

Clubs, Pros Must Look Ahead with Junior Programs

By OLE B. CLARK

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LONGMEADOW is one of the finest and most active clubs in New England and it will continue that way.

The reason for being certain of Longmeadow's steadily bright future is the insurance the club has in its junior program.

At some clubs junior classes are conducted because that's the customary thing to do. The older members don't pay much attention to the development of the youngsters except when an elder happens to learn that one or more of his own grandchildren are playing good golf.

But at Longmeadow they're all interested in the kids. The youngsters are encouraged.

Our members look ahead. There'll come the time of changing of the guard, when the sturdy veterans will not be playing so

often but the club expenses will continue. It will be then that the new crop will take the heavy end of the responsibility that their predecessors have handled so well.

I see this foresight being reflected in the youngsters' interest in the pro department. My teaching assistant, George Chapple; our shop boy, Bill McCormick, our caddie supt., Bob Caprera; and our starter, James Jones, who is going to college on a scholarship earned as a caddy at Longmeadow, all see these youngsters as future members to be trained to be the fine type of members their fathers and mothers are.

Obligation to Educate

We all figure that the professional department shares with the youngsters' parents the welcome obligation of educating the boys and girls as potential members



Ole B. Clark (R) and his teaching asst. George Chapple, give the Longmeadow youngsters a "skull drill" on the grip as part of the first class lesson.

of the Longmeadow standard.

The kids come into my shop and look things over and early get the desire to buy pro quality golf goods. We tell these youngsters about clubs and balls and bags and everything else in which they show interest. They won't buy now, but someday they will—and they will buy wisely.

I think that possibly this phase of the junior campaigns often may be overlooked. We older professionals who came into the game when clubmaking was an art in evidence at every pro shop got our interest in fine equipment aroused early and we learned lessons about buying and use of golf equipment that very few of our members learned.

We now see how more extensive early education of golfers would have been a valuable exercise of foresight in pro market development and protection.

TV Appearance by Kids

Our junior classes aren't long. We have four free lessons — one a week — in getting the youngsters well grounded in fundamentals. Then we let them employ their own energy, initiative and ambition. We do plenty of supervising and give some private lessons to juniors, as well as keep our eyes on them and give them tips when we see them playing.

Appearance on TV has been a stimulating experience for our youngsters. It was among the reminders that we give them that their performance in golf is important to a lot of people, as well as fun to themselves.

We start our lessons with a brief talk which acquaints them with basic ideas in golf course conduct as well as informs them about the grip, stance and pivot. We tell them the "whys" because bright youngsters always want to know the reasons.

This part of the training is just long enough to get them quieted down and beginning to get interested in putting into action what they've heard.

This introduction also is keyed to the theme of the instructors meaning business and expecting cooperation from our team.

After this opening five minutes each youngster gets a club. They all are spaced far apart, and the factor of safety for themselves and others at all times in golf is impressed upon them.

Youngsters Help Teach

Then George and I swing a number of times, asking the kids to copy us. It is astonishing how aptly many of the youngsters can do this when they've got the



Clark's shop at Longmeadow is neat, roomy, well-lighted and has everything easy-to-get-at.



Clark (L) is the greeter at the Longmeadow golf shop, giving the grown-ups a feeling of the gay kid spirit and the kids a feeling of being important grown-ups.

right grips. There are some youngsters who aren't especially adept physically but we can do pretty well with them by getting them keyed to the swing mechanically and teaching them a few check points.

Following these earlier swings we work with each one individually. After that the job is eased because quite a few of the kids are quick to pick up the teaching and pass it along to other youngsters. They take a lot of interest in helping each other and it is especially pleasing to George and me to see some boys and girls earnestly and effectively working with their companions who haven't been so quick to catch on. To us that not only reveals fine character and excellent parental background but indicates a spirit that makes superior citizens.

In the fourth lesson the kids hit three or four balls from the practice tee; two hitting at a time. We can see that there has been study and practice before that time. The fire of golf has been lit in the youngsters.

Youngsters' New Attitude

In the class lessons, on television, and in the cases of the ones who are old enough to get to play, we see uniformly excellent behavior. We are very proud of our youngsters and we are confident that as young Americans of bright minds and sound characters they'll rate as high as any group in the land.

The lessons are given Saturday mornings in June before some of the kids go away to camp.

I've been giving junior golf instruction for more than 20 years and have seen many a good golfer develop out of my kid classes. I believe that there is a much higher percentage of probably very good amateur talent in our junior classes the past few years than during previous years. The kids now just seem to be getting the right feel for golf and an attitude that good golf is a part of every American youngster's play career.

I wish I had more time to give to junior golf, but it's possibly just as well that I have to restrict myself to getting them started right, supervising and helping them, and letting them do most of the job for themselves.

Of course every older fellow gets a tremendous lift in seeing his youngsters come along. It keeps him pepped up and interested keenly. He hopes to have the youngsters always as his friends and to contribute something to their happiness.

The business part of a pro's job is immensely interesting and important. The shop service problems are challenging because the pro must help his members with his shop stock and shopping advice just as he helps them on the lesson tee.

But as a professional considers his job and his good fortune in being at a club with a fine membership it's bound to occur to him that one of the best things he can do for his members is to devote himself to seeing that the members' children become to golf of the next generation the excellent assets their fathers and mothers are.