



Some of the 500 boys and girls, learning to play golf under the tutelage of Memphis club pros in a program started by Marion Hale, Supt. of Recreation, watch a shot demonstration by one of the pros during one of the clinic sessions.

## Memphis Pros Have 500 Kids In Summer Teaching, Play

By EMMETT MAUM

**H**UNDREDS of kids in Memphis, Tenn., are learning the proper way to play golf each summer, all for free, thanks to the professionals of municipal and country club courses. As many as 500 youngsters have turned out in a day for the kids' golf clinic there which is co-sponsored by the Memphis Park Commission and the Commercial Appeal, morning newspaper.

The event, which will be in its eighth year this summer, has grown every year. Along with the growth in number of enrollees has been the boost in interest among the professionals who donate their time and energies to making the project a success.

They have made it so successful that the idea is being copied in many cities. And it may be adapted by any city that has the professionals to work with the kids and course facilities.

Started in 1947 by Marion Hale, supt., Recreation div., Memphis Park Commission, the clinic includes all ages from five years through 16. It is held three consecutive Mondays, after which a four-day tournament for kids in various age groups is held at Overton Park, a muny course.

### 4 Age Groups

The age groups in the tourney are ten and under, 11 and 12, 13 and 14, 15 and 16. A separate division includes girls of all

ages. Of course, both boys and girls are divided into flights, depending upon their scores, and everybody who takes part in the clinic is eligible for the tournament.

W. D. (Dub) Fondren, pro at Galloway, a muny course, is the general chairman for the event. But he is quick to point out that without his fellow pros' help, the clinic would be virtually impossible.

"We have expert help for the clinic," said "Dub." "For instance, Pat Abbott of the Memphis CC, Arnold Mears of the Chickasaw CC, Jake Fondren of the Colonial CC, Frank Stiedle, now pro at a Gulfport, Miss. course, and many others have contributed their time and efforts.

"The public course pros join in, too. Among those who have helped are Eddie Cook, Al Foster, G. L. Leonard, Andy Cusick, Bill Perry and Buck Compton. Also one of the South's finest amateurs, Hillman Robbins, never misses a Monday. He's a big favorite with the kids and spends many hours working with them."

Just how does the program run?

All right, the kids meet at a theater in mid-Memphis at 9 o'clock each Monday morning to see instructional movies on the game. These are provided by golf equipment and clothing firms. Use of the theater is donated by the management.

After the movie, the kids hop into Mem-

phis Street Railway buses, which also are furnished without cost. They are carried to the Overton Park course. First of all, they drink soda pop, given to them by a leading bottling company.

### Pros Get to the Kids

Then it is time to get down to work. With one of the pros on the public address system, the other pros begin hitting balls in view of the youngsters. The various shots and stances are explained to them by the man on the mike and sometimes those hitting the balls tell why they stood certain ways or hit shots as they did. The pros are careful to speak on the level of the young people, so they can understand and put into practice what they see and hear.

After this period of work is finished, the kids are divided into groups of 30 to 50. Each pro takes a group and begins instructing them individually. While he works with one youngster, the others watch and listen.

"Actually, we believe the kids get better instruction than if they paid money for an hour's work with a pro," said Fondren. "Why? I'll tell you—it's because of the great enthusiasm the pros get while they're working with the kids. Why, you take Pat Abbott, Arnold Mears and my brother Jake, all country club pros; sometimes you almost have to drag them off the tees. They work past lunch time and would keep on if we didn't call a halt."

### Strong Newspaper Help

Dub said that it is a real sight to behold as 500 kids walk down the fairway to the tee where they are to be instructed. Walter Stewart, sports editor of the Commercial Appeal and an avid enthusiast of the clinic, phrased it neatly. He said: "Those kids look like a bunch of blackbirds going down the fairway."

Stewart offers real help in the clinic and his sports staff members are assigned to cover the clinic thoroughly with stories and pictures. Long before the event starts, one of the writers begins doing stories on the clinic.

While the three-week clinic and subsequent tournament are on, large picture spreads with stories are carried. Undoubtedly this publicity, plus the word-of-mouth advertising by the kids, is responsible for the phenomenal growth of the clinic.

During the tournament, a streamer story is carried with complete results of all flights. This consumes a column or more in the paper. While the kids are being instructed, photos are made of the various

pros helping the youngsters and occasionally a group shot of the whole bunch of them.

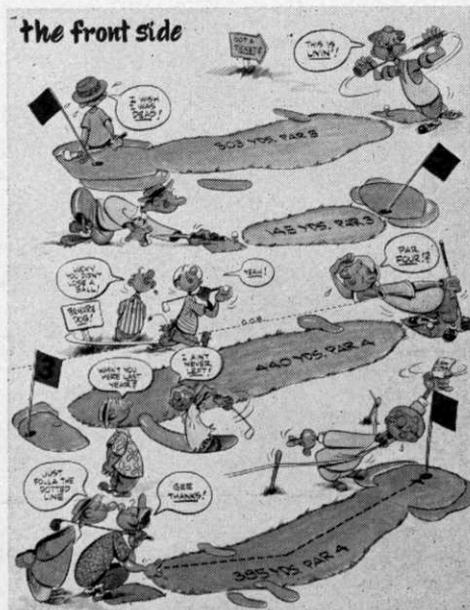
Instruction is not limited to many course kids. Many from the country clubs turn out, says Fondren.

"Actually, the country club kids' situation can be compared to youngsters compelled to take piano lessons," explained Dub. "They don't like piano lessons because the other kids are out playing. But, when there's a huge group of kids around, they are glad to join in for instruction.

"That won't hurt the cash in-take of the country club pros, though. For one thing, this clinic develops a great many golfers who otherwise wouldn't be playing. And those in the country clubs will want instruction as they grow up and seek to better their games."

Mothers and fathers often come out and hide behind trees to watch their youngsters practice. They keep out of view to avoid making the kids self-conscious. During the tournament, some fathers caddy for children and when the family is represented by

### DITZEN SHOWS COURSE



Walt Ditzen, whose Fan Fare is the most widely circulated sports cartoon strip, drew a series of amusing diagrams of Phoenix (Ariz.) CC holes and a very funny page on the gallery nuisances for the Phoenix Open program. Above is one of the Ditzen pages from a program which, as usual, is the most beautiful tournament program any golf tournament publishes.

two, the mothers also will carry the bags. Often parents bring lunches for the children and themselves, enjoying a picnic outing as well as golfing.

### Practice Rounds After Lessons

At 1 o'clock each Monday, the clinic ends for the day. However, that is not all for the kids. The Memphis Park Commission donates the 9-hole Overton Park course to them for practice rounds.

The tournament has prizes for all flights, as well as the medalists. They are provided by the Memphis Park Commission and the Commercial Appeal. Last year a total of 250 kids participated in the tourney.

In order to carry the golfers along further, Fondren and Roy Moore, prominent golf official in Memphis, started the city junior tournament. It now has an entry annually of more than 100. Fondren and Moore are already working to establish state and Southern junior meets when interest is sufficiently aroused. Prep school golf is fed through the kids' clinic. Most of the school players (nine four-man teams) come out of the clinic ranks.

That is generally how kids benefit. But, you ask, can you point out more specifically how the clinic has helped youngsters?

Sure, that is easy. Charley Joe Kochenderfer, who won the 15 and 16-year old championship in 1953, played in the city men's tourney not long afterward. And he shot a brilliant 69 in the qualifying round, in second place just two strokes back of the medalist, Arthur Macdonald.

In the girls' category, Diane Eames had never played golf until 1949, when she was 12 years old. Today at 16 she has already surprised some fine players in city and state competition. She is acknowledged to be one of the finest prospects for women's golf Memphis has had in a long time.

### Alameda (Calif.) Muni Supt. Praised by Players

**B**ILL SOUSA, supt., Alameda (Calif.) golf course, is credited by thousands of golfers as being the man who has given them something to greatly enjoy and the city something to brag about in the condition of its course.

Thirty years ago the present Alameda course site was a marshland home of ducks and mudhens. At that time the city of Alameda decided that the area, if reclaimed, would be an ideal spot for a golf course. Three years later the good idea became reality and 18 holes were designed. In 1926 the first players began enjoying

the convenience of the Bay City greens. During the first year nearly 55,000 players played the layout.

Ten years later, over 70,000 players were paying green fees each year, and the number of players has risen steadily. More than 13,000 players played the course during the single month of June this year. A total of 1,972,934 players have played the course since it was opened.

William Sousa has been with the city of Alameda, assigned to the Alameda Municipal Golf Course, since it began operating. For 13 years he has been course superin-



Jack Baker (L), sales mgr., H. V. Carter Co., tells Bill Sousa, Municipal course supt., details of new Worthington tractor

tendent. During the years Bill has worked very closely with Professional Earl Fry on all turf problems, watering schedules and insect control matters. From a long line of professional golfers, Earl Fry joined the Alameda Municipal Course when it first opened. Earl is a key figure in the course's tremendous popularity growth.

Due to the very heavy play on the course, Sousa is able to topdress greens only once a year. Heavy play demands that cup positions be changed six times a week. Watering is scheduled for late evenings and all night to facilitate better conditions for the players.

Highlighting his explanation of maintenance on the course, Bill Sousa relates that during the entire 27 years only three tractors have been used on the course. These have been Worthingtons. Caring for the equipment is the responsibility of mechanic Earl Vargas.

Another piece of equipment praised by Bill Sousa is the Junior G-L Aerifier. Sousa decided to purchase this equipment after it had proved its value to relieve the packed turf condition existing because of extremely heavy play.