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## SHOULD PROS BE SENT TO SCHOOL?

By Roland Wingate

A GOLF professional is primarily a teacher. A few pros get in the headlines once in a while, and a few pick up some prize money or exhibition gate receipts now and then, but day in and day out, the vast majority of us are primarily teachers. We sell balls and clubs, but shop profits often are not to be compared to the money we can earn from a full schedule of lessons right through the week. Shop profits and lessons usually are in close relation.

Obviously, one of the best ways for a professional to bring more pupils to his practice tee is to build up a reputation as an expert instructor. Now any man who desires such a reputation is bound to find, sooner or later, that he must work for it—and work hard.

Yet given all willingness to work and eagerness to learn, where is the ambitious young man to turn and what can he do to qualify as a teacher? The fact remains that golf instructors still expect to be born and not made, and too many husky young caddies are growing up with the idea that because they can get around 18 holes in the 70's and rewind a club shaft, the game of golf owes them a living as professionals.

Not more than a handful can make even a living as tournament players. If the rest of them would follow golf, they must follow it as teachers.

But where can they learn anything about this side of the business?

If they wanted to be lawyers, doctors, undertakers, or plumbers there are definite places where almost every such calling can be learned, and definite standards that must be attained before a man can become licensed to set a bone or wipe a joint in any civilized community.

### Pros Must Train Teachers

Not so in this golf business. Our apprenticeship system dates from the days of the gutty ball and the wooden shaft, and it's time we went to work and did something about it instead of depending on the natural development of instruction

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genius. There are plenty of bright, clean, eager, honest youngsters ambitious to break into the pro ranks. We owe it to them and to their future pupils to see that these boys are developed into real teachers. Yes—work and guesswork will get them nowhere, and the standards of our profession and our game can improve only as each generation of instructors becomes well trained.

"Very well," you say, "so what? Are we to go out and raise endowments, build marble halls and have our caddiemasters, clubmakers and assistants living in dormitories and wearing fraternity pins so that some day they may have a framed diploma and a license from the state to practice as golf instructors?"

While education on such an elaborate scale might be fun for those exposed to it, education on a reasonable scale is essential, if pro golf is to make real progress.

A decent education in the fundamentals of teaching as distinct from playing can be supplied at a very small cost, if we use the talent and the facilities already available.

### Better Follow Greenkeeping Lead

Greenkeepers have already shown what splendid educational work can be done along comparable lines by the fine courses they put on in co-operation with the agricultural facilities at state colleges.

Let us profit by their example.

Here is a job that the PGA can do—and do with great credit to the organization and to every member in good standing.

Why not start now? Why not begin at once to organize schools in every district to run two or three evenings a week during the winter?

Each local president can select a small staff of instructors from among the senior expert teaching professionals in his district. Let them map out a schedule of subjects to be covered and demonstrations to be given. Let each instructor take turns handling a few classes. The time he would be asked to donate would be relatively little, and his recompense would come in the rapid improvement of his own assistants and proteges.

The object of course would be to develop every member of the class in two directions: first, in the power to size up the game of any amateur—no matter how good, and second, in the ability to explain clearly and helpfully just how the game can be improved.

Expense of conducting the school? Why

should there be any? Plenty of clubs will be glad to donate a place in which to hold such schools.

### Teaching Golf to the Masses

Once the classes are well under way the students themselves could be given opportunities to apply what they have learned by giving lessons under the coaching of the senior instructors.

This can be done by the clinic method just as in medicine or dentistry. Here in Boston, for example, we have an institution known as the Forsyth dental clinic. Those who cannot afford the services of private dentists can come here, and free of charge, their teeth are attended to by students of the Harvard dental school who do the work under the close supervision of some of the finest dental surgeons in the profession.

Our golf clinics should be thrown open to youngsters, to caddies and to players on high school golf teams who would be glad of the chance to have free lessons from student professionals under the expert guidance of the leading senior pros in the district.

What an opportunity for these young players! What a break for the ambitious lad who wants a real training as a golf instructor! What a fine challenge to the abilities of our best professionals—and, above all, what a splendid chance for the PGA to set up real standards of proficiency that would enable the clubs to get a line on the best golf instructors in the rising generation!

We have the men. We have the means. It seems to me the whole problem comes down to one vital question: Have we got the energy and the ability to work together to organize such a plan and to put it to work for the advancement of our profession?

### WPA Offers Cut-Rate Instruction.—

Group golf instruction at the modest price of 25 cents for 12 lessons, one of the latest WPA projects, is the subject of a recent piece by Billy Sixty, golf editor of the Milwaukee Journal who conducts the well known column, "Going Like Sixty," in that paper. The lessons, which were offered by pros Tom Dobson and George Kinsman, Sr., in a downtown Milwaukee office building, got under way last January. The series was attended by a capacity enrollment of 600 from the beginning.

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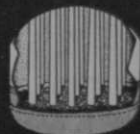
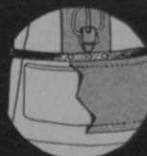


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