads, Royal is indeed interested in the confusion that is brewing among golf's consumers. "There is a lot of uncertainty right now. The consumer will continue to be confused. I think most pros realize that a ball's success is relative to the individual golfers that utilize it," said Neuguth.

The Royal official added that his firm's radical departure to the hexagon-shaped dimple has given average golfers a better flying projectile. In spite of the success its users might enjoy, Neuguth indicated that in the near future, it might cost them more to enjoy it. Price increases of between a \$1 to a \$1.50 a dozen appear likely within the next two years.

All the manufacturers previously mentioned have made their mark in the pro shops with round balls, but the two-piece makers, Spalding and Faultless, are also going forward.

Spalding's recent notoriety has been based on its \$250,000 challenge to Titleist, Titleist DT, Royal +6, Blue Max and the Wilson LD. Golf business manager Ralph Carlson told GOLFDOM since the

challenge campaign started last April, sales of his company's Top-Flite have increased 40 percent. "We're very happy with the results," Carlson added.

Several of the manufacturers' spokesmen which talked to GOLFDOM about the Spalding challenge felt it was detrimental to the industry and that several of the major companies in the market were not even included in the challenge. Carlson comments: "Developing the challenge, we decided we would only include the top balls in the market and several of the smaller companies were omitted, because we didn't feel they would be competitive to the Top-Flite anyway."

In spite of the reasoning, Faultless' vice president of operations Ralph Maltby countered with an ad campaign of his own telling the public that Spalding's challenge was little more than a "\$250,000 shell game." "It seems to me, if someone in this industry issues a challenge, it should be industry wide. We were left out. Possibly, it was because we were the only other two-piece ball on the market," Maltby said.

As expected, no one took on Spalding's claim, as Royal's Neuguth says, "it would just add fuel to their fire." No one is sure where the tests and claims will end, but in a random sampling of pro

shops around the country by GOLFDOM, it appears pros and their members are fairly unaffected in their purchasing attitudes, although there is some confusion.

"Members coming into our shop are often confused on what is the right ball for them," says assistant pro Lynn Rautio at the Tacoma Country and Golf Club, Tacoma, Wash., "but we recommend what we believe is the right ball for them and their abilities."

At Tacoma, the shop carries five or six brands which Rautio and head pro Gerry Mehlert consider the most salable. Rautio told GOLFDOM that local discount operations had cut into shop ball sales and the affect has been bad for business. A private club with 400 golfing members, Tacoma's pro shop customers can handle further ball price increases, according to Rautio.

Head pro since 1966, Don Smith has upped his ball sales to 25 percent of his gross since taking over the shop chores at the Charlotte Country Club, Charlotte, N.C. "Our membership (750 in all) believe in the pro shop and with promotions, our ball sales have done quite well."

Smith's situation in Charlotte is a bit unique to that of the country. The club is very exclusive. "You almost have to be born in the clubhouse to get in," says Smith. Along

with that, there is no competition from discounters. The nearest cut rate store dealing in pro line balls is miles away.

"Our members don't really shop around for balls. They know the balls they need are in the shop and they ask what is the best for their individual needs," Smith added.

Off the beaten path of most manufacturers' representatives, Goose River Golf Club in Camden, Maine, has a small shop for its 100 or so members, run by owner Crippf Chefley and his wife Ivif.

Near the Atlantic, Goose River is a club with an expanding membership and despite the economic atmosphere in most of the country, according to the Chefleys, things have been good this year. Goose River does not carry a large line of clubs and a lot of its business is in ball sales.

Selling over \$20,000 worth of balls a year in two shops, John Johnson, head pro at Shore Acres Golf Club and Lake Shore Golf Center in Rochester, N.Y., can speak with authority on the market.

Johnson who is in his 15th year at Shore Acres, does a lot of work to promote ball sales. "Through promotions and sales to leagues, we do a good trade," reports Johnson, who's president of the Western PGA section. His club is also influenced by a recession-proof city in Rochester. Many Shore Acres members work for a national photography concern in town, which has continued to prosper in spite of gloom in other parts of the nation.

Johnson says that discounters hurt his business, too. Bootlegging to local stores is common, but even with that, Johnson thinks '76 will be one of his best years ever.

Two clubs with something in common in sales margins are Sunny Croft Country Club in Clarksburg, W. Va., and Westwood Country Club in Houston. Both figure ball sales at 15 percent of their respective gross intakes.

Pro shop manager Lawrence Myers at Sunny Croft says sales have been good this year, but discounters are catching up. "In a couple years, those stores will have everything I have. It's inevitable with all these lawsuits."

\$250,000 says Top-Flite is The Longest Ball.

Only The Longest Ball would make this challenge. \$250,000 to the first of these: Titleist, Royal or Blue Max, Wilson D3, Titleist DT or Mizuno that can beat Top-Flite in a truly meaningful distance test. No gimmicks. Just men & women.

golfers with a knowledge of handicaps, hitting woods and irons until Cyntron Research Corp. an independent testing firm, determines the conclusive winner. Top-Flite already won a test like this using hundreds of golfers and beat the other leading balls by 8 to 15 yards! Now Top-Flite challenges them again, one-on-one, in a single kind of test.

TOP-FLITE beat Titleist by 3.3 yards beat Royal - 6 by 20.3 yards beat Blue Max by 3.3 yards beat Wilson LD by 6.7 yards beat Titleist DT by 8.4 yards

Omega

Two piece ball by 7 nations

Look for Omega in Professional Championships

The \$250,000 shell game.

Omega would like to accept Top-Flite's \$250,000 distance challenge. But we can't. We weren't challenged. Why? Maybe because Omega is the only other two-piece ball. Top-Flite's only rival in construction. And maybe because if they had challenged us, we would have accepted.

Why? Because we claim to manufacture Top-Flite. Which we proved in our own test. Omega versus Top-Flite. Head-to-head. The only two, two-piece golf balls.

Since Top-Flite didn't challenge Omega, you should. Hit them hard. Challenge Omega. Win or lose, confident about what you can say. And that's probably why Top-Flite won't risk \$250,000 against Omega.

The distance shell game. Can't we help?

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Charge and countercharge: At left, Spalding started its \$250,000 campaign last April, stating that four of its competitors couldn't beat its top ball in a test conducted by an independent organization. Some companies weren't included in the challenge and responded in kind. Faultless launched a campaign of its own for its slighted Omega ball.