

Pupil's Physique and Temperament Determine Swing He Must Have

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A STUDY of the records of national championships shows that each year there are a number of veterans who perform very well, notwithstanding their inability to devote as much time to their own games as do many of the expert younger players. Such performances are made despite the handicap of years and of a temperamental inability to get keyed-up to tournament pitch as the younger players do.

This long competitive life of the sound older golfers may be lost sight of because of their failure to make spectacular winning records that get them first places to the same extent as the meteoric younger players. However, in the long stretch of the older players' excellent performances in competition there is a great selling point for the pro who really knows his job. That selling point is the value of a swing so well grooved that it assures steadiness in play.

Brilliant Putting Upsets Oldsters

Time after time in recent years, the phenomenal performances of the younger players have revealed that oldsters have been better to the green but have lost their advantage there to the amazing putting of the recent crop of brilliant young golfers.

I am inclined to believe that older players whose form and knowledge of the game are excellent often weaken from the physical fatigue of qualifying rounds or the tension and excitement of competition, including the distraction of friends who entertain or visit with the player during and between rounds.

Nevertheless, these older players continually are giving demonstrations of the value of sound golf form, which is the main thing that we have to sell in pro instruction.

Part of our service to our members lies in correctly judging how far we can apply a sound swing to a pupil's game. We may give ourselves an utterly impossible task by allowing the pupil to get the vain hope

that he or she may get down in the low seventies after a series of lessons from us. Privately, we may be delighted and satisfied that we have done our jobs with expert effectiveness if we can get some of our pupils shooting consistently around 100.

If I listed the points making for a championship player, I should put early and consistent practice of the game as a first essential. A few of our champions, Walter Travis and Mrs. Hill as examples, started the game as adults, but these are exceptions.

Next I should put native ability; good muscle control and balance. Good motor coordination may be partly a matter of training, but there are individual differences which can be observed in teaching beginners, children as well as adults. Native ability includes also good vision, eyes which can be trained to accuracy in judging distances or estimating the effect of wind or the roll of the green.

When we can recognize these qualities in some of the younger students who come to us, we consider ourselves exceedingly fortunate, and I dare say there is not a competent professional in the country who hasn't gone far out of his way to help a youngster make the most of golf potentialities.

But, when we get the older people we have a difficult problem of doing a lot with sharply limited physical abilities and the lack of time or temperament required by the development of a championship type of golf game.

No Easy Task to Groove Swing

Then it takes considerable genius to groove a good golf swing. The job calls for all the experience and patience we have acquired in years of teaching the game.

In golf instruction the tutor must show penetrating judgment in recognizing the extent of possibilities in a pupil, and directing the instruction accordingly. A music teacher isn't expected to develop a Rachmaninoff or a Kreisler frequently from among the pupils. We can't expect to teach our pupils so they become Bobby Jones' or Joyce Wethereds. But we can set our sights on giving each one of them the soundest sort of a swing for their physiques and temperaments and thus prove ourselves to be artists and scientists rather than merely handymen around the lesson tee.