

# Class Lesson Success Based on Organized Program

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GROUP instruction in golf differs from individual instruction in that the instructor cannot devote too much time to any particular pupil. He must plan and simplify his teaching methods in advance of each class so as to benefit the pupils as a group.

An important point about teaching the beginner in golf is that his or her first impression of the game will linger the longest, so it must be a pleasant one. A competent instructor will try to make all explanations simple and easy for the student to digest and apply. Proceed slowly and thoroughly and give your pupils a chance to ask questions. Give out an instruction booklet at the beginning of the course so they can read in detail the important phases brought out in the instruction. "Golf Lessons", a booklet published by the National Golf Foundation, is excellent.

Bear in mind that you, the instructor, can do much to help a great number of people to enjoy golf through patient and sound instruction and your performance may be the best advertising you possibly can get.

The following should act as a guide to an easier and quicker method of teaching the basic fundamentals of golf to the novice. You will notice as you read that the putter is the first club that is swung, after practicing the mechanics of the swing as described in Lesson 2 with a wood. My reasoning is that the short swing in golf must be tried by the beginner before a full swing with an iron or wood can be handled with any success.

Maybe you differ, but you'd better have a complete and sound plan, just as a varsity football coach does about organizing work on his squad.

## Instructor's Outline

Number of lessons—12

Number of pupils—10 or under

Length of each lesson—1 hour  
Lesson

- 1 Introduction to Golf
- 2 Mechanics of Swing
- 3 Putting
- 4 Chipping

6 Pitch Shot

5 Short Approach and Trouble Shot

7 Medium Iron Shot

8 Long Iron

9 Fairway Woods

10 Tee Woods

11 Rules and Etiquette

12 Demonstration on Golf Course

In the first lesson give a brief history of golf emphasizing its growth as a participant sport in this country since the latter part of the 19th century. Mention some personalities and relate incidents. Mere talk will get boring.

List a few advantages of golf to the individual—a game that is played by people of all ages; a healthy sport in that it is played out-of-doors in the sunshine and fresh air; a great test of character; and a game that develops pleasant social contacts among the golfers of the world.

Show your pupils an average beginner's set of clubs—one that will last them two or three years, and explain the clubs and their functions.

Explain why the loft on each of the woods and irons varies.

Hit a few balls with each iron and wood listed above to show heights and distances expected from each club.

Conclude the lesson by swinging a heavy "Training Club" to show pupils how they can develop good hand action and rhythm in the swing by practicing with this club.

In lesson 2 demonstrate the following steps in hitting a golf ball using a wood club:

1. Grip
2. Stance and aim
3. Addressing the ball—"Hitting Position"
4. Swinging the club with the hands

Have pupils form a circle and work on the pivot by learning to do the following exercise with a wood club in their hands. Be sure the pupils are separated by safe distances.

Give origin and demonstrate "Vardon Overlapping Grip". Show how both hands

tend to swing the club as a team or a unit while using the grip. The correct grip will be a great help in swinging and controlling the clubs described in later lessons. Help pupils to place hands on club handle correctly by checking each one individually.

Set them with correct grip and in correct stance.

After that get them swinging the club with their arms.

Then have them swing to the proper pattern you describe and illustrate and especially get them to recognize and follow good footwork and leg action.

Then show three stances used by most golfers—open, square and closed. Teach pupils square stance for easiest results while they are learning the game. Emphasize aiming of shot after grip has been put on club by lining up their toes squarely to intended line of flight of clubhead.

Addressing the ball is very important in class teaching.

Insist on outstretched left elbow during swing. Make sure swing is moving back and through in one path. Make sure hands are under the shaft at the top of the backswing with the club horizontal to the line of flight. Explain what is meant by the present-day "one-piece swing." Stress importance of a slow, smooth backswing in developing a rhythmical and sound golf swing. Check pupils' pivot or shifting of the weight while they practice swinging.

In lesson 3 impress pupils with the importance of developing a smooth, firm putting stroke.

A narrow stance, slightly open, is probably best for the beginner to use. Emphasize that the blade should be kept low along the ground during the putting stroke and square to the line of flight. A steady head position is a must for consistently good putting. Discourage any signs of "wristy" putting in your pupils. A putting stroke is still a true swinging motion even though it is a short swing. Encourage pupils to practice putting in spare time between classes.

In lesson 4 the 7-iron is a good selection as an overall "chipping" club. The pupils should be shown that gripping halfway down from the top of the club, the hands can better control the action of the blade. Explain reasons for the stance, the position of the ball, weight distribution and head steadiness. The hand action should be firm throughout the short swing and the wrists should not take over and

cause a loose, disjointed motion as is often the case with most class pupils.

In lesson 5 use the 9-iron and explain why this club, with a smooth, controlled swing can loft the ball over shrubbery, bunkers or gulleys that frequently frighten the high handicap player.

On lesson 6, the full pitch shot, have the pupils use a 7-iron, using a full swing. Maximum distance for this club would be about 130 yards but impress upon the pupils the club is for precision rather than distance.

### Get Them Into It Easy

After you get the classes going so the pupils understand that the main thing is to connect with the ball accurately, rather than to slug it out of the lot, the rest of the job is easy.

Most of the high-handicap golfer's trouble comes from wanting to pulverize the ball, hence there's too much swaying and lunging and a disposition to use a wood-chopper's grip rather than a grip that will allow the hands to work correctly and bring the club into precise effective contact with the ball.

About nine out of ten new golfers want to go at the game too hard. If you can get them performing gracefully, smoothly and in balance on the short game you've got them started right, as you probably know. But in class lessons this is even a tougher job than in individual instruction and you have to keep watching to straighten out the awkward ones.

The safety element can't be emphasized too strongly; not only for the pupils but for the pro. There's no telling when a pupil will start to swing and you will be the accidental target.

Get the pupils paired off so they will be able to see their own mistakes in others. You know from your own observation that every foursome at every club has at least one fellow and maybe three or four fellows who think they're pros.

Make an interesting asset of this screwy phase of golf. You might be able to do something for the pupil who is taking his third class lesson and already thinks he's a pro. You may also protect the unsuspecting victim.

Get the classes performing to a count. It helps to develop rhythm.

Get the good and bad examples before the class. But under no circumstances embarrass the awkward ones. After all, it's your job to teach the awkward one to be good and if you can't do that, you're

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## CLASS LESSON

(Continued from page 69)

the one who's most at fault. But in considerably demonstrating how the incorrect swing can be given a simple and effective correction you and your pupil put on a helpful demonstration.

Get your lessons organized so there will be good balance between explanatory and directing talk, and action.

And when you finish the series you might put on a chalk talk telling the pupils how to play a course, but it's better to get a couple of pros with you and play, perhaps 9 holes, explaining the why of the shots and selecting from your class various pupils to play shots and tell why they are going to make certain shots, and how they are going to apply their lessons in making the shots.

### National Golf Day, May 23, To Be Gigantic Event

National Golf Day, sponsored by Life magazine and the PGA, has been set for May 23, with Julius Boros, defending National Open champion, playing a round at Oakmont CC, Pittsburgh, Pa., scene of this year's National Open, and against Boros on handicap basis at their own clubs there will be many thousands of golfers.

The same procedure as in 1952 when about 80,000 golfers paid their \$1 entry fee and played at their clubs against Ben Hogan's round at Northwood CC, Dallas, will be followed. Last year 14,667 golfers from 2,114 clubs beat Hogan on a handicap basis. Ben went one over.

This year Horton Smith, PGA pres., estimates there'll be at least 150,000 golfers participating. Life magazine won't estimate. Pros and club officials in numerous instances believe the 1953 entry list will surpass Smith's estimate as the initial event proved so highly successful that many regretted that they and their clubs didn't get in.

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