

Pros Study How And What to Teach

WITH the session being open to the public the PGA's Teaching committee program on Dec. 6 was presented to a "Standing Room Only" gathering of 500 pros and amateurs.

Bud Geoghegan, pro, Crestmont CC, West Orange, N. J., and Joe Hunsberger, pro, Juniata CC, Philadelphia, Pa., were introduced by Teaching committee chairman Harold Sargent and presented their Group Instruction methods.

Geoghegan and Hunsberger are credited by fellow professionals with conducting more classes and teaching more individuals through these classes and groups than any other two professionals. Hunsberger has 16 classes of 40 pupils each which he teaches every week through the winter months. All these classes are composed of Philadelphia school adult education students. Geoghegan's group instruction work is not confined exclusively to schools but includes industrial and YMCA groups as well.

Interest and attention was maintained at a high level by the use of questions and answers; Geoghegan serving primarily as the questioner with Hunsberger outlining his procedure and giving the details of his program by answering questions put to him by Geoghegan.

Group Lesson Methods

Hunsberger pointed out that as all of his classes are made up of students the school handles the enrollment of the students and collects the fees and pays Hunsberger for his services at the rate of \$10 per hour.

Geoghegan, in teaching his different groups, serves as his own collector and enrolls the students, charging a fee of \$10 for 10 lessons, limiting his group to 25 persons and two classes an evening.

Hunsberger's classes are composed of mixed groups, all adults, and include beginners and individuals with some experience. Classes are set up on a weekly schedule with nine lessons being given indoors and five lessons outdoors. Classes are conducted at the same time on the same day each week. Hunsberger told how he started his classes; on the first night teaching the fundamentals, beginning with the

full swing and using calisthenics to improve body movement.

For the second class he uses movies to break up the instruction routine and build up interest in the game. The third session is devoted to the etiquette of golf and following sessions are devoted to different clubs with a brief review of what had gone on in the previous sessions.

In setting up his classes for instruction, Hunsberger assigns four people to a mat with 20 pupils to an instructor. The instructor moves from group to group of four people, teaching one at a time at each mat while the other three students look on.

Instruction Procedure

For his outdoor sessions, Hunsberger devotes his first two lessons to driving, the third lesson to use of the irons, the fourth lesson to chipping and the fifth lesson to putting.

In answer to a question about the progress the students make, Joe indicated that at least 75 per cent of his students do very well after the fifth or sixth week. Although there are drop-offs from time to time he holds about 75 per cent of his pupils through the entire series of lessons. For the absentees at single sessions, he reviews the previous lesson each time so that the student will not get behind, lose interest and drop out because of failure to keep up with the remainder of the class.

Geoghegan outlined the methods and procedures he uses in setting up his groups and the pattern of instruction he follows. In his work with schools and industry, he tries not to overlook every means of advertising and promotion. He uses literature, newspapers, television, radio and movies. He supplies everything for his groups including the clubs, balls, mats and tees, if necessary.

The group classes which he conducts for industrial employees are arranged first through the personnel director of the plant involved who generally, in turn, calls in the recreation director through whom announcements and registration are handled. Geoghegan explained in most instances

recreation departments preferred that he handle the registration personally and arrange to collect the fees for the ten-weeks course.

Geoghegan pointed out that he follows the PGA teaching policy, stressing the five fundamentals.

Hit Ball Forward

After the elements of the swing are put together and Geoghegan feels the student or player has developed a sense of the swing, he accents the one piece turning of the body and bringing the clubface in square to the ball. He finds that using the hard, or regulation, ball, after the second lesson builds interest on the part of the player. From the big swing he moves on to the demonstration of the 5- or 6-iron, then the short swing with the short irons and chipping practice, and by the seventh or eighth lesson has the students using the longer irons, so when he's finished with the course the student has a good basic idea of the swing and that he's got to hit the ball forward and not down on it.

Both Hunsberger and Geoghegan reported that their extensive work in group instruction generally resulted in very fine business for themselves in sales and recommended professionals everywhere investigate the possibilities of conducting classes in their respective locales for the two-fold rewards that are potentially theirs if they apply the effort.

On Teaching Women

Mrs. Dorothy Germaine Porter, 1949 Women's Amateur champion and winner of the Women's Western Amateur titles in 1943 and 1944 gave the pros what many of them said was the best lesson they've ever had on teaching women and girls.

Mrs. Porter's remarks were based on her experience as a physical education major graduated from Beaver College, Jenkintown, Pa., and instructing women and girls in sports other than golf.

Salient features of her address:

Most girls show a lack of natural athletic coordination and sports timing and approach golf with a negative attitude. The girl who is a "natural" athlete can be easily taught but for the majority of girl and women pupils the pro must use a positive approach in finding a substitute for natural ability.

As all women at least think they can dance or move to rhythm their swings should be based on a definite rhythm. The opening measures of Blue Danube waltz

provide good golf swing music which eliminates tension and jerkiness and gives the girl pupil something definite to think about.

Practice and exercises should be to music.

Mrs. Porter recommended that the grip be taught so the reasons for it will be understood and that head position be treated in the same illuminating way.

The girls should be taught to think of the swing as a whole instead of a patching together of parts.

Keep each point simple and clear.

Get the woman pupil to make a habit of an orderly procedure in lining up the ball, then (in the cases of the elementary pupils) taking a square stance with the ball about in the middle and using the same swing with the various clubs determining the distances.

Course Etiquette

Women who have had no previous competitive experience in golf or other sports must be taught the etiquette and spirit of the game on the tees, fairways, greens and traps; the right of way on the course, and calling rules on oneself, etc., along with the lessons in hitting the ball.

Women often are baffled by the problem of distance. Their education must begin with impressing upon them that all references to distances from different clubs are based on the premise that the hit is square.

Women get the feel of control of distance best through practice from 25 to 50 yds. from a green. This practice should be done with music.

Hand action is best taught to girls and women by beginning with a half swing.

Tension and the tendency to pull up with head and shoulders are most common faults with women's putting after they've learned how to line-up putts.

Scoring Tactics

Women should be taught something about scoring tactics — not to be afraid of trap shots, to have faith in the club, not to depend on sheer strength, and to think in selection of the right club and about staying, or getting, out of trouble.

Mrs. Porter said the professional to teach girl and women beginners should be patient, use a lot of encouragement, keep the teaching simple and present short-term goals that are easily reached by the pupil.

She urged that pros extend golf instruction in schools and colleges and keep increasing the junior classes as the young, who do not have the fears and inhibitions

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of older people, learn golf much easier.

Ernest Jones, noted golf instructor and author, concluded the morning session with his talk on "How I Teach Golf." After years of study, teaching and no little research every new student presents a challenge to Jones because although he knows what he's going to teach, each pupil decides for him how he's going to teach. To Jones each pupil is different.

Jones approaches the subject of the golf swing by reducing it to its simplest terms. He pointed out that the golfer swings the clubhead with both hands and since the hands and fingers are in control, you don't use your wrists, that the wrists act only as hinges. Since contact with the club is only through the hands and fingers, one should not interfere with those hands and fingers.

Jones noted that the law of the pendulum takes over in learning to swing the club, that you cannot force a swing but at the same time it is impossible to get force without the swing and the speed with which you are swinging the club.

In the matter of keeping the head still he declared that it doesn't make sense when trying to move something as fast as possible that one should also try to hold something as still as possible. At the same time, control goes hand in hand with balance and perfect balance is the even distribution of weight essential to a basic swing.

Jones noted the body has power and that the hands are the medium through which power is transmitted. The first and most important step is to learn to swing.

Jones commented on a remark made by Gene Littler as being noteworthy of consideration by all those who aspire to become good golfers and attributed Littler's remark that he had "practiced years getting smoothness" as perhaps being the successful ingredient in his development.

George Dochat, professor of physical education at Rutgers university in talking on "The Psychology of Teaching" reminded professionals that their reading might well include some standard works on the subject of teaching. The Rutgers authority said knowledge of the laws of learning would make instruction easier.

Dochat said that a good teacher is a good analyst and must be able to recognize individual mental and physical differences in pupils and adjust the teaching methods to the pupil.

He said that the five factors most important in teaching, learning and playing golf are skill, strength, speed, endur-

ance and relaxation.

Fred Hawkins, newly elected chmn., Tournament committee of the PGA replaced Doug Ford, PGA champion and "Professional Golfer of the Year," on the program as Ford was competing in the south. The personable 31-year-old Hawkins talked fluently but briefly on the tournament personalities then hit a few shots with a 7-iron.

Hawkins had his most profitable year in 1955. He said he formerly was bothered by a fast-swing but has been able to slow it down and keep swinging smoothly. He admitted that he also had a tendency to sway but now turns away from the ball.

Ben Hogan gave a smooth performance. Ben started off with the admission that he was given "a hell of a tough chore," then worked up through details of his own methods and attitude toward experimentation, practice and competition.

The Hogan talk will be reported fully in GOLFDOM's February issue.

Bob Jones in wrapping up the teaching sessions said that in his opinion the Teaching committee was the most important PGA activity as it was directed at increasing people's enjoyment of golf.

Jones told of the difficulties he'd seen pros experience in trying to teach almost hopelessly clumsy pupils. Bob remarked that he and the professionals and amateur experts present were tremendously interested and benefited by Hogan's talk as one for those striving for the ultimate. But Bob added, for the masses who don't need the finesse and accuracy of a Hogan the pros must have a simple and effective way of teaching.

Bob said the pro has to know the steps of every swing in order to know where to look for errors and corrections but that the swing isn't something to be taken apart. The problem of getting the language to describe the feeling associated with correct golf Bob declared was beyond solving, but pros could come close to the solution by lucid teaching.

Jones said that the activities and policies of the club and tournament professionals should be complementary. He expressed the belief that publicity of the tournament professionals might get newcomers into golf but these green ones probably won't stay unless the game is made pleasant for them by the club pros.

The Jones talk was recorded on film for television and later gave PGA immense publicity by appearing on 84 TV programs.