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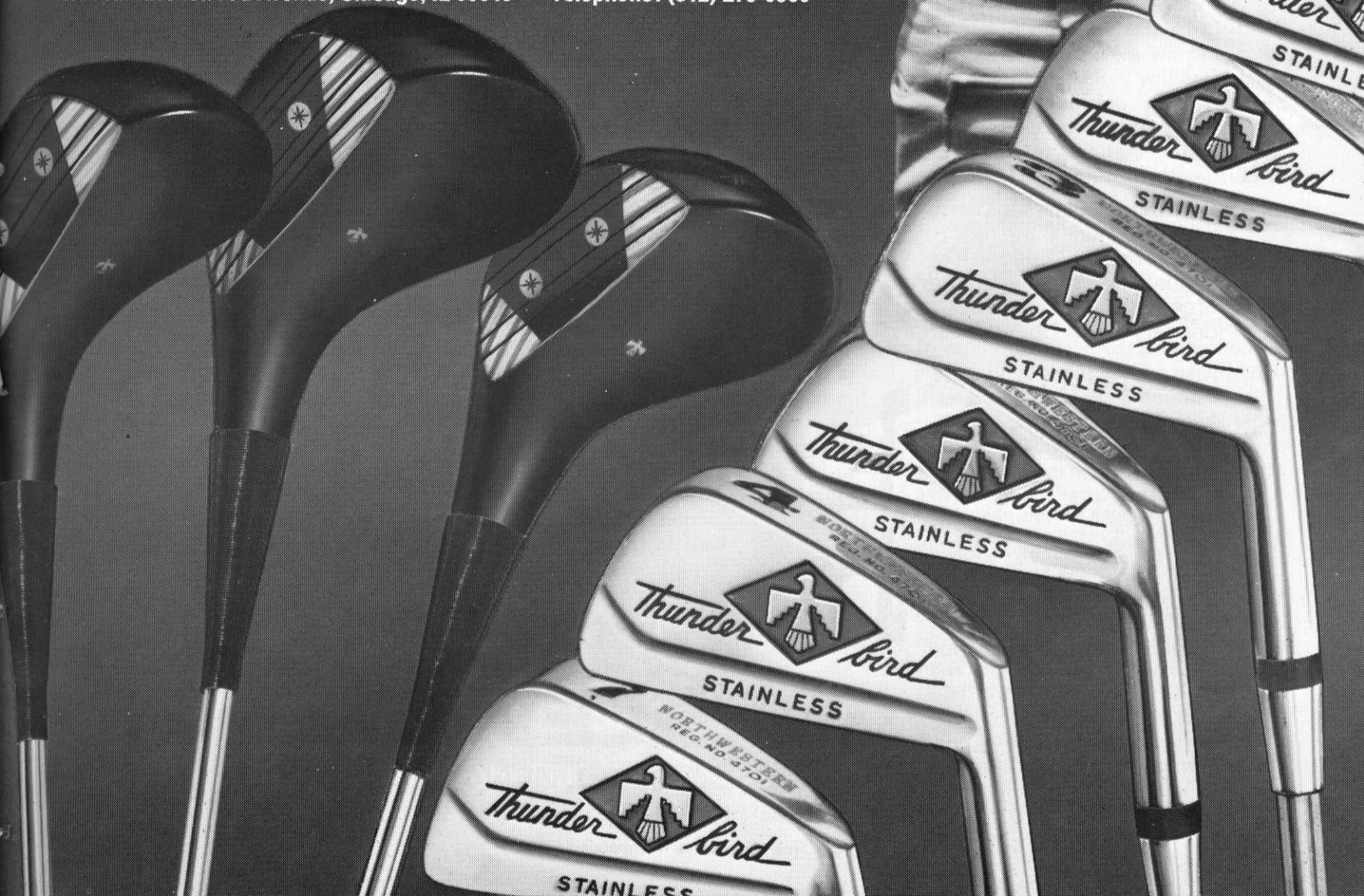
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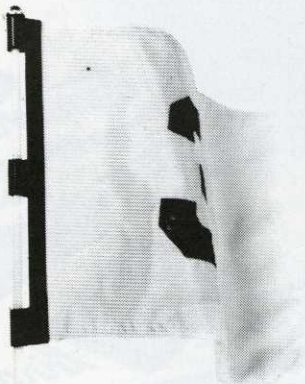
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speciality shops has also hurt sales in the territory.

When he works with new accounts, Horvath attempts to use the knowledge he has accumulated in over a quarter century in the market. He cautions the new professional to watch his buying habits, especially in hardgoods. Softgoods activity has helped ease the stress a little, as pros are looking to the low ticket items to generate additional income in the shop.

South of the Twin Cities in Chicago, a pair of fieldmen work the northern Illinois circuit, Tom Vehring for Hogan and Doug Millar, an independent rep for Lynx.

Vehring has logged seven years with Hogan, but worked for the old Arnold Palmer Co. in 1964. Between those assignments, he was an assistant professional at Chicago's Olympia Fields Country Club. Millar has been in the sporting goods business for the past 11 years. He has represented Lynx for the past three years, but also had jobs with MagGregor and Burke-Worthington. Both handle about 200 accounts.

"There are so many things the salesman can do to help the pro," said Vehring. "I can walk into a shop and see where the man is not selling product. If the pro trusts your opinion, you can work with him and get him to move more merchandise."

Subtle suggestions are sometimes the hardest to make, but Vehring noted that often when a salesman enters a shop, he can observe objectively the way new employees may greet him or offer him service, not knowing his position.

Speaking about the competition in the Chicago area from golf retailers, Vehring says if the pros are losing money they have no one to blame but themselves. "You have to kill your members with kindness. Anyone can sit behind a counter and sell balls. A service attitude is the only way to get those people back."

Not quite as old and established as its competition, Lynx' sales staff has had to establish its line in many shops. Often when Millar hits a new account he moves for the bag room, where he surveys the bags and tries to find a set of his firm's clubs. "If there is a set in the bag room, it's pretty easy to convince the pro his member or customer

has gone outside to get that equipment."

Downtown shops in the west

Another veteran of the pro shop wars over many seasons has been Spalding's man in Los Angeles, Red Walters. With 27 years in the Los Angeles and Ventura counties area, Walters has seen first-hand the trouble the downtown pro shop operators such as Walter Keller and Jimmy Powell have brought their colleagues.

"Those places are just mass display at the lowest price. There is no merchandising there," Walters stressed. In his mind, the professional has his customer at an advantage if he utilizes his capabilities as an expert with the products he sells. "Professionals must look at themselves as sellers. The speciality shops offer mass sales and no service."

One program Walters has attempted in the Los Angeles area, though with little success, is Spalding's custom cresting program. Individual clubs are set up for the facility with the club crest on the head. This approach has not stemmed the tide, though, from the downtown pro shops and the retailers.

Sell shoes and softgoods

Operating to the north near San Jose is Dave Bistic, one of Ernie Sabayrac's top salesmen. With more than 10 years in the Bay area, Bistic operates on some 200 golf accounts in an area of approximately 250 square miles.

With a plan for each specific operation, Bistic will go into a new or existing account and completely tailor a program for the pro. "I believe the golf shoe is the foundation of the apparel business. A golfer can't go out and play in tennis shoes."

For example, at a private club with what Bistic calls a "locked-in" membership of 300, the professional has to stock his shop with no less than 350 to 400 pairs of shoes. That assortment will have four to six different styles in four varying widths. Bistic thinks size runs should go about 12 dozen each in the "C" and "E" widths and 24 in the "D."

A broad price range will work well also, with some top line shoes falling in the \$48-and-up range, but 60 percent of the stock will fall in the \$28 to \$35 area. Some lower priced, but still quality, waterproof pairs can be in-

cluded in the \$20 to \$24 range.

Coordinate sales are essential and the proper buying has to be employed in slacks and shirts. Using the private, 300-member facility as the example again, Bistic thinks a collection of between 10 and 12 dozen slacks is the proper stock. At least 65 to 70 percent of that should be in solids.

"I've been in many shops that offer pattern slacks but have no matching solid shirts to go with them. So you've lost a sale," Bistic says. Keeping odd sizes in stock is also important. Based on the fit you might get from particular companies, some 34-inch-waist pants may not always fit the standard 34 size.

In shirt selection, pros should carry twice as many shirts as slacks. Bistic's sample club handles 20 to 25 dozen with half solids and half patterns. Sweaters are also a big factor in the Bay area. Seventy percent of the sweaters are sold in the last 3 months of the year. Carrying 10 to 12 dozen in different materials and textures is the key.

Proper employees in your store is another Bistic objective. "I think every pro must have a woman in the shop, if there is ladies' golf at the club. A knowledgeable, sophisticated woman, who knows the business and can relate to your female customers, can add another profit dimension to your store."

Bistic insists pros don't take advantage of simple merchandising effects such as display and lighting. He believes the pro should look into adding mannequins, half busts, and freestanding fixtures to his shop. A glass tabletop that can be used to display simply is also essential.

"Pros are afraid of sales, but I think they should have at least two a year. There are many innovative ideas available to stimulate activity," Bistic noted. For example, Bistic has come up with the idea of a "Balloon Sale." The club professional and his staff paint a variety of dollar values on brightly colored balloons, blow them up, and head them for the shop ceiling. Customers will then come in and, by the use of a ladder, get the balloons down, check the dollar value, and subtract that from a purchase in the shop. Such sales have generated more than \$6,000 in one night. □

Sod a whole golf course?

Using park personnel with federally subsidized salaries made a great difference in the cost of sodding the Springfield Oaks course.

"We had the unfortunate experience of watching our seed beds washed out three consecutive times after we built them. This left us with an unplayable golf course after the first year."

That was the problem facing the Oakland County (Mich.) Parks and Recreation Commission, according to commission Chief of Design and Development Robert Bomia, since it purchased 100 acres of land for the Springfield Oaks County Park.

After acquisition in 1966 of an original 170 acres which included an old 9-hole golf course, plans were made to develop the 3,000-yard par 36 facility into a 6,300-yard par 72 course. The additional acreage was purchased in 1969-70, new designs for the course were drawn in 1973-74, and the back nine holes were constructed.

From the beginning, however, the expanded course was plagued with adverse site conditions — mainly a gravelly substance which made it unsuitable for seeding. Backed by the Shiawassee River mill pond, the scenic terrain on the back nine is extremely hilly and uneven. Heavy rains habitually washed the topsoil from

modified slopes, creating the condition Bomia noted above.

Sod, not seed

"Due to our experience with this soil condition," Bomia continued, "when we began renovation of the existing nine holes, our contractor would no longer guarantee the growth of grass seed unless we supplied additional topsoil. Even with the additional topsoil, there was no guarantee that rain wouldn't wash the soil away again."

The commission's solution was logical, albeit unusual. It was decided to sod the entire nine holes: fairways, tees, and greens.

"When we first announced our innovative plan to sod the course," Eric Reickel, director of the parks commission, said, "we met with a lot of skepticism from the golf industry. Most people thought sodding would be outrageously expensive.

"You have to remember, however, that we had access to our own manpower to lay the sod. Comparing time, cost, and protection of the ground surface, we found that sodding was a



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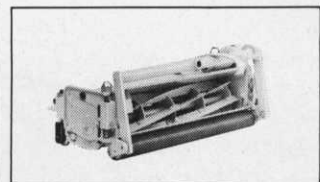
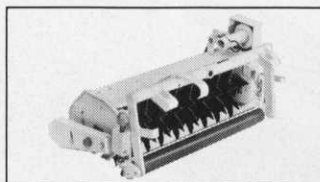
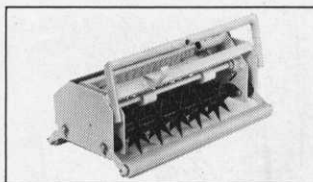
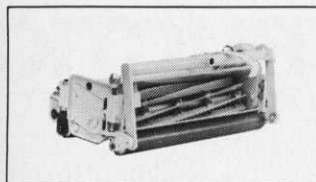
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Time is money
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“A total of 161,000 square yards of sod was used to cover the nine holes. The only areas done with topsoil and seed were in the rough.”



much better and more economical solution than new topsoil and seed. We were able to save the county over \$40,000.”

Topsoil for the nine holes would have cost Oakland County taxpayers \$96,500, while seeding of greens, tees, and fairways, plus stone removal, would have cost \$20,274. Total cost for this method would have been \$116,774.

In contrast, sod for the fairways and greens, with the use of park personnel funded by a federal CETA program to lay the sod, cost just \$77,371. The taxpayers were saved \$43,403 and are now able to enjoy a

lovely, grassy golf course that is impervious to rainstorms.

Other advantages

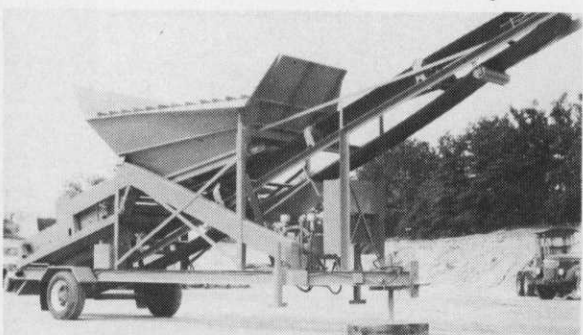
A total of 161,000 square yards of sod was used to cover the nine holes. A mixture of Merion blue, Kentucky blue, Barron blue, and some Park, the sod was purchased from an independent contractor. The only areas done with topsoil and seed were in the rough.

The sodding procedure not only saved money, but the new back nine was opened to the public a year earlier than it would have been under

normal seeding and growth conditions. The sod was laid in the fall of 1975, and the full course opened to the public on July 1, 1976.

Due to the early opening last summer, the finished golf course has reflected increased play. In 1974, the last full summer the 9-hole course was open, park officials recorded 10,755 rounds played during the months of July, August, and September. In 1976 the figure for those same months grew to 15,309 9-hole rounds. Even greater play is expected this coming summer when all 18 holes are open the full season. □

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[†]U.S. Patent Nos. 3699684 and 3830373



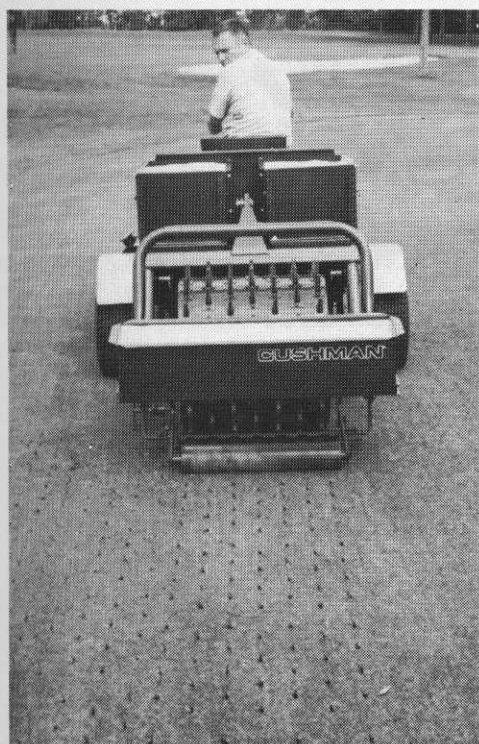
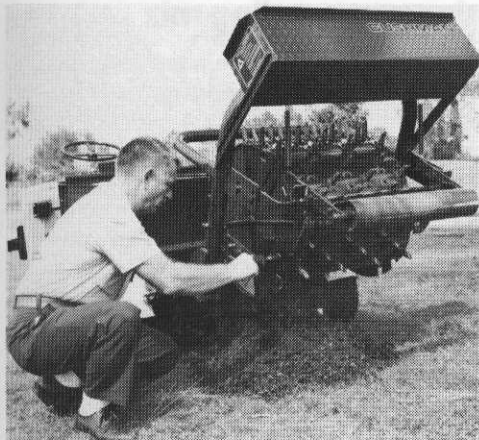
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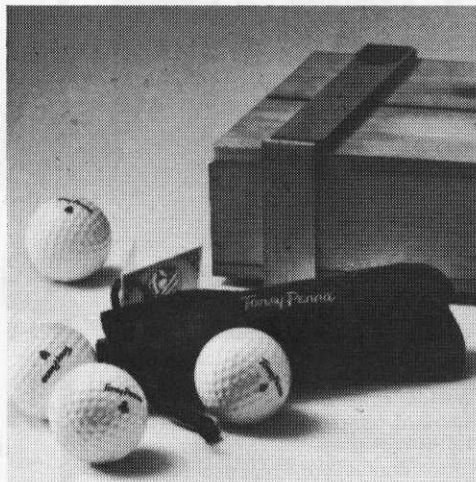
Products



New greens aerator minimizes manpower

Nearly 3 years in development, the Greensaver greens aerator eliminates any need to manually rake up cores after aerification. Instead, cores are collected inside a drum studded with 112 hollow tines; they can be removed easily (top photo) through a hinged door. The Greensaver, which will be introduced by Cushman at the GCSAA show in Portland next month, can be mounted on any hydraulically equipped Turf-Truckster chassis. Weight added to the vehicle is transferred to the coring drum, thus providing downward pressure to give 2½-inch penetration. The coring unit is designed to permit travel over uneven surfaces without substantially affecting vehicle traction or penetration depth. Based on tests at courses in the south and midwest, the Greensaver can remove 60 percent as much soil as walk-behind aerators, but can aerify greens up to 10 times faster.

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Premium-quality balls are hand selected and tested

The Toney Penna golf ball is called "the most precise ever made" by Rawlings Golf, now selling it nationally through pro shops. Made of lively two-piece construction with a Surlyn cover, the balls are each hand-measured for precise roundness, weight, size, and compression. A rough-hewn wood display box comes with a half-gross order of two dozen three-ball pouches.

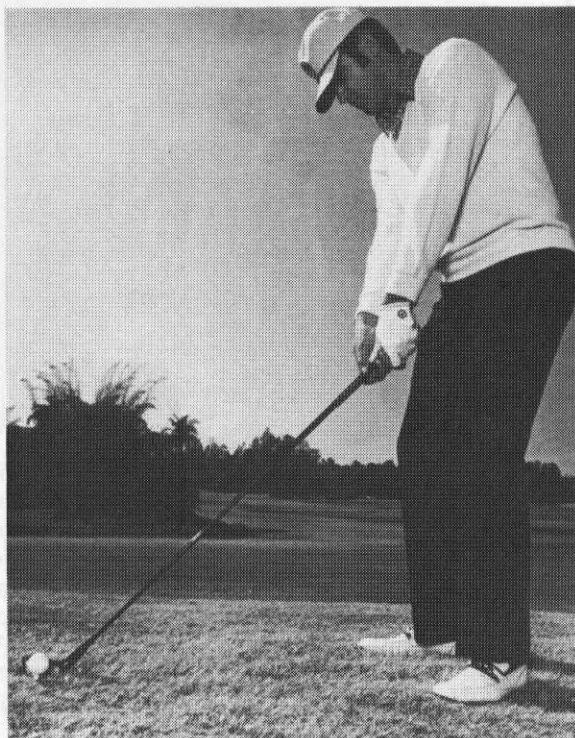
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New feature boosts power of electric convection ovens

G. S. Blodgett Co. has added a switch to the control panel of some of its Zephraire ovens which instantly boosts the input from 11 to 18.5 kilowatts to meet the production demands of peak periods. A full load of potatoes, for instance, can be baked in 53 minutes rather than the normal 76. Recovery time between loads is also reduced. Use the low setting to conserve power.

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Low-cost graphite shaft now available to all

Used exclusively by Wilson for the past year, the Babcock & Wilcox AccuTorque graphite golf shaft is now available to all equipment manufacturers and pro shops. AccuTorque is 100 percent graphite and weighs in at 2½ ounces — ½ ounce less than the top-of-the-line DynaTorque shaft. And the price is 30 to 40 percent lower. AccuTorque is available for woods in three flexes. Tests have shown it to have playing characteristics and performance comparable to about 80 percent of competitive higher priced shafts on the market. AccuTorque was developed in response to golfers' demands for a graphite shaft at a lower cost. B&W graphite shafts are recognizable by their unique step design.

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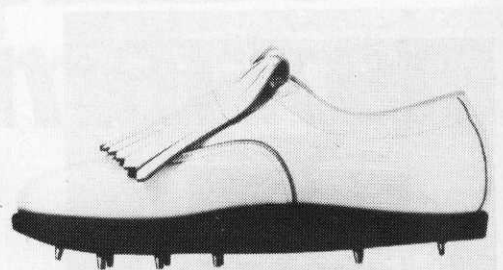
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Products

Winter overseeding mix

Medalist Brand 5, a new, premixed turfgrass formula for winter overseeding, is now available and ready for use. A product of Northrup, King & Co., the mix contains four improved fine-leaved perennial ryegrasses: Pennfine, Eton, Pelo, and Derby. All are compatible and have been tested under play conditions in the south for several years. Using a formulated mix provides consistency through the season as well as reducing the cost of buying and applying additional varieties later in the season.

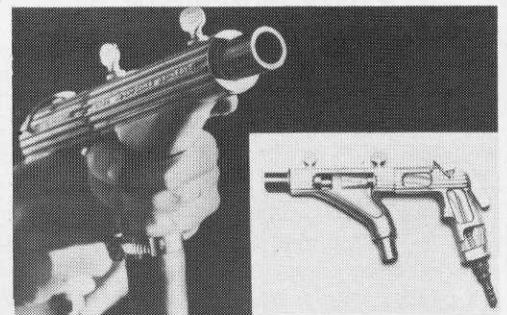
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Natural golf shoe

Pick up on the trend to "natural"-type shoes by selling oblique-toe, rocker-sole golf shoes in your pro shop. Get-Set Golf Shoe Co.'s product has what the company calls an Un-Heel, to move body weight and center of gravity to a more natural position: towards the arch. This to create a more solid plane of balance through the hitting area, as well as comfort when walking. Made of top-grain elk-hide leather and lined with orthopedic leather, Get-Set shoes needn't be polished—just cleaned.

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