



Here are a few of the 150 pupils now taking weekly lessons from Bill Gordon.

PLANT SCHOOL DRAWS 150

Rockford pro having busy winter and good income from employee golf school

TO W. C. (Billy) Gordon, pro at the Forest Hills CC, Rockford, Ill., and Don Nevins of the Central Illinois Electric & Gas Co. go credit for teamwork that will show far-reaching effects in the employee recreation plans of many large corporations and which most certainly will have a beneficial effect on alert pros' income summer and winter.

What makes the pro job a tough one in which to earn a good living is the long off-season during which comparatively few pros can make money out of the game.

What makes the job of the employees' welfare directors of corporations plenty tough is trying to find interesting and inexpensive recreations for the off-time of the employees. Increased, and sometimes enforced, leisure that employees can not spend pleasantly is a seriously disturbing factor in employer-employee relations. The appeal of golf to all ages and both sexes has identified it to the employees' welfare directors as a game warranting lively encouragement.

Investigations have revealed to corporation executives that golf fundamentally is cheap enough to fit nicely into employees' recreational plans. There are problems they have to overcome, especially with

slot machines and group rates, but these problems are becoming fewer. Corporation officials say that numerous employees have gone out and enjoyed golf at low cost only to come into the clubhouse and drop more money than they can afford into the maws of the slot machines. That means they quit going to the fee courses. There is also the problem of attempting to work up large group business for fee courses, only to have the employees' "quantity rate" deals upset by the inability of fee courses to get together. A small fortune in additional annual revenue for fee courses is being kept out of the course owners' tills because a few owners happen to be afraid they might not get as much as some other owners.

However, the outdoor phase of golf is the secondary phase in the employees' recreation plan worked out by Gordon and Nevin. They started on the basis that many people would individually figure out



Gordon working in the net with one pupil while the rest of the class picks up pointers watching.

their course problems once they had been given the fundamentals of golf play by indoor instruction.

Bill Gordon knows from experience the pro headaches in indoor instruction schools on the usual private basis. He says: "A pro opening an indoor school has a net to buy and install for about \$150. He has rent for 3 or 4 months at \$50 to \$75 a month. Cocoa mats, light, heat and other necessities will run his total investment up to \$500 at least. Then he has to sell instruction, which he should have done before he started his school. It is all a sad business. I know. I have had 3 indoor private schools and after working days and nights have been glad to net \$25 a week. I had to sell a lot of equipment to do that."

Gordon got the tip on the C.I.E. & G. employees' golf school last October while he was running his usual fall clearance sale of clubs and bags at the Forest Hills club. Some of the public service company employees came out to buy sets of irons. To insure satisfactory sales Bill takes his customers to the practice tee near his shop and watches them hit balls. Inasmuch as the swings of the prospective

buyers were not any too good, Bill made a few suggestions, stopped a wild open-faced slice and sold some clubs. Then occurred the idea of putting a golf net in the recreational quarters at the C.I.E. & G. Co., where the employees could get instruction and supervised practice so that by the time spring rolled around the utility company employees would be set for good performances outside.

Don Nevins of the company took to the idea and got a local canvas man to make a net according to Gordon's specifications. The company employees installed the net on their own time. Company employees had thus, at an expense of \$40 in cash, a golf instruction and practice installation that ordinarily would cost \$125.

Employees Get Plan

A mimeographed sheet was passed among the company's 550 employees. It read:

Many employees are interested in the formation of a Golf School where they may receive instructions from a professional at a very nominal cost.

Please express your desires by checking below, or marking your questionnaire "Not interested" and returning it to me.

If we have sufficient interest, we can establish a driving range at the Service Building and have "Billy Gordon," professional, as the instructor.

Here's the Plan—Ten persons to a class. Classes meet once a week for ten weeks. Lessons will be 50c or less, depending on enrollment.

Check time on the day preferred

<i>Time</i>	<i>Mon.</i>	<i>Tues.</i>	<i>Wed.</i>	<i>Thurs.</i>	<i>Fri.</i>	<i>Sat.</i>
5:15						<i>Morning</i>
6:15						<i>class</i>
7:15						<i>for</i>
8:15						<i>children</i>

Check your class below

<i>Ladies</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Man & Wife...</i>	<i>Mixed</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please return questionnaire to Don Nevins

The classes started off with 80. Now there are approximately 150 taking class lessons. The company guaranteed the pro 100 employee students, in groups of 10, for 35 cents per pupil per lesson; thus the pro had a background of \$35 a week and mornings and afternoons free for private lessons for which he gets \$3 an hour paid by the individual pupils, some

of whom are non-employees of the company; among them are company officials' wives.

There are 6 stands with cocoa mats for group swinging with cotton balls for about half an hour before going into the net. In this way, even with 10 people in a class, all get enough individual instruction to keep interest and enthusiasm high. Results are very satisfactory to the pro and his pupils.

Free instruction charts as provided by PROMotion are used by Gordon in his classes and have been found very helpful. The series of lessons started with pitch shots. Gordon says that 60% of the pupils never have had golf lessons previously and have told him that they have long wanted to play golf but never has instruction been made convenient for them. From results to date, he believes that the pupils will graduate onto the courses this spring numerous golfers who will have remarkable first years at the game.

Every evening at 5:15 and 6:15 Monday through Friday he has classes; the Tuesday and Wednesday 5:15 classes being for girl employees. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday he has classes at 7:15 and 8:15. Recently he has had to start classes at 10 and 11 A. M. on Saturdays for the children of employees. The 7:15 and 8:15 classes are mixed classes of company male employees and their wives.

From the company viewpoint the indoor golf has been one of the most satisfactory of all indoor recreation enterprises, and Gordon is highly pleased with the winter income without overhead and the new contacts he makes for selling playing equipment. Illustrated publicity in the company's house organ has been given the indoor classes and word-of-mouth publicity has been so strong that additional time for the group classes is to be scheduled.

Credit Assistant With Assist in Pro Success Box Score

WEBB GILBERT, pro, who makes a business of handling the pro department's member service at the Topeka, Kan., CC, is credited by competent observers with doing one of the country's best jobs of merchandising golf satisfaction.

Gilbert modestly attributes a good part of the success with which the Topeka pro department is handled to two main factors. The first factor, that of being with a club

that is in sound financial condition and run on a businesslike basis, probably is responsible for Gilbert's selection as pro. He tips off the situation by commenting, "I never have been around a club where they have a better bunch of fellows to work for and with than they have here." That "for and with" is the combination pros seek.

The other element in the Gilbert success story is the credit he gives his assistant, L. J. (Dutch) McClellan. Of Dutch, Gilbert says:

"He knows all departments of the business and is a particularly good instructor and salesman. If I want to go to a tournament, play with some of my members, or am busy teaching, I know the business is going to be handled as it should be.

"There are a lot of pros out of jobs, or located where they can hardly make a living. It seems to me the pros who are located at good clubs would be much better off to hire some of these boys as assistants instead of hiring some boy out of his caddie ranks. As you know, it is easier to get a job if you have one and this would afford a good opportunity for these boys to step into a good job. The pro could afford to pay them considerably better than some caddie, because they would get him a lot of business he loses when he is teaching and playing."

Of course the other side of that is the risk of a double-cross by an assistant who may devote more time to trying to get the job of the pro who hired him than to the task of giving the pro cooperation in thoroughly expert handling of the pro department at all times. This sifts down to exercise of canny judgment in selecting the right fellow.

Gilbert's comment on assistants touches a subject that again is coming in for serious study by pro leaders. Numerous thoughtful pros have expressed the opinion that one trouble with the pro job situation today is that many pros don't give the same care to selection, training and reward of assistants that was the order of the day previously.

On the subject of stocks and golf development at the Topeka club, Gilbert comments tersely:

"I try to carry a stock of merchandise large enough to fill any reasonable request. I believe you have a much better chance to make a sale if you have the merchandise on hand, and I don't like the idea of telling a prospective customer that I can order it for him."