Cars CAN be modified for special handicaps

Golf cars are not designed to fill the needs of the physically challenged. Yet, as National Amputee Golf Association Executive Director Bob Wilson said: "When you start getting into the question of wheelchairs you really open up a can of worms. Unless a person can get out of the car and into a chair unassisted, you've got problems."

Now a number of golfers are finding an alternative — having a golf car customized to fit their particular handicaps. Probably the first handicapped golfer to have a golf car customized was Dennis Walters, who was on the verge of joining the PGA Qualifying Tour in 1974 when a fluke accident rendered him paralyzed from the waist down.

After the accident, Walters customized a car "by trial and error," and it has been his ticket onto the course ever since.

In fact, each year he gives dozens of trick-shot exhibitions from his car. The vehicle sports a seat that swings out to the side 90 degrees, allowing him to make his shot and swing back into the car. "I have blueprints and if anybody writes in, I send them the blueprints," he said.

Handicapped — Continued from page 30

and expense-wise" the hospital could never offer a course just for the handicapped. Asked if Edwin Shaw's pioneering program is a breakthrough for handicapped golfers, Wilson said: "It's got to start someplace... Possibly once it hits the papers and gets publicized enough, the next logical step is that other people say, 'Hey, we're doing this (training) in a gymnasium with whiffle balls; we've got 150 acres out here that nobody's using for anything; why don't we put in a golf course?'"

As for Edwin Shaw Hospital's part, Cinson added: "Our planning committee is really ready to go. We're anxious..."

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