

# Pro Uses Local TV to Develop Community Interest in Golf

By RICHARD A. GARVER

The armchair golfers who can talk a good game but somehow never get around to making that trip out to the course are really reforming in Bloomington, Indiana.

Behind this movement from living room to fairway are the efforts of golf pro Eddie Lawson and his televised "Tips On Golf" shown over WTTV every Tuesday evening.

Sporting the record of originating the first TV golf in Indiana, Lawson has progressed through an initial six-weeks series of golfing instructions that is bringing the game right into the armchair addict's lap.

"Tips On Golf," run by WTTV as a public service in conjunction with the City Recreation Department, has the effect, in Lawson's words, of "giving a private lesson to hundreds of persons at the same time."

This program series was originated with the idea that even the person who had never seen a golf club might be a potential golfer, and that the audience members who already were golfers would appreciate some tricks to polish up their games.

A definite program sequence was planned in advance of the first TV showing. This is how the six shows were mapped out:

**First week:** A quick history of the golf game with accent on its old age. Some pictures clipped from *The Golf Handbook*, showing the evolution of the game and its present-day equipment were used. First instruction to be given was fundamentals of the grip.

**Second week:** Get down to facts with discussion of the stance, swing, and follow-through. Grip is reviewed, with diagrams drawn on fingers to show proper grip. Proper stance shown on backdrop by white shoe prints pasted on sheet of black cardboard.

**Third week:** A continuation of the stance and swing instructions with a local feminine golfer on the program to illustrate the lesson.

**Fourth week:** So many TV fans had written in asking about rules of the game that Lawson took this session to explain situations that might occur while on the course.

**Fifth Week:** A group of young golfers, ranging from five to fifteen years of age, were guests on the show. This was more

of a question and answer session with the kids strongly bringing out the point to the audience that golf is not just a retired businessman's game.

**Sixth week:** An interview with other state pros and a general roundup picture of the game and its possibilities.

Although the programs were planned in advance, a number of technical problems arose during the course of the series. Most were minor, but their solutions were important to the success of the show.

For example: The first night that Lawson stood before the camera and began swinging the clubs, the reflection from the club's chrome shaft so glistened in the camera's lens that it was impossible to tell if the pro had a No. 3 iron or a No. 9 iron in his hands. From this point on, clubs with dark shafts were used.

A special effort was always made to show grips from both the top and bottom view, so that the person who was watching



Bloomington, Ind. pro Eddie Dawson uses diagram and thumb tacks for illustration before TV camera as he presents interesting session on rules.

might follow the same procedure with his own club in front of the TV receiving set. Standing instructions from Lawson always were: "Get out your own clubs and go through this with me."

For exhibition of all shots, Lawson stood on a rubber mat which had a cross of white tape on it. By using this cross, the audience could accurately judge the relationship of ball, feet, and club.

Another technicality which was taken care of before the series began was the

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matter of color in the clothes of the man before the camera. The clothes should be in contrast to the background and preferably contain some pattern rather than a solid color. This makes it much easier to follow the pro on the TV screen.

During the session in which golf rules were explained on a black and white illustration of a typical golf hole, a neat trick was used with great success. In place of what normally would be the golf ball lying on the fairway, white thumbtacks were used. From the viewer's seat, they looked like the whitest, roundest golf balls made.

One of the important features of the programs was a three-minute section at the end of each show entitled "The Shag Bag." During this time, Lawson would answer questions sent in by the fans. And he did get a lot of questions, some from as far away as Indianapolis, sixty miles to the north.

During all these shows, a procedure was followed that saved the TV cameraman a lot of nervous sweat and made for a better presentation. Immediately before each show, Lawson would go over the program's sequence with the cameraman. Between these two men they would decide where the best place for the camera would be in order to focus at the proper spot of attention.

When Lawson was showing a grip, naturally the camera would be focused on his hands. When he was going through the motions of a swing, the cameraman would have advance warning to get his camera back in order to take in all of the swing. It was the close cooperation between the cameraman, the program director, and Lawson that produced a smooth show.

Altogether, this six-weeks series of "Tips On Golf" proved to Lawson and the people of Bloomington what many other pros and television stations are just beginning to realize. That is, it doesn't require elaborate equipment to stage such a golf series. The interest in this type local "live" show is tremendous. Television is presenting the golf world with a wonderful opportunity to stir up the golfing spirit in those marginal fans and get them out on that course.

## Grip Expert Dies

Dan Zabinski, for 25 years with Wilson Sporting Goods Co., died of a heart attack recently in Chicago. Dan was regarded as one of the top club grip experts and did much special work for pros and amateurs. He is survived by his widow and son Richard.

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