

Pioneer of Movie Teaching Tells His Experiences

AN INTERVIEW WITH HOWARD BECKETT

LIVELY interest in motion pictures as an effective means of golf instruction has been stirred up by the publication of George Sargent's article in *GOLFDOM* with reference to what the P. G. A. is doing in getting studiously shot master-pictures of the stars as a basis for more resultful teaching.

In view of the wide extent of this interest it is helpful for the professional to hear from Howard Beckett, professional at the Capital City Club, Atlanta, about his experience with movie instruction. Howard pioneered in this work and brings out the point that selling the undoubted value of this instruction to the members is one of the difficult jobs that must be done. O. B. Keeler interviewed Howard in the summer of 1924 on this movie instruction and here is how O. B. quotes Beckett:

Starts with Self.

"One of my first subjects was myself. I was not satisfied with the way I was hitting the ball. While I was learning how to use the machine I got a man to take some pictures of me. I found out right away what was wrong. I was letting my hands fly out as the club started down.

"One woman pupil admitted to me that before she saw herself in the movies she never had known what the instructor meant when he told her she was jumping up and down while hitting the ball.

"I didn't know anybody could perform that way in a golf swing," she confessed.

"I have about concluded that all people who play golf have a mental image of how they look while swinging. Rather, it is a picture of how they want to look, very likely founded on the memory of how some good player looked. Not many will admit this, and perhaps most of them really are not conscious that they have such a visualization. I think one reason why most pupils are so set in their way is because their style, good, bad or indifferent, is based on a mental image, objective or subjective, which they regard

as themselves in action. The teacher may tell them over and over again that this or that detail is wrong; but the picture persists and they can't see what is the trouble.

"Now, if the pupil can be shown himself on the screen, actually making a shot, with the fault exaggerated by slowing the action, his mental ideal image is likely to get a jolt—it may even be shattered permanently."

Beckett did some local advertising on motion picture instruction and got lots of publicity on it, short-lived but still so far-reaching that the Prince of Wales had some pictures of himself taken for golf instruction. Even the newspaper paragraphers and editorial writers took up the subject, one scribe forecasting, "the golf enthusiast of the future may be heard boasting: 'I perfected my drive on only 20,000 feet of film.'"

Needs Pro Push.

The Capital City club professional in commenting on his six years' experience with movie golf instruction clearly reveals the need of concerted pro action in getting some standard practice for all professionals in this work and giving it the persistent national publicity it needs so it will be accepted by the public as the pros' construction of a royal road to golf. These two purposes the P. G. A. has in mind according to the Sargent statements in *GOLFDOM*. Movie instruction is planned to be the big feature of the Pro Business conference to be held at Columbus, O., early in 1931.

Howard tells *GOLFDOM*: "while everyone realizes golf instruction with the movies is a wonderful thing I must say that I have not yet been able to put it over in the manner that it warrants. To my mind it is the soundest way for anyone who really wants to learn to play the game. I don't believe there is an average golfer who knows how he looks when he swings on the old apple, and if he could see a motion picture of himself, and have a pro go over it with him, he could almost



Alex Pirie, P. G. A. chief, films Herb Graffis on GOLFDOM'S roof garden, diagnosing reasons for scribe's comical scores

correct his own faults. I always have felt that the day is coming when this movie instruction would be a great thing for the game. Naturally it is good news to me to see that my opinion is being confirmed by the present interest in the subject.

"One of the developments that I am confident will be hastened by use of the movies in golf instruction is a standardization productive of much better scores. Study the swings of all the leading players and you find that the movement of the hands, the pivot, and the position of the club is the same going back and coming down into the ball in every case. It is the easiest swing imaginable and the hardest thing about it is to get the proper timing. This can only be acquired with practice. I have increased my lessons 100 per cent and turned out some fine players by explaining this swing to the pupil. After he gets the feel of it and is conscious of being on the right track, he is anxious to keep on until he has this right swing set in his game."

Unique Point Event Popular on Petaluma Schedule

JOHN CAVANAGH, club captain of the Petaluma (Calif.) G. & C. C., has figured out an event new to the calendar of his club and which proved so interesting it is being featured during the rest of the Petaluma schedule. Henry Benton, sec-treas. of the club, tells about this novel tournament saying that it had its incep-

tion in the necessity of giving all members an equal chance at four prizes of unequal value, donated by one of the members. A special score card was printed, on the face of which were columns for "award" and "penalty" in addition to "hole," "par" and "score." Par on the Petaluma course runs: 435-434-345—435-434-345.

On the back of the score card were printed the following rules for the tournament:

Course rules must be followed. All holes must be putted out.

Players are divided into four flights, according to their regular handicaps.

1st Flight—Players from scratch to 12.

2nd Flight—Players from 13 to 16, inclusive.

3rd Flight—Players from 17 to 20, inclusive.

4th Flight—Players from 21 to 24, inclusive.

Each player must keep his score for each hole and have his card attested by a companion player.

The awards and penalties as noted below will determine the winner of each flight. The golf score will have nothing to do with winning a flight.

A player who pars the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 8th, 9th, 12th, 13th, 15th and 17th holes will receive an award of Five (5) points for each one of those holes he pars.

An award of Ten (10) points will be given for a par on each of the 2nd, 11th and 18th holes.

If a player does not par any of the above holes he will not receive a penalty for failure.

A player who does not par the 5th, 7th, 14th and 16th holes will be penalized Ten (10) points for each of those holes not parred.

Failure to par the 10th hole draws a Five (5) point penalty.

EXTRA AWARDS

For a Birdie—15 points.

For a Eagle—25 points.

For a Dodo—50 points.

A player making a birdie, an eagle or a dodo on a hole for which there is an award for a par will receive credit only for the higher award.

After the winner of each flight is determined, the one who has the best net golf score (actual score made, less his handicap), will get first choice of the prizes. Second best, second choice; third best, third choice, and fourth best, the remaining prize.

All cards must be turned in immediately after completion of 18th hole. Players will keep golf score only. Official scorers will compute awards and penalties.