

TV Golf from Municipal Pro Steps Up Play in Community

By JIM FOSTER

ERNEST Edwards, professional at the Gillespie Park muny course in Greensboro, N. C., has been credited with getting from 300 to 500 beginners started in golf each year since he has been in his present post.

That's a pretty fair record of public service, but it is being far exceeded by Edwards' present performance in taking the game into the homes of thousands of potential golfers, new golfers and veterans at the game with his work on WFMY-TV at Greensboro. The Edwards' program has meant a decided extension of the community's recreation interest and service.

The response since his 15-minute weekly show started in March has been amazing. Many duffers who had been hacking at the ball the wrong way for years suddenly took an interest in their swings and as a result home club professionals throughout the area have been getting more requests for lessons.

Many persons who had never thought of taking up the game, look forward to his picture-tube instructions weekly and some are putting his tips into practice on the courses.

Although he has had no previous television experience Edwards is at complete ease before the cameras. His instruction is informal, just as though he were on the tee with a pupil. Charlie Harville, sports director of WFMY-TV lends him able assistance in the way of questions that golfers might ask.

Class Lessons Easiest Start

Although the TV audience is the biggest class he has ever had, group lessons certainly are not new to Edwards.

He believes the best way to learn is in a class with from five to 20 other beginners where players can capitalize on the mistakes of others and feel more at ease themselves.

The rapid growth of golf in this section



Ernest Edwards (left), Greensboro, N. C. pro, and Charlie Harville, WFMY-TV sports director, rehearse popular golf program before going on camera. Backdrop with green and water hazard gives show real golfing atmosphere.

can be attributed to a great extent to Edwards and George Corcoran, Greensboro CC pro with whom he worked when he was starting in the profession. Both have pushed the sport among beginners, women and juniors especially.

Edwards was not a polished player when he turned pro in 1934. He started to work as assistant to Tony Manero at Sedgefield GC and managed the shop for him for six years. It was during that period, in 1936, that Manero won the National Open Championship.

In 1940 Edwards moved over to Star-mountain Forest CC as assistant to Corcoran and one year later was named head pro at Gillespie Park. The city had built the nine-hole course as an experiment and under the guidance of Edwards it has been more than successful. The course has grown to 18 holes and annually leads the other four courses at Greensboro in the number of rounds played. Some 20 to 25 thousand rounds are played there annually.

Although he does give many private lessons, Edward's group lessons naturally are most popular during spring and summer. He sets them up in a series of six sessions



Demaret's 65 Breaks Notre Dame Course Record

Jimmy Demaret and Jack Burke knocked off from their pro circuit labors long enough in May to play an exhibition at Notre Dame University GC, with Demaret shooting a 33-32-65 to break a 19-year old course record. The old mark was a 67 authored by Horton Smith. Burke, troubled by the Irish greens, had to settle for a 73. Others who took part in the exhibition and their scores were: Tom Sheehan, former ND golf captain (73); Creighton Miller, All-American Irish halfback in 1943 (71); and two members of this year's ND golf team, Joe Grace and Charlie Thurn, who carded 75 and 74, respectively. In the picture above are (standing, l to r): Rev. George Holderith, CSC, Notre Dame golf coach; Burke; Demaret; James Gerity, Adrian, Mich. industrialist and ND alumnus who recently donated \$5,000 to foster golf and bridge at the South Bend school; Sheehan; Miller; and Ed (Moose) Krause, ND athletic director. In the front row are Grace (l) and Thurn.

of one hour and 30 minutes each with a maximum of 20 pupils. During a lesson he works with each student individually.

In his teaching, both personal and television, Edwards tells the beginners not to be in a hurry to hit the ball. "Putting should come first," he says. "Not only is putting half of the game but by putting first students can get early into the primary good habit of keeping the eye on the ball."

Swing Precedes Hitting

After putting Edwards goes to the middle irons, emphasizing that swinging comes first and hitting second. His theory is that beginners have a tendency to want to lift the ball when they start hitting too early. Therefore he suggests they get in high grass and "mow it down." When they get the feel

of hitting through the imaginary ball he allows them to start firing away.

Through informality, Edwards keeps his television show interesting and informative. He suggests that viewers get their clubs and follow his grip and swing. "I just heard a lamp crash," he said once after a full follow-through. He will often pick out common first names and state, "Mary, that grip's all wrong, you're gonna' slice it."

The program, sponsored by Pilot Insurance Co., has been sold for 26 weeks and probably will be continued since the response has been excellent.

Direct plugs are out but Edwards helps all pros by telling his audiences to "see your home club professional and let him work out your particular problems."