

Texas High School Students Keen for Golf Classes

By JOHNNY RAMSAY

Senior, Sherman (Tex.) High School

Golf for boys and girls is a comparatively new, but rapidly growing, activity in the high school at Sherman, Tex. About 3:30 each afternoon, Tuesday through Friday, one of the school busses stops at the Woodlawn CC near Sherman. From it emerges 27 students, all but six of them boys, to receive their regular instruction in golf.

Responsible for this fine golfing program is Byron Davis, principal of Sherman high school, who has been playing the game for years. His great interest in the sport is one of the foremost factors in the organization of this high school golfing program, which is unique in Texas.

Although 1947 was the first big year for golfing in Sherman High, it was not the first time that the sport has been offered to students there. It all started back in the spring of 1942 with Mr. Davis as sponsor and with interest just as keen. That was at the beginning of the war. Mr. Davis entered the Army. The class, left without a sponsor, was abandoned. Immediately after his return in January of 1946, Mr. Davis set to work to organize high school golfing on a larger scale.

Finally in February, 1947, the Woodlawn CC offered free play to 16 boys. Since there were 26 applicants for the class the sponsor tried to select those who would derive most benefit from the training and those who, because of their scholastic standing, would help the club to gain recognition as a good organization.

School Finances Equipment

Next came a big problem—getting clubs for such a large group. An appeal to local golfers for aid brought a little response, but not enough. Funds for equipment, transportation, and instruction still had to be secured. The Sherman school board agreed to help by allowing the club to use \$300 from the school's athletic fund and additional money from the high school activity fund.

Mr. Davis went to work immediately on transportation, contracting with the owner of a school bus to pick the golfers up at the school at 3 o'clock and return them there at 5:45. Cost of the 12-mile round trip to the Woodlawn club was fixed at \$4 a day.



Sherman, Texas, H.S. golf class. Prin. Byron Davis, right, Professional H. W. Williford, left.

Final step in organization of the activity was securing an able instructor to teach the young golfers the rudiments of the game. H. J. Williford, Woodlawn professional who has participated in many tournaments and who has a long golfing experience behind him, agreed to teach the group four days a week from 3:30 until 5:45 at a price of \$50 a month. Members of the class attribute much of their progress to his encouraging manner, his friendliness, and his understanding.

With an ample amount of equipment made available through the purchase of additional used clubs and bags, the boys were ready to begin learning the game. Williford, the instructor, says that the team worked seriously and with a strong competitive spirit in spite of the fact that not one of them had ever had a golf club in his hand prior to the spring of 1947. This year enough new golf sets were acquired to equip a team of 21 boys.

The class was opened to girls for the first time last fall, and six of them enrolled. They still do not have complete equipment, but this will be supplied as soon as their progress justifies the purchase of additional clubs. This idea of girl golfers in a high school golfing program is new in Texas, as far as we know, although it has been tried in several other states.

Funds for the activity are still being supplied by the high school athletic fund and the activity fund, but members of the class help to raise additional money in various ways. The Parent-Teacher Association has also promised to aid the team. Mrs. J. V. DeFord, president of the local PTA, is highly interested in the program as it is being operated at the high school.

Club Members Interested

Another factor in the rapid progress of the team is the interest and enthusiasm which members of the Woodlawn CC have shown in the project. They are helping the boys in every way possible in order to stimulate their interest in mastering golf.

John Robert Williams, captain of the boys' team, had never touched a golf club when the class was organized. Eight months later he was shooting in the low 80's. He is showing steady improvement, his instructor says. Williams is only one example, for there are several other boys in the class whose progress rivals his.

Already matches with neighboring schools have been held. As only the six top-ranking players are scheduled in these tournaments, competition is keen around the week of the contests.

Additional prestige has been added recently to the local high school golf team by write-ups in state newspapers, inquiries from neighboring schools concerning the program, and arrangements for the playing of several matches with teams from other schools.

Mr. Davis hopes to extend this golf program until it takes in 30 or 40 boys and girls. His main desire is to arouse still more interest in golf throughout the state, and he hopes someday to see the game take its place with football, basketball, track, and baseball as an interscholastic sport.

His advice to schools just beginning their golfing program is to start out on a small scale and take two or three years to develop the project. As the activity is opened to more and more students interest will increase, he says. Vital to the success of any such program is a sponsor who has an interest in young people and a love for the game of golf.

It looks like a busy year of progress ahead for the young golfers at Sherman High. Perhaps if one ventures down this way in four or five years he will find another Byron Nelson or a second Ben Hogan who has taken advantage of this fine system to secure his training.

Nationwide Interest in Golf Program for Schools

More than 100 schools and colleges have registered for the intramural golf program being sponsored by the National Golf Foundation and the Athletic Journal for the nation's schools in 1948.

The favorable early response indicates the program will be one of major interest in intramural sports in high school and college physical education. From a paro-



Individual gold and bronze medals to be awarded to intramural golf tournament winners are made available to schools free of charge by the National Golf Foundation.

chial school in Illinois: "Many thanks for your encouraging program—it's a break for the kids." From Calif., "May I take this opportunity to thank you in advance . . . this is an excellent gesture on your part." From a Kansas golf professional: "I am vitally interested in the program as I realize the young fellows are the future golfers."

It is interesting to note that schools registering for the intramural golf program range from the smallest to the largest. Hudson, Kansas High School with an enrollment of 48 is the smallest with the Univ. of Nebraska the largest so far.

Most of the schools are sponsoring tournaments for both boys and girls with more boys than girls competing although, in some instances the number of girls entered exceed the number of boys.

Materials for conducting an intramural golf tournament furnished free of charge to the schools registering for the program include: (1) A 32 place draw sheet, (2) A booklet on suggestions for conducting intramural golf tournaments, with information on seeding and drawing, (3) A promotional poster, (4) Handsomely lithographed National Golf Foundation Certificates of Award, and (5) Individual golf bronze medals for the tournament winners.

The advisory committee assisting in conducting the golf tournament program is composed of: Herb Graffis, Editor, GOLF-DOM and GOLFING; John L. Griffith, Publisher, ATHLETIC JOURNAL; Eldon I. Jenne, Director, Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Portland, Oregon Public Schools; Ted Payseur, Director of Athletics, Northwestern University and Chairman of the Golf Committee for the National Collegiate Athletic Assn.; and Robert J. Strauss, Supervisor of Golf, Public Recreation Commission, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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