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The old pro

Is golf fun or more problems?

Now that I no longer have to work at golf, I get scared at seeing how many times we in the golf business forget that the main reason for golf is fun. Even in the children's classes at clubs I see far too much of the sort of deadly seriousness there is in recruit training in wartime. No wonder the kids lose interest and drop out of classes. They thought golf would be a lot of fun, but before they are allowed to play golf they are made to work at it.

On the road from my home to the club, I pass through a poor neighborhood where a priest has fixed a vacant lot for basketball, baseball, and football. Generally there are some kids on this lot, playing and yelling and excited and in a spirit of vigorous fun that I seldom have seen in junior classes at any golf club.

Why? Certainly the nature of golf isn't dull — even if the game isn't noisy.

Several times last year I looked in on golf classes at colleges. The instruction was technically as good as I'd ever seen, but the atmosphere of the instruction was solemnly studious — as though all the students thought they'd better work hard or they'd flunk the course.

At the club in the attitude toward lessons and play there is far too much tension — instead of the easy, relaxed, and carefree spirit which the member probably needs to escape the load of business duties and worries he carries in earning enough to pay his club bills.

The pro is helplessly involved in members' irate demands for more agreeable starting times and as the innocent and endangered bystander in a tiff between some women members certainly does not have the sunny look and the refreshing air of a man who is in the fun business. The pro should be a pleasant pied piper leading the members from the roaring, crowded hard-time prisons of metropolitan concrete and asphalt to the happy-life-giving golf on the green grass and the rest of the picture of trees, shrubs, and water.

Even in the golf instruction books there is usually a grim, cold tone of household mechanics as how to repair a toilet. When Tommy Armour told in his books about golfers being human beings who wanted to play better so they'd have more fun, he made a bundle on his books. As I look around and think of the moneymaking chances I missed by forgetting golf is fun, I don't hear of many pros who are selling the fun of golf.

Remember: fun is what golfers are eager to buy.

golfbusiness
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