



Elmer Biggs of Peoria, one of the country's staunchest advocates of group instruction by pros, is shown here with one of his recent classes.

GROUP INSTRUCTION ? YES !

By JACK FOX, Pro
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WHEN a professional takes the perspective of his business that gives him a broad long-range view and enables him to compare it with other business developments, I am sure that he will agree that two of the most valuable promotion moves that pros have made are:

- (a) Group instruction, and
- (b) Junior instruction.

We have built up a belief by the general public that instruction is essential as a first step in golf. Other games have let their market development depend on the player coming right in and playing without instruction. Consequently we have put up for ourselves a handicap of a sort, but it's a handicap that correctly overcome, will result in strengthening the pros position. Therefore we must take a foresighted, broad attitude toward group instruction of those adults and juniors who are not sufficiently interested in golf, or not sufficiently financed at the moment to pay for golf instruction. If they don't get golf instruction, the chances are they won't become golf players.

I was very much interested by the article on pro activities in junior instruction which appeared in June GOLFDOM. I was especially interested by the remarks of my good friend Danny Williams; but, with the highest appreciation of what

Danny has done and is doing for the advancement of golf among adults and juniors, I take respectful exception to his ideas about the need for junior group instruction being put on a paid basis.

I thoroughly agree with Danny Williams about the specialized nature of the properly qualified pro's work.

Repay Golf for What Golf Has Given

The golf professional of to-day is a specialist and, as such, is entitled to all the compensation that he can get for his efforts. The art of teaching is attained by careful study and years of experience, and this art should not be cheapened by any pro casualty giving free individual instruc-

This year saw record lists of entrants in the various hole-in-one contests conducted by newspapers.

Thirteen hundred and forty-nine shot in the New Orleans Times-Picayune third annual ace competition. No aces have been made in the 3 years of the contest, during which 14,485 shots have been played by 2,879 entrants.

tion. However, that does not mean that we, the pros, should not give in return for what the game of golf has given us. Our foresight in making people golf-minded today will fill our country club memberships tomorrow.

Group instruction to the adults and free group instruction to our members' children is at least part of that answer. Free group instruction to these children throughout the country will mean many thousand potential golfers for tomorrow. This would certainly be a wonderful contribution to the game we love and out of which we earn our living.

Group instruction is in its infancy, but it has, in my opinion, a great future. The number of people who can be taught to swing a club correctly in groups is almost unlimited and from 10 to 12 can be taken on the practice tee for ball-hitting instruction when they have made sufficient progress to warrant it.

The pro who devises a method of group instruction whereby he can teach the golf swing by numbers will find that there is little difficulty in moulding together a sound golf swing and the time taken to do so is much shorter than one would at first expect. The assistant employed by such a pro is indeed lucky and need have no fear of the future. Eminent physicians do more than their share of work gratis because they love their work and these men are much bigger men than we can ever hope to be. If we can imitate them just a little, we would be accomplishing something.

To state that any pro giving free instruction is a poor business man and teacher is unwarranted. The pro teacher who is booked up for weeks ahead and can still find time to give the juniors an hour or so a week and also give helpful hints to his members to make their game more pleasurable, is, certainly, in my opinion, a much better business man than the one who charges a nickel every time he moves.

Free group instruction to members' children is the best advertising a pro can get and any good business man will give you the answer to good advertising.

Any pro who gives free instruction with the idea that it must positively sell golf clubs and equipment is indeed a poor salesman. A good salesman sells himself first and his product afterwards.

Let every country club and its pro organize a junior club, give the youngsters every encouragement and see the increased interest and activity at the club.

Spalding Discontinuance of 35 Retail Stores Will Boost Pro Volume

SPALDING'S discontinuance of its retail stores in 35 cities marks a major change of policy that reflects merchandising progress of pro golfers. The new policy extends Spalding's reliance upon pro outlets for its golf retailing, and would not have been placed in effect had the Spalding officials entertained doubt of the pros' capacity for stacking up alongside any other sporting goods retailers.

Pros will be one of the 3 major channels through which Spalding sports goods will be sold. The other two will be the Spalding Wholesale Dept. serving schools, colleges and athletic organizations; and sports goods dealers in all principal cities.

Charles R. Robbins, pres. of A. G. Spalding & Bros., in commenting on the pro angle of the policy change, said:

"Spalding retail stores always worked hand-in-hand with the pros. These establishments, however, did a substantial volume of golf business with a good-spending class of golfing trade that the pros had not been successful in reaching.

"We have watched the development of keen merchandising sense and energy in pro golf with great interest, hoping for the time when the expert standard of merchandising and player service in supplying equipment, would become so general that we could confine our major attention in golf, to manufacturing.

"The right time has arrived. The professionals have identified themselves as such alert and competent factors in the retailing of high-class golf goods that we relinquish a tremendous annual volume of golf goods retailing, confident that the pro abilities will protect this quality volume.

"I am sure that the thoughtful pros who are the leaders in golf goods retailing appreciate that the Spalding new policy is the most significant sign of pro merchandising competence that has been made, and that placing at the disposal of pros, the volume of successful golf departments in 35 cities' stores, is certain to be a factor in pros' increased prosperity in 1939."

FIRST gate money for a golf match is said to have been collected in 1892 at a pro match between Jack White and Douglas Rolland.