

PGA Teaching Session Sets Pattern for Advance

GOLF INSTRUCTION this year is going to show the influence of the PGA Teaching program. The Teaching committee, headed by Harold Sargent, at the Detroit PGA annual meeting hit the point to which previous presentations of instruction techniques had been aiming since the committee was established.

There's a double-barreled teaching problem with the PGA that until recent years everybody seemed afraid to mention out loud. The pro problem is not only what to teach but how to teach. It was only when frank and scholarly admission of the pro teaching problem as the most difficult in sports tutoring was made that the PGA dared make a truly scientific approach to golf instruction research.

What has complicated the pro instruction problem is that so many amateurs think they are great golf teachers. And the pros, working for clubs which have these amateurs as members, are too discreet or scared to question the tutelary genius of the amateur professors.

Chris Brinke of Lyon Mfg. Co. and Byron Gould, Murray Body Co. pres., two prominent veteran amateurs, did pros a great service in clearing away this confusion between professional and amateur instructors, although Gould, due to a crowded program, didn't appear on the Detroit platform. Brinke made a survey of country club members who are between 30 and 60 years old on "Pro Golf Instruction from the Player's Standpoint." Chris got 288 replies, and with them 87 letters, in response to his questionnaire.

Brinke's questionnaire returns gave the pros a blunt close-up from a representative array of golfers.

Some did not answer all questions.

Instruction Is Surveyed

To the question, "Does the pro simplify or complicate the mechanics of the swing in his explanations?", 145 answered that the mechanics were simplified, and 133 said the pro explanation complicated.

Eighty per cent answered that the pro was available for lessons enough of the time.

Survey returns expressed the opinion that 70 per cent of pros were not suffi-

ciently interested in the games of all the members.

Seventy per cent of the returns were that the pro lesson approach was too general rather than individual.

In 60 per cent of the returns the golfers didn't believe pros considered their individual size, shape, etc., in teaching them.

Returns showed pupils thinking that pros stuck to fundamentals in 55 per cent of the cases and introduced "personal secrets" in teaching 45 per cent.

The returns were 50-50 on the question, "Do they (teaching pros) correct your faults or try to make you over generally?"

Pros Improve 65% of Pupils

Sixty-five per cent answered that they had improved through pro instruction and 90 per cent answered that they considered pro instruction "worth the time and the money."

Fifty-five per cent said the pro had helped them enjoy the game more.

"To personally please more members" the responding golfers suggested clinics, the pro knowing and playing with more members, and taking more "sincere" interest in members' games.

The most startling figure in the returns was the belief in 90 per cent of the returns that the pro has not really helped to fit a set of clubs to the player. Brinke commented on this reply that this showed the biggest, most urgent need for pro sales development work.

Ninety per cent believed a course in psychology would help pro teaching.

Eighty per cent believed the pros explained things clearly enough to avoid misunderstanding. Eighty-five per cent thought the pro didn't place enough emphasis on pitching, chipping, bunker shots and putting in their instruction. Seventy-five per cent of the queried golfers answered the question, "Does the pro play or practice his own game too much or too little?" and of those answering 60 per cent said "too little."

Sixty-five per cent said more loft on their wood clubs would benefit them. Wood sets preferred by those who answered this question would consist of a 1½, 3½, 4 and 5

wood. Seventy per cent said they could do without 2-irons.

Most instruction was received on driving in 80 per cent of the cases; 20 per cent was on irons and nothing on putting.

Instruction Is Job-Getter

Questionnaires showed that if the answering golfers were hiring a pro 95 per cent of them would prefer a successful teaching pro with personality; 3 per cent would want a young pro and less than one per cent would want a "name" pro.

Brinke said the extent of the response amazed him as did the number of letters going into greater detail about the answers. He commented that some pros are doing outstanding jobs in human relations and others have no sensitivity to the pupils' personality.

The Brinke survey summarized pupils' opinion on many points pros have been discussing and disclosed that the pupils need plenty of education on what the leading instructors pretty generally have established as teaching policies and practices.

Burkemo Explains Technique

In following the general PGA annual meeting plan of having the current PGA champion tell about his own game Walter Burkemo outlined his playing methods. Burkemo, like some other fine players, stresses breaking the wrists immediately on the backswing, although general procedure is not that way.

He emphasized keeping weight on the left foot from the 5-iron to the wedge and favoring weight on the right foot from the driver through the 4-iron.

Burkemo plays the ball off his left heel in all shots.

He keeps his feet close together in putting; lags the long putts and jabs putts up to 15 ft.

Not Enough Balls Used

He uses 3 new balls each round. With the pounding and hacking the ordinary golfer gives a precision product such as a golf ball, even though its tough cover may not show many scars and may stay white the ball usually is played too long to give best results to the average golfer, Burkemo believes. The idea is worth investigating by pros, to increase ball sales and give players better scores. Astonishing improvements have been made in golf ball construction and the tendency now is to play with a ball until it's lost. Twenty years ago the golf ball sales averaged about one ball per round. Now sales are approximately one ball per two rounds. Burkemo is strongly of the belief that players are han-

dicapping themselves by playing balls that are beat-up inside. He says he can't afford to do it, but has to take full advantage of the improvements built into the modern ball.

Burkemo says he tries to play par golf, rather than birdie golf, and is inclined to be too bold because he goes at all shots positively. When he is putting well he says it encourages him to play all shots well.

Right Hand Whacking Helps

Al Watrous, who said he's playing as well now as he did 25 years ago when he was among the stars, observed that the swings are different now. There's less pronation, terrific clubhead speed and more delay of hand action in the hitting zone.

Al said that he had hit the ball better, more consistently and farther last summer than he ever had before, as a result of taking Tommy Armour's advice to "whack the hell out of it with your right hand." He added that Tommy didn't tell in his book how to do this; it was something that had to be worked out by the individual.

Watrous called Hogan the greatest player he'd ever seen. Watching Nelson, so Watrous said, was one of the best lessons he'd ever got in seeing how to control the club.

Paul Hahn showed one of his very interesting golf promotion and teaching movies and reported on what he'd observed and learned from pros and typical amateurs in his hundreds of exhibitions.

Hahn Advises Organizing

Hahn said he was convinced that the most effective pro instruction was that which had the routine well organized instead of being hit-and-miss, and which protected the pupil against misinterpretation of the pro's teaching. Paul remarked that too much pro instruction failed to get results because the pupils were afraid to ask questions. Development of mutual understanding between pro and pupil is the basis of all good instruction Hahn emphasized.

He said that the millions of possible positions of 10 fingers, the 50 muscles and tremendous number of nerve endings in the fingers made teaching "feel" a very complex as well as essential job in golf and considering the individual character of feel he'd found that the best way to teach was to get pupils in the right positions and enable them to learn the feel for themselves.

The technicalities of muscular position and feel were treated in an address on "Function of Forces—Direction of Muscular Forces and Hand Position in Golf".

by Dr. Randall M. O'Rourke. The physiology was illustrated by O'Rourke's sketches. His explanation of the golfer's anatomy clashed with some preconceived notions of pros and got them some enlightenment in personal conferences with O'Rourke after the session ended. The O'Rourke talk, although in some respects, on the medical student rather than the pro plane, gave the pros some good leads for discussion with doctor members of their own clubs.

Cary Middlecoff briefly reviewed the lessons of the Ryder Cup matches and paid high tribute to the British players, press, club officials and all who figured in conduct of the matches and reception of the Yank players and their wives. Middlecoff said the critical playing points of the matches that accounted for American victory by a narrow and lucky margin was that younger British players tried to play too pretty and play short approaches over smooth turf with lofted clubs while the American players slapped putter shots close to the hole under the same playing conditions.

Colleges Set Pattern

Albert C. (Bert) Katzenmeyer, University of Michigan golf coach, told of organizing instruction procedure at U of M along lines that are setting a pattern widely used in teaching 53,000 college students and many thousands of high school students.

Bert said that screening out students who hadn't played golf was an important factor in arranging the program as the schedule should be followed with due consideration for background and proficiency.

He stressed making the terminology plain right at the start as a risk always is that the students might not understand what the teacher is saying. Demonstration and getting the pupils set in correct procedure rather than a lot of talk is a "must" in college and school instruction Bert noted.

The benefits of cooperation between college golf coaches, athletic directors, other coaches and faculty members was brought out by Katzenmeyer and Crisler in showing PGA sectional officials why school golf instruction was proving so effective.

Crisler said the sport coach's value was in his ability to impart what he knows to each pupil. The coach can't expect the pupil to absorb too much at one time. Bert has the football coaching technique in alternating between outside work and classroom instruction with films and slides. Correction is one of the most delicate matters in any sports instruction, both U of M experts commented. No person likes to be told he's wrong. "Always point out the mistakes

of the other team" Fritz advised. And correct only one thing at a time.

Harold Sargent, Tommy Shannon, George Lake and other PGA officials who put on the Detroit program cleared a lot of fog away from the instruction program and got it steaming ahead.

1954 National Golf Day Set For June 5 at Baltusrol

The 1954 National Golf Day has been set for Saturday, June 5 at Baltusrol Golf Club, Springfield, N. J., site of the 1954 USGA Open on June 17.

Ben Hogan, acclaimed 1953's "Male Athlete of the Year" in the annual Associated Press poll, will be the opponent against which the country's top pros and lowliest duffers will play in this third staging of the nation-wide tournament co-sponsored by Life Magazine and the PGA.

This year, Hogan, who swept the three major titles in golf in 1953—the U. S. and British Opens and the Augusta Masters—will tee off against the field in his second appearance in the history of this event. His first start was in the opening edition of the series at Dallas' Northwood course when he shot a par 71 against 87,094 entrants.

All proceeds, with no deductions for expenses, will be shared by the USO and the National Golf Fund. Last year the two organizations netted \$54,501 each, the sum of the \$1 entry fees paid by the 120,614 golfers of the U. S., Canada and Mexico who made up the field against 1952 U. S. Open Champion Julius Boros. Of the 108,885 playing at 2,650 U. S. clubs, 12,310 copped the winner's medal by topping Boros' 70 at Pittsburgh's Oakmont Club.

Baltusrol, the 1954 site of the National Golf Day, is the fifth oldest golf course in America. Since its opening in 1895 this famous club has been host to many great golf events, including three USGA Opens, three USGA Amateurs and two USGA Women's championships — as well as numerous state and sectional events.

QUICKENS PLAY — Sunset Ridge CC (Chicago dist.) increased speed of play per round by not allowing a foursome to leave the first tee until the preceding foursome had putted out on the first green. Early protests against new system vanished when Saturday, Sunday and holiday time records showed players got around the course quicker than when starting under old system of teeing off at first hole after preceding foursome had hit their second shots.