

MINNESOTA PGA Teaches the Teachers

By HERB GRAFFIS

THE way in which the Minnesota PGA goes at its work of bettering the results of golf instruction gives pros everywhere a successful policy and procedure to study.

Delegates to the 1955 national PGA meeting were impressed by some exhibits of Minnesota golf instruction methods, particularly by the golf exercises devised by Les Bolstad for members of the University of Minnesota golf team which he coaches. However to get a real inside on the methods which have made Minnesota's representative professionals instructors of an exceptionally high average of effectiveness one must attend the instruction session at the association's spring meeting. Not all of the Minnesota PGA members are there, unfortunately. It's the tough luck of the absent ones and their club members because this session coordinates in a most useful manner practical, specialized experience of successful professionals and the most advanced methods of physical education and manual skills instruction as presented by members of the University of Minnesota faculty.

Pros' Scientific Attitude

There are two features that stand out in the Minnesota PGA instruction sessions: First is the attitude of scientific investigation; the other point is the method of organizing and conducting the class in which the teachers compare methods, ideas and results.

Nobody appears to be reluctant to come forth with a question or to tell how a some-

what different teaching procedure was successfully applied.

It has seemed to this writer that the veterans Willie Kidd and Jock Hendry have had a great deal to do in encouraging a spirit of eagerness to look for something progressive in golf instruction. Jock and Willie have been first class golf instructors for many years and when they show genuinely keen interest in what earnest younger pros tell about their own methods, successes and failures, the younger fellows feel that they are with noted authorities who are working with and for them.

Bolstad Organizes Study

Les Bolstad, a profound golf scholar as a promising amateur, then as a tournament and teaching pro, and now teaching golf to the University of Minnesota's pupils and faculty, is credited by his Minnesota PGA colleagues as making the Minnesota PGA spring teaching session the most valuable class for teaching teachers in all of pro golf.

Bolstad conducts the session by presenting instruction problems that arise during almost every professional's work on the lesson tee. Pros who have been especially successful in solving particular problems begin the discussions with their suggestions. Then other professionals are asked to comment from their own experience.

The hours pass with this well-organized cooperative research effort and at the close of the session each pro not only has acquired new and sound ideas but an added

respect for the brains and helpfulness of his colleagues.

Watch Your Words

Among helpful points that the Minnesota pros consider at their sessions are those of the expressions that are most vivid to the pupil. The professionals recognize that a phrase may have different meanings to different pupils, hence an important part of the teaching job is to speak in words that make a clear, understandable picture to the pupil being taught. For instance, one professional said he found himself saying "hand action" when he actually meant hand and arm action, and was puzzled by the pupil's inability to get the idea.

Pictures Help in Teaching

Comparisons of experiences with pictures as instruction aids also contribute to the value of the Minnesota PGA instruction sessions. Care in camera placement in taking instruction movies is one point the Minnesota pros stress. They have made arrangements with a photographer who goes around to their clubs and makes flip-books of movies of their members.

One pro uses a Polaroid camera for getting instruction pictures printed in about a minute. He told of taking a pupil's picture at contact and discovering that the elbows were spread when the ball was being hit. This gave quick help in discovering and correcting the fault.

The Bolstad outline for the 1956 session presents elements of the instruction program of the Minnesota pros.

Minnesota Pros' Outline

I. The only short cut in learning the golf swing is to present the swing as a whole pattern of movement, fill in the parts, then go back to the whole again. Whole-part-whole.

a. Golf pros are prone to think of detail not wholeness.

II. Create a favorable climate for learning.

a. Attitude of friendly cooperation, interest in the person, general air of relaxation.

b. Present only a reasonable goal which pupil can accomplish.

1. Most all pros are perfectionists and set too high a goal.

2. Set too high a standard and there is apt to be a let-down and feeling of failure.

c. Be sure to point out that learning takes time, that only practice can erase the initial awkwardness,

that there are apt to be sharp ups and downs in performance.

d. One of the greatest enjoyments in golf is to improve.

e. Praise as a factor in motivation. The difficulties of the game itself will knock the pupil down enough.

III. Recommended ways to start a beginner can vary. Figure out the easier skill.

a. Full swing with shorter-handled club stressing outline, movement, posture, and body movement.

b. Short swing stressing hand and arm movement and producing immediate results of square contact with ball.

c. Inter mingle the two.

d. Putting.

e. One handed swing with right hand.

IV. Just talking won't do the job. You have to demonstrate. Don't neglect the demonstration. Get right in and maneuver the pupil. Figure out ways to maneuver a golfer thru swing.

V. Develop set lectures for such things as putting, approaching, sand shots, description of full swing. Present a plan instead of just making corrections.

VI. Have your pupil make notes on points brought out in lesson.

a. Rate of forgetting is high especially in first 24 hours.

b. The effect of a lesson may be multiplied many times over if the golfer keeps notes.

VII. Encourage pupil to follow daily habit drills.

a. You can't have pupil think of everything, much has to be reduced to habit.

VIII. Habit breaking is often the crux of the problem.

a. Before you can learn a new habit you have to break the old one.

b. Three steps recommended:

1. Purposely practice the wrong.

2. Simulate the right move.

3. Overlearn.

IX. If something works, have learner repeat the plan over and over with the idea of firmly implanting the feel and the habit.

a. This would be no time to introduce a new idea.

X. If something doesn't work, drop it.

XI. Size up the individual for strength, coordination, length of fingers, arm length, age, personality.

a. Be sure to determine which is

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Explains Time-Payment Plan



The newly introduced time-payment plan which A. G. Spalding & Bros., Inc. is extending to its pro customers is explained to the press by Donald H. Mudd, company treas., at a meeting in New York. At the press conference were (l to r): Mike Turnesa, well known pro; Mudd; Harry Amtmann, Spalding ad. mgr., and Charles M. Crawley, vp of Beneficial Finance System which is cooperating with Spalding in the new credit service.

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the individual's master eye.

b. One-handed swing with right is good aptitude test.

c. Most beginners have low aptitude for counterclockwise exercise.

XII. You can't build a swing on top of a poor underlying body movement. Technique is meaningless unless the right arm is swung correctly.

XIII. Points brought up under "wholeness."

a. Sequence approach to ball. Plan, feel, look, and then get swing off in given order of movement.

b. Factors in the address.

c. Forming swing to "master line."

d. Outline of swing — General shape, form and alignment.

e. Stress on swing movement.

f. Posture and body movement.

g. Arm swings.

Club Management Course

A short course in Club Management is scheduled to be held at Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., Aug. 20-24. J. William Conner, Statler Club, Ithaca, is in charge of arrangements.

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