

School Golf Clicks Here

AN OLD athletic storeroom that formerly housed the printing equipment of the Peoria Opinion is now being used as an indoor 'golf laboratory' by students of Peoria Central high school at Peoria, Ill. Carroll Bockwitz, mathematics instructor and golf sponsor at the school, is the person most responsible for building up golfing interest to the point where the students flock to the new practice haven after school, on Saturdays and on holidays.

There are generally more applicants for practice time than can be comfortably taken care of, but Bockwitz manages somehow to work each student into the program of instruction that he has found most effective in teaching beginners. Under Bockwitz' direction, the Peoria Central golfers crashed through to their first state championship in 1938, and despite the fact that several of the stars of the squad graduated, another strong team is seen for the 1939 season. Conference and city titles have also been won by Bockwitz's Peoria Central squad in the last three years.

The students have worked with Bockwitz in the metamorphosis of turning an old, unused room into an ideal indoor golf practice site. The 'laboratory' now contains driving tees, nets, chipping tees, and a large bulletin board covered with articles and diagrams of the proper swing, grip, etiquette of the game, etc.

Camera Points Out Error

"The camera doesn't lie," in Bockwitz' motto, and every few days he takes pictures of the boys as they start and finish their swing, and then compares these shots with the swings of the pros. Bockwitz is now working to obtain motion pictures showing the experts in action. The 'laboratory' has been in operation since February first, and will continue in operation until weather permits the golfers to move outdoors. Bockwitz tells of the golf plan at Peoria Central:

"Promotion efforts in golf began at Peoria Central in the spring of 1936. Art Andrews, pro at Mt. Hawley CC, and Peoria CC's professional, Elmer Biggs, cooperated with the athletic department of the school in getting the golf program under way. Biggs and Andrews gave talks in general assemblies, and Horton Smith gave the kids a treat in shot execution in

an assembly demonstration. Motion pictures on golfing technique were also presented and explained.

"After these carefully arranged assembly programs, there was provided class instruction for more than 300 students, who were interested in more thorough and personal guidance. These assembly programs and demonstrations, we knew, would serve to create interest in arranging classes for golf instruction, and we also realized that very little golf knowledge could be acquired by the students watching these demonstrations who had had little previous experience or training. We had to give them some more personalized instruction, as skill in golf must be developed by an understanding of the fundamental methods, followed by carefully guided practice.

"From the accompanying photo, you must observe that our driving nets are not the most attractive thing to look at; they are of canvas that is used around the athletic field at football games. Our practice room was prepared from available space and available material. The squad cleaned the room and put up the canvas. They worked the thing out care-

Photo Courtesy Peoria Star



Student driving into one of the improvised nets in the Peoria Central golf 'laboratory.'



Photo Courtesy Peoria Star

Bockwitz (center) is shown explaining proper grip technique to a group of interested pupils in golf at Peoria Central High School.

fully to determine just what position the nets should be placed to best avoid glancing balls. The boxes are cheese boxes from the cafeteria. The platforms are from the boys' gymnasium. It would seem that any school could develop the same facilities.

"It was interesting to see how the boys were able to dig up old magazines from which articles explaining golfing technique were taken. We covered an old table tennis table with the best articles, and had enough so that we were able to rotate them for a bit of variety. They brought in copies dating back to 1931.

"Interest has been running at a high level and the boys all say that they have learned more golf in the past few weeks than in all their golfing experience. With warm days coming along every once in a while now, the boys have a tendency to chase out for a little outdoor practice, but they always come back the next day with even greater interest in the indoor drills. They feel they will be more free of jitters during this coming season's matches, and base their conclusion on the fact they'll

Tom Murphy, pro at Cape Ann GC, observes that young players since group instruction of juveniles has become so popular, have become such roving mirrors of their instructors' styles it's almost possible to tell who has taught a kid from watching the youngsters swing.

Although the lack of imitative aptitude makes golf instruction of adults a more difficult job than juvenile tutoring, Tom's of the opinion that the kids' imitations are going to be a big factor in reminding pros to pattern their own swings to a classic form.

have a much better understanding of the game and of themselves.

"Each boy pays for his share of the expense of taking pictures of his swing by charging him according to the number of shots taken. This picture-taking business has been most helpful in getting a concise idea of what the player is doing and in convincing the player of his faults. Golfers often have a resistance to suggestions of changes in the methods they follow, but the boys seem to enjoy having their methods picked to pieces when shown their faults in picture form. They also derive benefit in thus being able to discuss, from the pictures, the particular styles of other members of the squad.

Any School Can Copy Project

"I want to make strong point of the fact that nothing is being done at Peoria Central that is the least bit unusual, or that cannot, and is not being done by many other schools. The boys liked golf, they found someone willing to put in the necessary time, and they just went to work using materials that most any school has plenty of—space, and old, unused bits of equipment lying around the athletic department. In golf the students get the exercise they need, have fun, and the person or persons handling the instruction reap the same benefits. Students thus given an early start in a game they will be able to play, skillfully, for a greater part of their life, get to know the value of competent golf instruction, needed by them if they are to enjoy golf, thereby creating a huge market for the professional's services in the years to come."

Hal Sharkey Dies—Hal Sharkey, first tournament bureau manager for the PGA, died of pneumonia at Mountainside hospital, Montclair, N. J., March 27. Sharkey had been ill a week. He was sports editor had been ill a week. He was the Newark News sports editor at time of his death.

Sharkey had been a sports writer for 25 years, and in 1918 began specializing in golf. He did golf and its pros a lot of good. He was a grand, genial companion; a fellow of wide knowledge and sound judgment. He is mourned by hundreds of golfers who knew him personally and regarded him highly.

Sharkey is survived by his widow, the former Miss Lola Pursley of Jacksonville, Fla., his father, a brother and a sister.