

School Classes Best Field for Pro Golf Build-up

By PATTY BERG

(At PGA Annual Meeting)

I have conducted golf clinics at schools and colleges in almost every one of the 48 states. I feel that this method of passing on my golfing knowledge and experience, acquired through endless efforts of pros, is my only means of paying back this huge debt owed to golf.

The schools and colleges offer the best facilities for imparting golf knowledge. These students will be the future golfers of America, and from them will come the future professionals of America.

The clinic offers the advantages of proper instruction, maybe otherwise unattainable to these future golfers. As a rule, schools and colleges do not have golf courses at the disposal of the students, and many of them do not even have golf courses convenient. The clinic remedies this situation to a certain extent. I always tell my students that I can show them the proper methods but their home professional can best do effective teaching.

A clinic should be accompanied with a demonstration. Emphasizing the fact that golf requires work, I try to stimulate interest by outlining the advantages achieved from golf. It is a hobby which can be enjoyed from early until late in life and can be carried from the college to the business world. I point out that not only physical exercise, necessary for good health and keener power of concentration are derived from golf, but also character and personality and poise, which are assets to everyone.

Always stressing the necessity of seeking the professional, I advise the students of the only shortcut in learning golf, the correct method.

Wins Pupils' Friendship

It is interesting to note that in the beginning of a clinic most of the students refer to me as "Miss Berg." However, if by the end of the clinic they are not calling me "Patty" or "Pat," I feel that I have failed in my mission. I want them to know that golf is a friendly game.

As to the selection of clubs the professional is again brought into the picture. In instructing the students that good golf clubs beget good form, I indicate the necessity of the professional's advice in securing the proper clubs.

After the background matter is well rooted into the minds of my students, I begin the actual instructional part of the clinic, much as you do when you begin a golf lesson.

Beginning with the grip, I demonstrate all the methods and the advantages and disadvantages of each, never forcing one grip or the other. I let the student decide which is the most comfortable grip.

The next lesson consists of the stance, teaching that proper strokes are only possible when a comfortable stance is attained. I demonstrate the position of the feet, the head and body, and also the position of the ball in relation to the feet.

The wrist and hand action, being one of the most important single factors in the execution of the golf swing, is the next subject explained, demonstrated and discussed.

The fundamentals of golf having been demonstrated, the next step is use of the clubs. Wood play is studied in detail, illustrating the position of the head and the feet and the body during all the operations when producing the swing. In teaching the basic fundamentals, I advise experiment with different methods under pro supervision.

Kids Want Distance

Illustrating the difference between wood play and iron play, the next step is to instruct students to strive for accuracy rather than for distance in the iron shots. So many times most of the students, girls as well as fellows, want to just murder the ball, but we try to tell them that first they must build their swing for accuracy and later apply this distance.

At this point, the need for choosing the proper club in order to reach the target effectively is impressed on the student.

Chipping, pitching and putting, and the demonstration of sand trap shots is the remainder of the clinic. However, this portion is directed only to the more advanced students or those who have at least mastered the fundamentals of the game.

As you can readily understand, much can result from such a clinic and demonstration. The beginner learns, and the golfer has an opportunity to improve.

Carrying out such a program on a nation-wide scale, will give assurance of sound basic instruction of the next golfing generation and the development of an even greater number of professional golfers. The youth of student age is responsive to training. His or her mind is more alert and conditioned to receiving instruction. He has the desire and will to play well. His enthusiasm and determination is at its peak, and all these qualities make a good golfer, so why not capitalize on this?

Big Job Ahead

So much remains to be done in this field. The number of colleges that would welcome this program probably is vast. By enlarging on this idea and making it a nation-wide program almost every college could be made a golf-playing college.

Out of gratitude to the professionals who have launched me on my career, and to the profession as a whole, I feel that anything I can do in extending golf instruction in schools is a good way of keeping the game growing and pro earning possibilities increasing.

I should be paying my company for the privilege of doing this job for golf, instead of them paying me. You see, golf is really more than a game. It's something that gets into your blood—your life's blood. As a result, golf has given me the real pleasures of life.

You know it would be impossible for me to ever put as much back into golf as I have taken out of it, but it's certainly the swellest darned job in the world trying to do it.

Reno Scores With Washoe Muny Course

Golf, in 12 years has become a major sport in the city which is widely known for its sporting activity.

Twelve years ago when the Washoe County muny course, Reno, Nev., was being completed few, if any, would have conceded the possibility of that community ever putting up \$15,000 for an open tournament. At that time only a handful of the most optimistic looked forward to the successful development of a golf course with grass greens and fairways. Today the hopeful have been rewarded. The Washoe County course is an asset to the community and can well take credit for the beautification and increased property values of an entire locality.

The 6,601 yd. course has been brought along through the efforts of pro-mgr. Hutt Martin and grnkpr., Wm. Mayo to the point where it is now an excellent example of fine operation and maintenance. The first years were lean ones, but 1945 bore the fruit of persistence and perseverance and the balance sheet at the end of the year showed a profit of \$2,386 on a gross of \$25,547. Return of young men from the war seemed to be a decided factor in the profitable operation as 1946 receipts increased almost \$10,000 over those of 1945. Success of the \$5,000 first Nevada State open encouraged Reno golfers to put on the 1947 \$15,000 event.

A reservoir which supplies water at the rate of 1,000 gals. a minute is the prime factor in solving the turf problem and of course is indirectly responsible for the fact that surrounding residential property has increased many times over the \$384,000 represented in the total cost of the ground, course and clubhouse construction.

The Washoe County course gets play all the year round which adds to the maintenance problem. However, all phases of operation are greatly simplified, Martin says, by the full cooperation of the Board of County Commissioners Ernest Kleppe, James Peckham and Carl Shelly.



This is the tenth green at Washoe where Reno's 1947 \$15,000 Open was played. Growing good turf on this soil is an historic achievement of which Reno citizens may well be proud.