

# Details of a Well Rounded Instruction Program

By Charles Oakley

FOR some time past I have been attempting to establish a schedule for teaching golf to groups that would be both interesting and instructive. At last the opportunity was offered me at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Colo., in connection with the Adult Education and Recreation conference held last Aug. 29 to Sept. 16. There, under-graduate credits were given by the university to those completing a satisfactory schedule combining all phases of adult education and physical recreation.

On the day announcements were made that golf lessons were to be given we had so many students up for transfer to golf that a limit had to be set at 50 and an extra hour after school hours had to be arranged so as to take care of as many as possible. I arranged my schedule as I had long wished to do; that is, to hit all the different types and classes of players from the beginner who had never even seen a golf course to the advanced tournament player.

Arranging my class in groups of tens and then dividing them in pairs I started the beginners putting back and forth between each other; then the advanced groups were started at approach and chip shots, etc., according to their ability or lack of ability. Then I moved through these groups showing the correct grip.

The space used for these groups was a large grassed area directly in front of the men's dormitory on the campus. Lacking space for long iron and wood shots, I used cotton practice balls for these instructions.

Now with my divisions of putting—pitching—chip shots—long irons—and woods, I was able to move my students along as I wished from one department to another as they progressed, but I always managed to keep each group at ten so as not to have too many or too few in any one group. My advanced players wanted work in each division so it was easy to keep rotating them all.

As the course of instruction was to be a short course, it soon became apparent

that if I was to make headway with such a large group I had to eliminate all unnecessary details and only show the student how to grip and swing and not go into detail as to how not to do it. In other words I never used "don't do this."

## Avoids All "Don'ts"

I always said "do this." This was a revelation to me as I learned from this group that by showing them how to do a thing one way they didn't worry so much about doing it wrong. Neither did I show them what caused a hook or slice. But I always worked along the line to hit a ball straight as far as you could and no farther; if it sliced, don't hit it so hard. "Keep your strength within your timing."

I do agree that it is necessary for advanced players to know what causes a hook or slice but I also know that different individuals have different faults that will cause a ball to hook or slice and when a student is taught how to hook or slice, they are more apt to continue going from one extreme to the other than they are if they only concentrate on hitting the ball straight.

I concentrated on teaching the grip. In my mind the grip is the most important of golf fundamentals. If the grip is taught correctly and learned sufficiently by the student, his greatest difficulties are over because the correct grip or incorrect grip is telegraphed to the rest of his body through his hands and arms and is directly responsible for his timing and result of the shot. I feel now that the students attending my classes benefited greatly from this as they can now go to their respective pros for further seasoning with the knowledge of the importance of the correct way to hold a club.

After a half hour of grip and swinging practice I called a general assembly and lectured on golf's place in our everyday life. At this hour, the routine was pretty near the same except, of course, the lectures varied, covering etiquette, rules, fundamentals, club construction, ball construction, course play, stance, address, types of play, (match and medal), care of equipment, care of the course, USGA,

PGA and Golf Promotion. Then the class was moved to a golf course where we went through a match play tournament for my 16 advanced players, with the beginners acting as officials, markers, caddies, etc. It was surprising to note the number of questions arising during this tournament that had to be referred to the rules committee to settle.

Regardless of the belief of the student beginner that golf is easy and fun, there is work connected with learning to play and unless the instructor uses diplomacy and tact in arranging his schedule, the student is apt to become discouraged through too much work and not enough fun. So the instructor must keep his schedule well balanced.

In attempting to outline a definite procedure for group instruction I found it very important to cover the different classes of players as a whole.

I also attempted to classify the beginners and without any reflection on any individual I wish to set down here the different types a pro must work with, as I saw them as beginners: A. Eager (over-anxious) B. Lazy. C. Inquisitive. D. Conceited. E. Inferiority Complex. F. Physical Defects.

So it is evident that each beginner must be taught separately, after completing a course in group instruction, if he wishes to master golf.

At the present time I am instructing golf at two high schools and a junior college, also at the City Park Golf course where I am pro. I have plenty to do to keep me busy.

## USGA Frowns on Long Spikes

**I**N view of damage done to putting greens of golf courses by long, heavy and sharp spikes now in use on some golf shoes, the USGA is endeavoring to have shoe manu-

facturers change the size and the character of such spikes.

"Tearing of fine grasses on greens creates problems not only in greenkeeping but also in enforcing and interpreting the rules of golf," says the USGA. "Grass so torn cannot be pulled out without violating the rules, if its root is still in the ground, for it is not a loose impediment under Definition 12. Further, it may not be pressed down, for under Rule 28 the line of putt must not be touched except by placing the club immediately in front of the ball in the act of addressing it and in removing loose impediments; in moving any loose impediment with the club it must not be laid with more than its own weight upon the ground, nor must anything be pressed down either with the club or in any other way."

## Golfers Now Ask: "But Can He Teach?"

**G**OLFERS are getting much more excited about instruction. During the past two years there has been a noticeable increase in number of lessons given. This increase has been accompanied by the development of a more critical attitude among the students.

To show how a representative of one type of golf pupil looks at a phase of pro instruction, we quote from a letter received by GOLFING. The writer is a Chicago flour merchant:

"Teaching is an art for which a very high percent of the pros have not prepared themselves either by training or education. By and large, a pro is a man who has acquired a fairly good golf swing but has not acquired the art of teaching that swing.

"In the medical profession, pseudo-scientists and dishonest and incompetent individuals are called quacks. If the same yardstick for measuring the quality of golf pros were used, there are many who would fall into the quack classification. The licensing of medical practitioners is under legal supervision. "Turning pro" is about as easy as going into the grocery business excepting that a grocer needs capital."

It's a pretty strong rap, and, of course, not generally applicable, but it shows you one of the problems the pros as a group have to tackle in establishing themselves and their instruction service on a basis fairly immune to attack.

Passaic County Golf Club, Preakness, N. J., has begun publication of a four page monthly club bulletin that, until it can decide on a name, it is calling "??". The newsy little periodical has been conducting a naming contest among members of the club, and selection is expected to be made shortly. Editor is John S. West, and Darrell Shepherd is handling business details.

Interesting columns in the ?? are conducted by Kent Bradley and Dick Kerney. Kent's is called "Within Course Bounds," and Kerney bats out a piece each month entitled "Through the Lobby."