



On platforms of high school assembly halls Horton Smith demonstrates shots to students and stirs greatest golf interest Peoria has felt.

6,200 SCHOOL-KIDS LEARN

By JACK FULTON, JR.

Horton Smith, Guest Star, Shows Hunch of Biggs, Peoria Pro, Is Sound

CHALK one up for Elmer Biggs, pro at Peoria (Ill.) CC and chairman of the PGA publicity committee. On May 13, due to his well-handled negotiations with the Peoria school board and the principals of that city's high schools, some 6,200 pupils gathered in assembly at their six respective high schools to hear Horton Smith deliver 40-minute lectures on golf. The stunt was one of the greatest promotional jobs ever performed for the good of the game. In addition to fine newspaper publicity both before and after Smith's appearance, practically every high school student in Peoria now has a better understanding of golf and has been given a clear explanation of why learning golf while one is young and muscles are limber is advisable.

Biggs in describing how he went about lining up the high schools, made it plain that a "name" pro as lecturer is an essential part of the plan, because only a small part of the students who will attend the lectures (assembly being compulsory in most high schools) are golfers. Youngsters are always interested in celebrities and will pay closer attention to them than

to a lecturer of whom they have never heard.

"There should be no jealousy or criticism among PGA members over who does the lecturing," says Biggs. "In my mind there is no question but that a well-known tournament player can do the job the best. There is plenty of follow-up work to be done by the local pros."

How Plan Was Promoted

When this idea of promotion among high school students first occurred to Biggs, he got in touch with Horton Smith and laid the plan before him. Horton agreed to do the lecturing. With that detail handled, Elmer started his negotiations with the Peoria school board and eventually secured its approval.

"After being approved by them," Biggs says, "the plan was turned over to the superintendent of schools, who called a meeting of the school principals, so that they could work out a schedule of assembly periods to fit into Smith's tour.

"The important thing that I brought out to the principals was that we were not enthused about just talking to those students who play golf, but we wanted the students

who have never tried the game to listen to the lectures, and a compulsory assembly period was the only solution to this problem, as the thought behind the whole movement was to sell the game of golf to them, feeling that the future of the game depends upon the development of the youngster's interest.

"It should be the duty of each PGA member to carry on this promotional work in the schools after the lecture tours are made. Certainly lecturing to approximately 6,000 students in one day will have its desirable results to Junior Promotional golf workers."

Lectures Well Organized

The lectures themselves were carefully worked out to gain the interest of the pupils at the outset. At all six lectures, Horton was introduced by the coach of the school, thus securing the cooperation of the men who are in charge of golf activities among the youngsters.

In each case Horton would rise, deliver a brief introductory statement and then would hit balls from a cocoa mat into a canvas hung on the stage. This gained the students interest, as they wanted to see action. There was lots of applause after each club demonstration.

Next, Smith commented on the universal

appeal of golf. He made it plain that golf was not a game to replace the students' present athletic interests, but rather was something that was a lot of fun that should be added to everyone's sport knowledge. He named famous athletes in other sports who are ardent golfers and pointed out that these men find relaxation in the game.

Horton urged his eager listeners to take lessons from a PGA pro. "He will be a man who knows the game, and will give you something in the way of good sound rules, which will start you out with a good foundation," he commented.

The balance of the Smith lecture dwelt on the fundamentals of the golf swing, starting with the grip and stance and following with demonstrations of body pivot and follow-through. The lecture ended with an offer by Horton to answer any sensible questions the pupils cared to ask.

It was a long and busy day for Horton Smith. His first forty-minute lecture started at 8:30 a.m., followed by others at different schools at 9:25, 10:10, 11:15, 1:00, and 2:00. By the end of the day he was growing a trifle hoarse, according to newspaper writeups, but otherwise carried through nobly.

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