



Pro George Diffenbaugh checks grip of Dick Gambatese, a member of Kenwood G & CC's championship Junior interclub team and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase high school team that won the Washington, D.C. and Maryland state titles.

How Pros Teach — V

Treat 'Em Like Adults

That's the theory behind the methods used by George Diffenbaugh who has a reputation for being one of the country's top Junior teachers

BY JOE GAMBATESE

The qualifier for the USGA Junior Championship in the Washington, D. C., area had 108 entrants this year. It was the largest field in the country. Five youngsters shot 73 or better over the challenging Chevy Chase Club course.

One of the reasons the nation's capital is such a hotbed of Junior golf is smallish, amiable George Diffenbaugh, a PGA member for 35 years.

The Kenwood Golf & Country Club pro sometimes has to look up at the tall kids he teaches. But those who know golf in the East look up to Diffenbaugh as the outstanding teacher of small fry just starting out to face a lifetime of golf.

The record speaks for itself!

One of George's proteges, Bobby Brownell, won the Washington district amateur title 11 straight times before losing to another Diffenbaugh product, Perky Cullinane. Cullinane later won the Austrian Amateur while in the service.

Big John Eisinger utilized what the Kenwood pro taught him to lead Washington qualifiers for this year's U. S. Open. Johnny Dunn has been outstanding in national Junior and area tournaments.

Kenwood's Juniors have won the area Junior interclub championship twice in the past three years. One of the Kenwood boys, Dave Turner, then only 14, made two holes-in-one just a few months apart in 1958. This amazing feat was duly recorded in Ripley's "Believe It or Not."

Last year, at 15., young Turner won Kenwood's club championship, as well as the Junior title, before his family moved back to Fort Worth.



Girl players at Kenwood learn about chipping as Duffenbaugh patrols the line at a clinic.

Marty Garber, Jr., at 15, was runner-up for the District's schoolboy championship. Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School's city and Maryland state championship team was dominated by Garber and other Kenwood juniors.

Program at Peak

Brownell, Cullinane, Eisinger, Dunn, Turner, Garber and other prominent graduates of the Duffenbaugh School for Kids are all part of an area Junior golf program which reached its peak last year. That's when Deane Beman of Bethesda Country Club, just down the road from Kenwood, played and won his match on the Walker Cup team and became the youngest American ever to win the British Amateur.

How does Duffenbaugh do it?

Says Bobby Brownell, his first star pupil: "The thing about George is he treats you like an adult—not a kid." Besides reaching the top among Washington golfers, Brownell teamed up with his insurance business partner, Ralph Bogart, many-time Maryland state champion and another one-time Junior star, to win Winged Foot's famed John G. Anderson best-ball tournament for the fourth time this year. The best amateurs in the country compete in this scratch-play tournament.

Duffenbaugh confirms the adult approach.

Inquires About Interests

"I don't talk down to a boy—or a girl," George says. "The first thing I do is talk to him about what interests he has.

"While talking, I put a club in his hands and fix the grip so that it comes natural to him. Most kids will grip the club almost

correctly, with thumbs on the shaft.

"I explain why the left hand is where it is, why the club is in the palm of the left hand but in the fingers of the right . . . better control, better feel. I explain that a good grip is most essential because the hands are the only part of the body that touch the club.

"Then I explain the stance . . . you must stand natural to the ball — don't spread your feet; you must have balance but you don't get it with your feet too close together or too wide apart."

Duffenbaugh next starts the youngster swinging.

"I start with short strokes," he says, "because the short stroke is much simpler to explain. I stress mostly hands and balance. Other components of a good swing will follow naturally if the hands and balance are correct.

Starts with Five-Iron

"I usually start with the five-iron. We cut down discarded clubs for the smaller kids."

George encourages every youngster to watch and imitate good golfers he sees around the course.

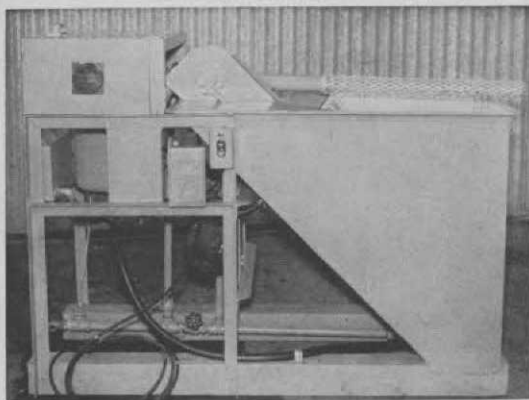
"I tell them to watch the good golfers' footwork and balance, how they use good hand action and get over on their left side when they hit."

Duffenbaugh doesn't try to teach too much at first because he believes it only confuses young minds. He also tries to take just what ability a youngster has and try to improve on it.

"Some kids never will be able to swing a club right," he points out. "You shouldn't

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Treat 'Em Like Adults

(Continued from page 34)

force a kid into golf; he'll resent it, won't play well, won't enjoy it. He'll probably catch on later."

Common Fault

What is the most common fault of young beginners?

"They all want to hit home runs," Diffenbaugh says. "I teach them the short game first so they won't want to kill the ball."

"Kids have another common fault: They want to hit from the top — break their wrists too early on the downswing. They also tend to hit from the outside in, causing a slice," George continues. "I stick a tee in the ground a few inches behind the ball and just outside the line to force the youngster to hit from the inside in order to avoid hitting the tee."

The Kenwood master finds that teaching youngsters in groups helps whet their interest in the game. Kenwood's Junior program, one of the outstanding in the country, includes five weekly clinics of two hours each in the spring.

"I had a young boy taking lessons, but he wanted to be in the clinics to meet other kids," George points out. "Clinics

don't take the place of lessons. We use them more to get the kids interested and started by showing them some of the fundamentals. Lessons come later, if they want them.

"At our clinics I usually work with the novices while those with some knowledge of the game are coached by some of the club's better players. I show them the grip, stance and basics of the swing and get them hitting plastic or puff practice balls.

"Beginners' groups should be limited to 10 or 12. Otherwise you can't give the kids enough individual attention.

Imitation Is Wonderful

"By the third clinic we have them working on chip shots, chipping from the edge of the practice green. About that time, I pick out a few kids with good swings and ask the others to watch and imitate them. Imitation is wonderful.

"We don't work on woods until the fifth and last clinic," George says. "Then we spend most of our time on the 2- and 3-woods, not the driver."

For six years Kenwood has had a well-rounded and complete program of events for its Juniors. It includes discussion of rules and etiquette, showing of movies, an interclub team, the clinics and the

usual golf events that adults hold.

The program has paid off in many ways. With an organized program, Juniors are taught how to conduct themselves as well as how to play. It has brought to Kenwood many members who are interested in their children's development as golfers. And it has developed excellent golfers.

In this year's district Junior championship, four of the 16 qualifiers were from Kenwood — more than from any other club.

Suggests Keeping Players Posted on "Slow Times" at Courses

Writing in the Willowick CC (Santa Ana, Calif.) Golfer, Gerald Hall, the professional, says that because of the heavy demand on golf courses persons all over the country should be encouraged to take advantage of that period of the day when requests for reservations are lightest. Quite a few owners and operators of courses in Southern California have started doing this.

At Willowick, for example, weekday demand from 6 to 8 a.m. and from 2 to 4 p.m. is lightest. And, crowded as the

course is on weekends, it still isn't impossible for quite a large number of golfers to start their rounds anytime between 2 and 6 p.m. and get in a full 18 without being nearly as harassed as if they had started in mid-morning or around noon.

Probably nobody ever has bothered to determine how many players at semi-private or public courses have given up golf completely or greatly curtailed their play because of overcrowded course conditions. And nobody will do it as long as business is as rushing as it is at present. Yet the players who are dropping out may be the ones who could mean the difference between success and failure if economic conditions become pinched. Some effort should be made to keep these people playing golf. Hall's suggestion for informing all players of the relatively slack periods on weekdays and weekends could help to do this.

Marue A. Carroll, Oshkosh, has resigned after 38 years in office with the North-eastern Wisconsin GA. He spent 13 years as its sec., then 25 years as its president. He was succeeded as pres. by Robert Testwide, Pine Hills CC, Sheboygan.



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