

Golf School Teaches Pro How to Score in \$

By FRED SCHOFIELD

Marina Golf School, San Francisco

There is a post-graduate course in golf pro business in conducting a golf school. You have to get your own "members," you have no guarantee of anything and you have an overhead that really makes you wince when you add it up. Pros at clubs whose members have no idea of the pros' cost of doing business can appreciate the burden of overhead the golf school pro assumes the minute he opens a first-class establishment. You have to make energetic solicitation of your customers. They don't come to your "club" as members come to the course to play.

Considering the foregoing and other handicaps to golf school financial success it is no wonder that comparatively few of the schools have made profits commensurate with the amount of time a diligent pro puts into this type of enterprise.

Nevertheless, my school is a financial and service success. I don't want this statement to be considered a boast, for I'm not making any star tournament player's income out of it but I'm netting what would compare very favorably with the income of a pro who is on the job at almost any representative good, active club.

In this business of mine I've learned and applied some things that I believe will be of interest and help to my friends on pro jobs at clubs. So I'll pass along, as frankly as I can, what I believe to be the chief reasons for the success of my school.

Primarily I believe that at a school I may have a bit of an edge over the pro at a club. People come to my school because they are keenly interested in learning to score better. Those who don't come in voluntarily I go after. I get them by giving them reasonably strong assurance that I can greatly increase the percentage of their good shots and sharply reduce the number of their poor shots.

You and I have told each other repeatedly, and I've read in *GOLFDOM* many times, that a primary impulse accounting for taking golf lessons is the desire to have the greater enjoyment of the game that a good score promotes. In my school business building I've discovered that the "fun" element is NOT the most effective factor in inducing adults to take golf lessons, getting them in the best mood for absorbing

instruction, and getting them determined to keep at it until they show results of instruction.

Pride Sells Golf Lessons

The most effective selling theme is pride, or perhaps vanity. The vast majority of people who have high scores at golf are somewhat embarrassed by their scores, regardless of their pretense at jolly indifference. What keeps them at the game is hope everlasting, the fact that others are as bad or worse at scoring, and the charm of the game in providing an entertaining escape from confining, laborious and worrying work in offices, factories and homes.

When you gear your efforts to their wonderment at being so poor while others of apparently no better physical or temperamental qualifications are so good at scoring, then you have them in the right frame of mind for being cooperative and receptive to your instruction.

The development of this psychology I am convinced is one of the basic reasons for establishing a golf interest which means steady, profitable business for me.

I see in my school business the profit possibilities of another angle the pro can play up more than some of the fellows do. That is making the pupils feel that they are "insiders" in golf and know the gossip, the whys and the wherefores of what's going on in the game.

Bulletins As Education

I have made sure that there is a fine, bright "atmosphere" of golf around my school. One of the ways in which I develop that and give my customers helpful close-ups is by my bulletin board. I always try to have interesting and specific information for my pupils in these bulletins. A lot of pros have bulletin boards on which there are advertising announcements. In my case I try to make the bulletins educational in a way that encourages the customer to sell himself.

For instance, the day this was written I had on my board a bulletin about common-sense in buying golf balls. That isn't because I, or any other pro, have been able to get all the balls I can sell now but it is because the instruction of a pupil with



Office of the Marina Golf School.

respect to the best ball for his game is definitely a pro service. You and I know that the balls account for a few strokes difference in the games of better players and probably more strokes when the high handicap player uses a thin-covered high-compression ball.

This is a tough, but important, point to get across to the common golfer but I am sure that my bulletin helped make the point sink in.

A bulletin also goes into detail about the importance of having golf clubs exactly fitted to the player instead of buying sets at random. Again, I hardly need to remind any pro that I could sell many more clubs than I am able to get. But these bulletins look ahead. There is going to come a day when golf club production will be large and there will be a great many retail outlets for them. I want myself protected then by having my people know the plain common-sense of buying clubs fitted by a specialist who knows their games.

Foresight in Pro Service

I certainly have been convinced by innumerable incidents that the pro who is constantly keeping in mind the long range idea of his relations with his customers has every sale an ad that helps make future sales.

In this respect, the pro has to be especially careful in the sale of shoes. Particular attention should be paid to the comfort of shoes rather than being governed entirely by the looks. I feel very happy when a customer comes in or phones and says: "Fred, I played today and the shoes are great. They feel like I had worn them for months." Every time, for years, when that player wears those shoes he may be reminded of the highly satisfactory purchase he made at my shop.

Lessons have been like clubs, balls and bags. The demand has been greater than

the supply of lesson time available. Again, in the golf school, the pro has to be a careful businessman. Time is money for him. Yet I always have felt that golf cannot be taught hurriedly. I often find that I accomplish much more during the last 10 minutes of a lesson than during the longer time previous. In between the lessons I insist on supervised practice. In that respect I believe the school pro may have an advantage over the club pro who cannot supervise practice as closely as one can when the pupils are in nets.

Feel of a correct swing, of course, is highly important for the pupil to acquire, but feel is the most difficult thing in the world to teach. Teachers of any manual performance will confirm that statement. However, what I can and do teach in helping the pupil acquire correct sensing of the swing, is the REASON WHY the ball was topped, hooked, sliced or otherwise improperly hit.

I specialize in introducing a "starter" of 6 lessons, (with practice when necessary). My pupils at the end of this series of golf lessons are able to give you most of the answers,—in other words explain the cause of the result, whether good or bad.

In conjunction with the lessons, I also make a point of checking their golf equipment, and repair it as needed. I impress them with the idea that slamming clubs down in the bag, and dropping the bag on the course, rather than setting it down gently, are points to watch.

In the golf business the golf professional makes many friends, particularly among his pupils. With this in mind I make my place of business a place of comfort, and try to have all conveniences for the golfer. Many of my customers drive over probably just for a golf chat, and to hear anything I may have new for them in the way of golf gossip. Some come in for a friendly game of bridge, or to practice their golf shots, or to read my library of golf.

In the evening every once in a while I show motion pictures of the golf stars in action, and other sport shots, with a 16MM projector. This meets with great success, and at a later date I intend doing lots of photographic work on golf.

I, as a rule, compete in most of the nearby golf tournaments. Upon my return to the city my clientele is more or less interested to know just what went on, so we spend some pleasant times chatting about "thisa and thata."

I myself feel we pros are engaged in the finest sport there is. The duty of every golf professional is to make every effort towards the betterment of golf in every respect.

Make the customer feel at home; give
(Continued on page 62)

Golf School Teaches Pro

(Continued from page 34)

him the best of service, (if the item is not in stock, make an attempt to get it), and give him all the value possible in teaching the game.

A married couple, (both pupils of mine), went to Manila for three years. Before they left I contacted Manila, and as soon as they are desirous of playing golf there, all they have to do is to go see the pro friend of mine I introduced them to, and I

am sure they will receive the best of attention.

In the event any of my pupils leave for a golfing vacation, I usually give them an introduction to the pros they would come in contact with, and rest assured should any golfer come in my place with a word from an out-of-town pro, they will be given every service.

Then we have the ladies to think about. My wife, a fine Texan, and a good golfer, greets my feminine clientele with ease. A sound golfing conversationalist, Mrs. Schofield takes care of the wife while I am busy teaching the husband how to 'break 100'.



Ray Gerber

MEMBERS REJOICE AT GOLF ON GRASS, NOT WEEDS

By WALTER E. MAAS, Green Chmn.
and

RAY H. GERBER, Supt.
Glen Oak CC, Glen Ellyn, Ill.



Walter Maas

Beyond doubt one of the most enthusiastically endorsed course maintenance results ever presented to our club's members has been the successful outcome of our 2, 4-D application. With fertilization to assure prompt filling in of the spots vacated by weeds the improvement of golf turf after 2, 4-D application was almost beyond belief, and certainly beyond our brightest hopes.

We had more than our share of dandelions, plantain and buckhorn but after one application of 2, 4-D one really must look rather sharply to discover any of these weeds on our course, with the exception of the places where it was impossible for us to reach with the large boom of our spraying device. Possibly our results, for some reason or another, surpassed those normally attained but we followed recommended standard practice.

Fairways that once were the worst on our course now are our best. The grass spread rapidly when the weed competition was removed.

The bad lies that usually call for skill beyond that of the average player no longer exist. It's our opinion that the tendency to play "improved lies" is not only a bad thing for the spirit of the rules of the game but is a check to the development of the game of the average country club member. Now we have no

more bad lies and all members play their shots with more confidence than ever was possible on weedy fairways.

One point about this 2, 4-D job that especially appealed to us is that we now are not compelled to mow the rough so frequently to keep new crops of weeds coming all over our course. With the difficulty of getting labor and the high cost of labor we figure that it will be only a comparatively short time until the cost of the entire 2, 4-D application will be offset by the saving in reduction of rough mowing costs. Another point, not often thought of in connection with 2, 4-D application; is that its elimination of weeds in the rough makes finding of golf balls much easier, thus answers one argument often made for abolishing the rough and doing away with a testing and valid feature of real golf architecture.

Another maintenance practice we have been able to follow this season is that of mowing the greens 6 times a week. This certainly has helped in getting our greens back to their best pre-war standard.

NEED SUPPLIES?

See Page 83
