

My Instruction Plan Brings Profit

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HAVING been associated with my club nearly 16 years, I often think back to the days when our membership had a waiting list, and to the time there were days I wished I had no lessons. Members sought my services, so there was no need for solicitation.

But since the change in economic conditions my lesson revenues began to decrease very decidedly. The effect was shown on merchandise sales as well. This condition existed, I believe, generally. My hat goes off to any pro who showed an increase during those slim years. He must have had something.

I guess I was patient too long, as I kept assuming the next year always would bring back the better year. But while conditions have shown a slow, steady rise in the last three years, my lesson revenue did not rise with it. I began to realize I was giving plenty of first tee, tap room and locker room lessons, for which there was no remuneration. I was getting a number of one lesson jobs, too. Any pro who says he can guarantee a sound game in one lesson should put it in writing. I want to read it.

Being associated with a private club, my solicitation naturally is limited. Advertising and the use of the telephone did not seem to bring satisfactory results. It was quite common for the member to say, "Thanks for calling, Walter," and "I will try to make it next week." Then it rained, then it was too cold, then it was too hot, then "I am leaving town for a while." Were these just alibis or didn't my knowledge of the game merit their help? In conversations with various members I found that plenty were willing and they admitted they needed the lessons, "if they could just find the time."

Sends Letter to Members

So last year I made a personal survey of an unlimited instruction plan I had and found the reception good, good enough so that the success of it to me was assured before my letter went out. This was the letter:

"Dear Member:

I have a plan to help you improve your golf game that I hope will interest you.

Here it is:

I will give you as many lessons as you care to take for the whole season, for \$10.00. And I will keep a record of your progress, starting on May 1st, and continuing until September 15th. I agree to give you a half hour lesson between 9:00 A. M. and 6:00 P. M. on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of each week, excepting holidays. And, of course, I shall be glad to consult with you about your game at any time.

I also agree to furnish, at no extra cost, practice golf balls and tees, you to pay for the caddie's services in retrieving balls.

Maybe this service will appeal to some other member of your family as well as yourself—your wife, a son or a daughter. Of course, this same plan is offered them.

A great many club members already have taken advantage of this offer. And if you will fill out and kindly sign the enclosed card, and mail it back to me, I shall be happy to enroll you.

Or, if you desire further information, please call for me at the club, or 'phone me at the club, 2-6701, or at my home, 2-6620."

Some have signed up who have never taken a lesson from me, others have signed up because they do not feel obligated when they ask me about their problems. I find myself gaining quite a few 5 to 10 minute lessons which are usually helpful to the advanced golfer.

Lesson Merit Demonstrated

Perhaps the biggest feature are the results which can be obtained by the pupil. That, in my opinion, will be the plan's biggest advertisement. I am getting the opportunity to show the merits in teaching. In other words, I am trying to bring back the word—'lessons,' and not just lesson.

I am now assured of a 50% increase in lesson revenue, and this may reach 75%. Naturally, it will affect income from single lessons but this will be added to my anticipated revenue. Further, it is giving me some nice working capital.

Of course, I have tried to show only the good parts of the plan. I am not sure just how it might work at a municipal

course or at some private clubs. I do not know what effect it may have in years to come, but I am inclined to think it will be most favorable. With this plan I have eliminated class lessons and bargain series. I am a believer in class lessons only in schools.

Now, when it rains, or is too hot, or too cold, it gives me ample time to check my stock, rearrange same, or catch up with some correspondence. There's no longer the thought that I'm losing out on some needed money, just because of the weather. I did not have to specify that this plan was contingent on so many les-

sons because I had most of them lined up before my letter went out, but it may be well to give this some thought.

I am taking pictures of my pupils with the purpose of aiding myself. This should also be interesting to the pupil. Then at the end of the year I can show a decided contrast in results from start to finish. Possibly, too, these pictures will make a swell feature at some party.

I might say that I expect to increase my sales of merchandise; in fact, the plan has already shown its effect in increased sales of equipment.

Flash Photo Analyses Give Instruction Pointers

MUCH scientific data of value in teaching has been brought to light by flash photographs taken at the research laboratory of A. G. Spalding & Bros. Pictures of a golf ball being hit, for instance, plainly indicate two things, among other points:

(1) The player who says he sees the ball being hit, is no more seeing the exact contact than he sees lightning as it flashes. The action is far too fast to be seen as it occurs.

(2) The player who thinks he gets a deliberate hook or slice by tricky hand action at instant of contact is kidding himself.

Duration of contact of wooden head and ball is $4/10,000$ ths of a second. Try to do any tricks in that brief period.

Another point that stands out in the flash pictures of the ball being hit is the

terrific strain to which ball construction is subjected. The pictures show the wisdom of paying enough for a ball so it can withstand, especially in its internal construction, the beating that it gets.

Ball pictures were taken with the club being swung by a driving machine that propelled a Spalding Dot approximately 250 yards.

Notice that the ball reaches substantially its maximum flattening before its front edge moves at all. Notice, too, that as the ball is compressed horizontally, its vertical diameter elongates, and similarly, as it reacts from the compression, in leaving the club, the horizontal diameter is stretched, and the vertical shortened. These pictures provide valuable clues to the stresses to which the interior of the ball is subjected.

