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GOLF LESSONS NEED OVERHAULING

The golf lesson business today is very sick. And it needs drastic medicine to make it well.

Several things it could do to heal itself and better serve the golf industry are: 1) Free lessons on a modernized basis by competent instructors at private clubs. Most well-managed clubs could afford to increase the professional's salary by what he gets for lessons and offer the professional's and qualified assistants' services without charge on the lesson tee. The increased club income soon would pay the cost, and the members would be getting more use out of the club. 2) Free modernized instruction at resort courses. This kind of course should be ideal for improving one's golf, because study time is available and the study tee convenient. Golf resort hotels are amazingly backward in failing to utilize the valuable advertising inherent in improving golfers' games. They advertise name pros, who are famous because they were and are interested in their own games, not the games of others. At a resort the name pro plays with three guests a day. Paying an able teaching professional, so he could give lessons without charge would pay the resort hotel. The guests would advertise it. What made Pinehurst the first great golf resort in the United States was Maniac Hill, that historic open air golf university where professionals in the North and South Open and during their annual trips to and from winter golf jobs discussed techniques with each other and keen amateurs. 3) A revolutionary overhauling and modernizing of instruction policy and methods. This would have to be done primarily by the Professional Golfers' Assn., then by the

National Golf Foundation in its collegiate golf promotion.

The present half-hour lesson originally was a substitute for the playing lesson, which got results, but was abandoned about 1910 in the United States because professionals didn't have enough time for those eager to learn by playing. Then came the years of teaching by the side of a fairway, then the practice and lesson tee.

Despite the skill, devotion and temperament of some professionals, the lesson tee results generally have been unsatisfactory and often a waste of an able professional's time.

Every successful teaching professional's results usually have come from inspiring eagerness to learn by showing the pupil how to teach himself. The professional's diagnostic ability and his direction in basic training usually require only five or 10 minutes at the start of the lesson when an effective instructor is on the job. The rest is supervision, sometimes correction, so the pupil can work out his or her own answers, just as must be done in play.

The Professional Golfers' Assn. in its annual national meeting teaching sessions and at its sectional meetings on teaching has had expert professionals demonstrate how they play, but rarely how they learned to play. Although pro golf authorities agree that effective golf instruction is about 25 per cent teaching and 75 per cent learning, the outgrown half-hour lesson method calls for the opposite division of time and responsibility.

The national scoring average of golfers, which has 90 per cent scoring over 90, shows that the half-hour lesson pattern is obsolete. Economics, too, show the plan is archaic. Less than 4 per cent of a

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GRAFFIS from page 6

professional's income derives from lessons. About 70 per cent of lessons are given to women, because the lesson time and place is inconvenient for men. After 60 years, the half-hour lesson plan seems to be doomed, maybe for the good of golf.

Amos Lapp, 48 years a superintendent, St. Andrews GC, West Chicago, retired. He will become green chairman of courses operated by *Joe Jemsek*. St. Andrews is a Jemsek course. Amos Lapp's sons in charge of courses are Kenneth, now at Coghill CC, and John, who moves from Glenwoodie CC, also a Jemsek course, to succeed his father at St. Andrews.

Clifford A. Wagoner, president, Golf Course Superintendents Assn. of America, says, "National Golf Day 1973 has got to be classed as the Number One event of this year's golf tour."

How right he is, considering the wide scope and value of the PGA's only nationwide fund-raising affair for golf education, turf research, golf therapy in veterans' hospitals and as an aid to indigent professionals. Joe Dey is asking men in the Tournament Players Division to improve their showing in National Golf Day. It steadily has been the poorest of any PGA section. Dey defends his charges by saying that a higher percentage of the TPD contribute their \$1 minimum each year. He's probably right, because there are too many home professionals who are indifferent, lazy or unthinking about getting their members or fee course players to participate in an individualized sport's biggest charity.

Golfers aren't cheap; they simply haven't been told what's being done with the money. Cliff Wagoner knows. He has seen it help young men get through turf management schools on GCSAA scholarships, which get their support from National Golf Day funds raised by PGA members.

Al Radko, research coordinator of the United States Golf Assn. Green Section, which studies and directs the distribution of around 15 per cent of National Golf Day money to golf turf research all over the country, can tell you that the

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GRAFFIS *from page 10*

money in this area alone has accounted for savings and improvements in golf turf maintenance exceeding the \$1.8 million National Golf Day has raised over 20 years.

I have heard intelligent men question the amount National Golf Day allows to the 26 caddie scholarships funds around the country. The money is about 20 per cent of the National Golf Day revenue and is given as aid to ambitious, energetic kids, who are carefully screened.

Tournament pros who get \$5,000 or more for exhibition performances for charities or get \$22,000 to \$40,000 as tournament prize money should blush for what they give to National Golf Day, the public relations gift of the sport that makes them rich. Just think of it, there are more than 11 million American golfers, and National Golf Day doesn't raise \$150,000 any year.

The recent ruling of the United States Golf Assn. allowing camp counselors to devote 10 per cent of their time to teaching golf to kids without the counselors losing USGA amateur status, is a pleasant innovation. It shows that the USGA has quit worrying about the risk of an amateur school teacher becoming professionally pregnant by helping school youngsters get educated in golf.

The Royal and Ancient was years ahead of the USGA in liberalizing the amateur status rule, as it applied to school teachers whose sports instruction included teaching golf.

We never heard of anyone ever giving a slight damn about the risk of being tossed out of amateur classification, nor do we recall any official action being taken. Maybe some school teacher told the USGA about the birds and the bees. Anyway the USGA got realistic and nobody was hurt.

What a bright feature story *Jack Flowers* did in the St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times on *Buddy*, son of Stewart (Skip) *Alexander*, professional at Lakewood CC, St. Petersburg. Young Buddy has been mowing them down at Florida interscholastic kid events and surveying modestly the next step before the tournament circuit journeymen's bracket.

Second-guessing about car paths now is being done by superinten-

dents, green chairmen and golf course architects.

Some experienced men say aeration, topdressing, fertilizing and drainage possibly required in the heavier traveled areas could be done for several years at the cost of a hard surface car roadway and provide turf the course needs.

A beautiful course and faster play would be other desirable results of maintaining the turf for car traffic, the second-guessers say.

Several superintendents and architects believe that on fairways and roughs, well-built and maintained car traffic is distributed, so it does no harm to turf. Bordering greens car traffic should be prohibited. Hence, the fewer car paths, the better.

Michigan's PGA's National Golf Dinner is one of the year's largest PGA affairs. It had 560 this year. Honored as Michigan's Club Pro of the Year was *Gregg Matthews* of the Kalamazoo Elks GC. He lost his sight a year ago, but stays on the job and is learning to play again. Also honored were veteran caddiemasters *Harry Hilton* at Oakwood Hills 32 years, *Bill Langau* at Plum Hollow 26 years and *Sam Moore* 27 years at Knollwood and *Doug Mintline*, the sports editor of the Flint Journal for years.

Robert W. Schroko, now manager, Engineers CC, Roslyn, N.Y. . . . *Fred R. Seitz Jr.* to Shaker Heights, CC, Cleveland, as general manager, coming from Country Club of North Carolina, Pinehurst . . . *James Popovich*, now general manager, La Quinta (Calif.) CC. Popovich moved from general manager, Woodland Hills (Calif.) CC . . . *Gilbert Andujar* named manager Forest Hills G&CC, Chesterfield, Mo. He formerly was assistant to Dewey Kennon, manager of the Meadowbrook CC in Baldwin, Mo.

Chester Horton died recently at Portland, Ore. He was 92. He was at Edgewater GC, Chicago, as professional and encouraged a kid named Chick Evans, who became one of golf's greatest. Horton was the first to write a widely syndicated golf column. He and his brother, Elijah, also a pro, had indoor schools in Chicago in the early 1920s.

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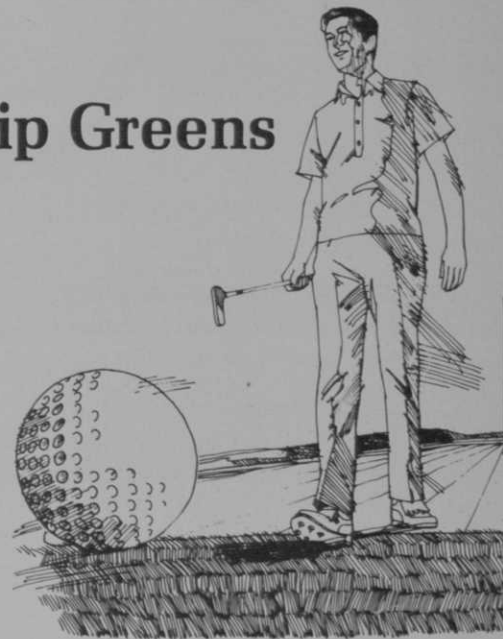
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