

Promotions Build Business at Phoenix Range

By DEAN SMITH

JACK LEDWON, whose promotional knowhow has built the Camelback golf range in Phoenix, Ariz., into a thriving business, knows how to get maximum mileage out of a turkey.

Twice a year, at Thanksgiving and Christmas, he has run turkey drawings for his driving range customers. The plan, with Ledwon's followup ideas, has been so successful he is looking for excuses to run it in the spring and summer, too.

Ledwon works it like this: When a customer pays for a basket of balls, he is given a ticket on the turkey and asked to sign a registration book giving his name and address. When he returns he is given additional tickets for each basket he buys. Signing the book again is not required.

"The drawings build business two ways," Ledwon explains. "First they encourage more play, since every additional ticket gives the customer more chance of winning the turkey.

"Second, and perhaps more important, it gives us a mailing list. We have our own mimeograph machine and send out postcards to persons on the mailing list every time we have a sale on equipment, whenever we stage a special event or for almost any good reason."

Monthly Mailing Program

Ledwon is thinking of starting a monthly mailing program soon. Regular reminders in the mail, he believes, will bring people in that much more often.

"When we draw the turkey winner, we make quite a big deal out of it," Ledwon points out. "We take the winner's picture with the turkey and post it prominently in the shop. It shows people we really did give away a turkey, and the pictures bring questions from new customers who want to know what they're all about. Any con-



Besides doing a lot of promotion work to bring his Camelback range to the attention of Phoenix golfers, Pro Jack Ledwon gives plenty of lessons. Here, he instructs Mrs. Hubert Merrywether, wife of Arizona state senator.

versation starter like that is a good thing since you want to be on easy speaking terms with all your patrons."

Do mailings help?

"You bet they do!" Ledwon declares. "We get a close-out item, for example, and send out cards on it. People start coming in and asking about the merchandise right away."

The turkey drawings are but one phase of Camelback's energetic promotional program.

Two other major promotions are staged each year—the junior golf program and the Lions Club hole-in-one contest. Both build business for Camelback range, located in one of Phoenix's better residential sections.

Gets Juniors Started

Ledwon announces his junior golf instruction program through newspaper stories in October, and attracts as many students as he can accommodate on his 30-tee layout. He divides them into two age groups—10 through 12 and 13 through 15—and offers a free lesson each Saturday morning through December.

The kids get the instruction free, but pay for the balls at 50 cents per basket. It pays off at the cash register, since most of the youngsters return several times a week to practice and many buy clubs and other equipment.

What's more, their parents often become

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interested, too, and soon dad is out hitting balls and shopping for equipment. Ledwon estimates that two-thirds of his students take up the game with real seriousness.

The hole-in-one event is staged in March under the sponsorship of the Phoenix Lions' clubs with proceeds going to the Lions' Sight Conservation fund. Last year a \$500 prize was offered for a hole-in-one along with numerous special prizes donated by merchants.

A 60 x 80 green was recently built at the range, using 36 yards of sand and topsoil. The grass cover is 2/3 Australian rye and 1/3 Seaside bent. Rings six- and ten-foot in diameter are drawn on the green to provide incentives for special prizes.

During the two years the contest has been conducted, \$8,000 has been turned over to the sight fund and the event is snowballing in interest. The Phoenix press gives the contest good publicity.

Ledwon and his assistant, Leon Pounders of Omaha, Neb., both PGA pros, have built up a busy teaching schedule and the range's overall business is on the increase.

Ledwon started the Camelback range in 1953 after four years as an assistant pro at Encanto GC, Phoenix's municipal course. He obtained a quonset-type steel building

for his golf shop and has been improving the grounds each year.

With his promotional flair, Ledwon hopes to continue building his range into one of the Southwest's finest.

Grau's Answer

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Actually the introduction of a stronger bent grass can help materially in reducing Poa annua. Penncross creeping bent is a stronger grass than Seaside. As soon as you can obtain some, I'd suggest you begin to introduce it into one of your Seaside greens so that they can become stronger and more resistant to the invasion of Poa annua.

Q. What strain of bentgrass seed do you recommend to be used this spring in reseed-ing our greens and "froghair" to help combat Poa annua? (N.M.)

A. On the greens I recommend Penncross creeping bent seed, using 1 lb. per 1,000 sq. ft. following thorough multiple spiking in order to get the seed down into turf. Follow with a light topdressing and keep continually moist for 10 days to two weeks in order to get the grass established.

For the frog hair or collars, I suggest that you give one of the fine strains of bermudagrass a thorough trial. Ugandagrass is one that