



Corner of the French Lick lower course shop. Woods and irons are out where golfers can handle them, get the urge to buy.

MR. AVERAGE GOLFER

By MEL SMITH, Pro.,
French Lick Springs, Ind.

MR. AVERAGE GOLFER generally is a capable and successful man in business. Mentally and physically fit, a fine sportsman, 100% loyal toward his club, an ardent fan of the game. He follows exhibition matches, reads articles written by experts about golf and all in all is just about as enthusiastic as a person could be toward the game.

A successful fee-course owner, for many years a private club official, recently commented: "If we had been able to increase decidedly the percentage of players who shoot under 90, the depression would have touched the golf business and golf clubs but lightly—and there would have been thousands more golfers to lighten the blow."

Mel Smith, experienced pro coach, infers that the official was right.

Smith goes at the problem of increasing and protecting golf from the instruction angle—the start of golf interest, club success and pro-shop profits.

As instructor and golf superintendent at the famed French Lick Springs (Ind.) resort, Smith has the opportunity to make close-up studies of numerous cases of Mr. Average Golfer. He reports his conclusion in a way that will stir pro thought and probably give a clearer idea of the pro hiring problem to many club officials.

However, his own game is far from what he would like it to be. His club handicap indicates that. Surely so loyal a supporter of the game should not have to struggle, season after season, with the same handicap, unable to lower his score. Every consideration should be given him.

Strong effort is being made to encourage new players to take up the game, but the consideration Mr. Average Golfer receives is too little. Mr. Average Golfer loves the game, really wants to play a better game. Don't let him fool you about that. He would give most anything to trim his business partner or his pal in the locker room. Mr. Average Golfer may think he is too old, naturally awkward, or impossible. What is to be done about remedying the condition of Mr. Average Golfer?

The first step should come from the directors at his own club. But the officials may give Mr. Average Golfer very little

consideration, when a professional is being hired. They may secure an incompetent so-called "pro," because his compensation will be little or nothing. Therefore, the expense of the professional and the club is cut down.

I more than appreciate the conditions various clubs have been up against during the depression. But why cut down on the professional end when it can be the most important item to keep the membership intact?

A "pro" who has either just turned pro from the amateur ranks because he has won local tournaments somewhere, or can fairly consistently break eighty, may have no knowledge of golf instruction. He can't have or no one else can have unless schooled under a full fledged master professional for a few years, to acquire the knowledge and the art of teaching the game. Well then, Mr. Average Golfer is handicapped from the beginning and must do the suffering. He knows no better. He places his confidence in club officials who hired the so-called pro. Mr. Average Golfer always with that desire to improve, starts taking lessons, hoping that this new pro can give him the inside information that he has longed for. But this so-called pro is only picking up what little experience he can at Mr. Average Golfer's expense.

Pro Must be Competent Instructor

A full-fledged master pro, who has served his time as an apprentice, is not going to render his services to any club for nothing. His professional knowledge of club duties and the art of teaching cost him good years and plenty of good cash. He rightfully demands fair compensation, along with the full privileges of the pro-shop, which undoubtedly belong to him. It seems, however, during these past few years, some club officials who should have Mr. Average Golfer in mind at all times, hesitate to hire a professional because of his ability as a golf instructor.

After a season or two of incompetent instruction, Mr. Average Golfer gets steadily worse. He is disgusted with himself and thinks he is impossible. He decides after these two seasons of trying his level best, and faithfully following these impossible instructions, to quit the game and his club, take up some other sport. The game and his club is about to lose a good, loyal, enthusiastic member for no logical reason. This situation should never exist and I assure you it never would had this

unfortunate Mr. Average Golfer been under the watchful eye of a competent instructor.

Sometimes, after hearing from Mr. Average Golfer his sad story and his attitude toward the game, his playing partners (who play a much better game than he, and who were fortunate enough to begin their golf under a competent instructor), suggest he go to this man whom they know and assure him this fellow can do something for him. So Mr. Average Golfer, still with that spark in him which prevents him from being a quitter, concludes after some tall thinking, as rotten as he is playing now, this pro who was highly recommended can't make him any worse, and decides to give himself one more chance.

The qualified pro encourages him to stick with the game and start now on the right path. So Mr. Average Golfer puts himself in the hands of this pro and I promise you he will soon be back at his club with a steady improvement in his score.

Correct Address Cures First-tee Jitters

From my own experience—and I have given lessons to all types of golfers—too many of them have very little knowledge of addressing the ball. I know if they cannot at least address the ball intelligently they have absolutely no chance ever to execute an orthodox golf swing. If they acquire knowledge of addressing the ball they will not have that first tee complex.

You surely should not have to drive off any tee from under cover. How many times have you watched players driving from the first tee while you were waiting your turn to play? Notice Mr. Average Golfer going through a thousand different movements, getting all tied in a knot, out of position and off balance. Finally he swings at the ball from this awkward position with no result and many times a complete miss. After walking off the teeing ground he says to his caddie or anyone close by, that he can never make a decent drive from that first tee, with all those people standing there. This is a poor excuse. If Mr. Average Golfer had the knowledge of addressing the ball instilled in his own mind, this never would have happened.

Why is it such stars as Lawson Little and Bobby Jones stand out so far superior and ahead of the many thousands of

golfers today? Simply because they were schooled by competent instructors who instilled in their minds the fundamentals that must be had before a proper swing can be executed. I assure you that orthodox golfers of this type just mentioned will not fall apart from season to season, but will continue to play the brand of golf they are playing today for some time to come.

If our up-and-coming young boys and girls are to take the places of our present champions, which they most certainly will have to do, the handicap which Mr. Average Golfer has to contend with will have to be eliminated. I cannot see many, if any, champions in the making unless they are instructed by pros who know instruction.

Jersey Pros in Merry Matches for Gaffney Bucket

PRO golf reached a new high in good fellowship at the Crestmont GC, West Orange, N. J., when some ninety pros of the state turned out last fall as players and spectators for the first annual competition for the "Gaffney Bucket." Event will be held again this fall.

The "Gaffney Bucket" is an old oaken bucket donated by Edward J. Gaffney, president of the Crestmont club, as a perpetual trophy for an annual team match between the foreign-born and the home-bred pros of New Jersey. The event is to be played on the first Monday of every November at Crestmont.

The homebreds, captained by Jim Dante, pro at the Braidburn CC at Madison, won the opening contest, 29 to 4. Dante's men scored 19½ points in the singles matches and 9½ in the foursomes. The foreign side, captained by Jack Forrester of the Hackensack GC, garnered 2½ points in the singles; 1½ points in the foursomes. Following the competition a dinner was served in the main grill room.

Hal Sharkey, sports editor of the Newark Evening News and dean of New Jersey golf writers, was toastmaster. The committee, a permanent one appointed by Gaffney, is made up of Robert N. Pryor, golf writer for the Newark Sunday Call and former executive secretary of the New Jersey PGA, chairman; Joseph M. Byrne, Jr., secretary-treasurer of the New Jersey State Golf Assn.; Johnny Farrell, Baltusrol pro and former National Open champion; Jack Jolly, veteran golf ball manufacturer and dean of New Jersey



Edward J. Gaffney, left, president of the Crestmont GC, presenting the "Gaffney Bucket" to Jim Dante, right, pro at the Braidburn CC. Jack Forrester, center, captain of the foreign born team, looks on.

pros; and Sharkey, who was tournament manager for the winter tour a few years back.

Allotments Made of PGA Places at Pinehurst, Nov. 16-22

MORE THAN 1,600 PGA members—the largest membership in PGA history—are eligible for 36-hole sectional qualifying rounds of the 1936 PGA championship which will be played at Pinehurst, N. C., Nov. 16-22. Qualifying dates for the 28 districts have not been set, but must be played not later than October 27.

The championship field will have 121 starters, 105 of whom must qualify sectionally. Fifteen players are exempt—Manero, Revolta, Hagen, Picard, Runyan, Horton Smith, Sarazen, Wood, Laffoon, Olin Dutra, Armour, Dudley, Watrous, Zimmerman and Schultz.

The number of qualifying places allotted each district follow:

Central New York, 3; Connecticut, 3; Eastern Missouri, 3; Illinois, 7; Indiana, 2; Iowa, 1; Kentucky, 1; New York metropolitan, 9; Michigan, 6; Middle-Atlantic, 3; Mid-West, 2; Minnesota, 3; Nebraska, 1; New England, 8; New Jersey, 6; Northwestern New York State, 4; Northern California, 5; Ohio, 7; Oklahoma, 1; Pacific Northwest, 2; Philadelphia, 7; Rocky Mountain, 1; Southeastern, 5; Southern California, 4; Texas, 3; Tri-State, 3; Western New York State, 2; Wisconsin, 3.

Pro Tourney Early in '37—Date and site for the national PGA 1937 tournament have been announced by George Jacobus, PGA head. The Pittsburgh (Pa.) Field Club will be the scene of the pro's big show which will be held May 24-30. A \$12,000 guarantee gave the tourney to the Pittsburgh club, Jacobus said.