

New Angles in Golf Movies Put Ex-GIs in Business

By **BILL GRAFFIS**

FACED with the reconversion problem of using Army photographic training to make their living as civilians, a group of Hollywood former GI's have formed the first motion picture outfit specializing in sports films, particularly, golf pictures.

When Jerry Courneya, Ray Fernstrom, and Joe Brown, Jr., son of the Hollywood luminary, received their discharge papers from Army Air Force Combat Camera units they had every intention in the world of returning to their old jobs at various Hollywood studios. For Ray, a studio cameraman for many years, the step back into civilian life did not seem so tough. However, for Joe and Jerry it was an entirely different story. As seems to be the situation in many other cases of veterans wanting a break when they return to their places of employment, the studios did not care if Joe and Jerry had the secret of the atom bomb or if Army training had made them the greatest cameramen in the world. They could get their old jobs back, period.

Debut in LA Open

Before the boys decided to blow their studio jobs, they decided to find out just how good they were in the business of making pictures. Initial effort of the organization was the 16 mm. color motion picture film on the 1946 Los Angeles Open. Success of the film and pros' statements that the pictures were among the best they had ever seen for instruction purposes prompted Warren Sneider, Junior Association of Commerce president and head of the L. A. Jaycee group running the Open, to give Courneya's Productions exclusive 16 mm. rights for next year's tournament.

By the employment of new camera angles, every phase of a master golfer's swing is covered. Much of the credit for these shots goes to Ray Fernstrom.

While serving as a member of the Ninth Combat Camera Unit in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations and making plenty of pictures of Allied bombing raids on Axis targets, Ray observed that the films most in demand for training new bombing crews were extremely high level shots, made at 12,000 or more feet, and extremely low level shots made "on the deck." By comparing bombing results from both type shots, the problem of where to bomb and when was graphically demonstrated to the uninitiated crews. With the formation of Courneya's Productions, and with Ray given the job as chief cameraman and producer, the high

and low level camera angles, not made from any 12,000 feet or any 250 miles an hour aircraft, of course, but from stationary 14 foot platforms and a glass topped excavation over which the player stands, every angle of a swing is completely covered. Many of the points a pro tries to tell or demonstrate to a pupil, particularly the position of the hands at the beginning of the down-swing, are covered from the platform shots. By shooting from underneath the subject, Ray and his cameramen make a film record of every position of the feet and the body during a stroke.

Helpful Angles For Teaching

"By going for these unusual angles," says organization head Jerry Courneya, "a study of a professional golfer's swing is of some value to an audience. I have yet to find any golfer who got much benefit from a head-on or side shot made of a pro's swing.

"What we're doing with our golf films is to make them thoroughly educational as well as entertaining. Too many pictures of tournaments that I have seen merely show crowds racing down the fairways, through traps, and in general, covering every angle completely but the most important one, the pros themselves."

Introducing another idea into the field of motion picture coverage of golf tournaments, Courneya's Productions have found out that only by going on "location" at a tournament—holding club a couple of days before a meet is held is it possible to work out all the angles needed for comprehensive coverage. With increased attendance at golf tournaments just putting cameramen around the course is not enough, according to Jerry Courneya.

By walking around the course before the tournament begins and selecting high spots on which crews with cameras having telephoto lenses can be placed, the fairway filmers are all set to go when the first contestant tees off.

Film Day's Highlight

With other cameramen spotted at the first tee or eighteenth green, and 5 or 6 other photographers assigned to rove the course, concentrating on pre-tournament favorites or suddenly torrid contestants, the Courneya's Production group can easily obtain a film record of each day's play.

In placing camera crews around the course before the tournament begins Courneya's Productions have gone far in eliminating the beef often made by pros against all motion picture cameramen cov-

ering golf tournaments. Many of the golfing greats have protested that the whir and other disturbances of motion picture camera operation sounds like the takeoff of a Constellation, particularly when they are playing under pressure.

For closeup shots of the players, the photographers are equipped with silent cameras.

Complete Tournament Film

In future filmings of golf tournaments, the Courneya group is really going into "production." Before going on "location" at a tournament holding country club, both a shooting and an estimating script will be written. The shooting script will cover all the golf shots, both at normal speed and in slow motion, required for the various "props" needed. Too, in future productions, the work done by the members of the various committees, the marshalling of the crowds, the preparation of the course and of foods and all the other details that prime the officials of a tournament host club for trips to Mayo's will be presented. By noting the methods used by other clubs in preparing for tournaments, Courneya feels that his films will be as interesting to the club officials as they are to the members.

All coverage by Courneya's Productions is with 16 mm color films shot in Cine Special cameras. In using the 16 mm high fidelity color reproduction film, enlargements to 35 mm can be made without any loss of detail. With color it is also possible to obtain sharply detailed black and white prints for any organization wanting more than one copy of the film and not wanting to go to the expense of numerous color reels.

Courneya's Productions, which have now made sports film that range in scope from underwater fishing and alligator hunting in the Florida Everglades to lion hunting in Mexico, are of the firm opinion that golfing pictures are by far the toughest, not from the danger angle but from the hard work involved in keeping numerous players on all parts of a course completely covered in motion pictures.

Courneyas Says:

"In making a picture of a man stalking a mountain lion or a young lady engaged in wrestling with an alligator, you have a pretty good idea of which party is going to win the engagement before you start filming. But with any sport film, and golf in particular, you don't know until the last couple of minutes who is coming out with the prize. After thinking that the leader of a field of tournament golfers is a sure thing, the guy usually winds up taking an eight on one of the last holes and most of the film you have shot on him is no good at all. The only way to make certain that you are covering every player in the field is to have either a large number of cameramen spread all over the

course or 5 or 6 cameramen placed in position whereby they can cover 2 or 3 fairways and greens at a time.

"When we first started out, some of the old Hollywood cameramen along with a few newsreel photogs stated that no matter how strategically placed the cameraman might be, they never would be able to cover more than 40% of any day's play. Our group of ex-GIs found out differently. It took a lot of work but we managed to film about 85% of the play in the Los Angeles Open. This did not include our high and low angle shots which we had to work out with individual pros."

The proof of the success that the ex-servicemen outfit has had in shooting educational sports shorts lies in the fact that for their next 2 jobs they have allotted themselves a budget that runs over \$15,000. The films included in this budget are shorts slanted for clubs having badminton and tennis courts.

One, "King of the Courts," is an instruction film based on the playing actions of Budge, Perry, Tilden and Riggs. The other, a 400 foot film story, is concerned with the activities of young Dave Freeman, national badminton champion.

For clubs having a swimming pool, the Courneya crew will have a slow motion instruction short on swimming and diving ready for release within a few weeks.

Starting from a small outfit with no other assets than a lot of ambition and willingness to present new and more instruction sports motion picture films, and having developed within a few months to one of the largest motion picture units dealing almost exclusively with educational sports films, Courneya's Productions is now set up to go anywhere in the United States or Canada on assignment.

Information on the Courneya's Productions golf films may be obtained by writing the main office at 1566 North Gordon, Hollywood, 28, Calif.

Al Johnson Elected Iowa Greenkeepers' President

E. F. (Al) Johnson, gkpr., Iowa State College GC, Ames, Ia., was unanimously elected pres., Iowa Greenkeepers' Assn. at the organization's June meeting held at Wakonda G&CC, Des Moines. Johnson succeeds Wm. Keating, wartime head of the IGA, who was not a candidate for re-election.

Norman Westfall of Creston was elected v. p., and T. E. (Ted) Adams, 1000 Polk Blvd., was reelected sec.-treas. Johnson recently returned to Iowa after army service.

Jack Welch, veteran pro-gkp. of Wakonda, took the June gathering around the course in the forenoon. With the war over and labor more plentiful, Wakonda is