



How Pros Teach — I

YOU, Too, Can Shoot 90!

**That's What Big Jim Gantz
Tells His Students As They
Work Back from the Green**

ONE of the Ladies' Day regulars — an ordinarily pleasant woman in her mid-30s, dejectedly tramped into Jim Gantz's Dubuque CC pro shop with the lament that is heard a few thousand times over every season in every golf emporium.

"Mr. Gantz," she sighed, "my game has gone to pot. Simply gone to pot! Why, I can't even hit a wood shot any more and I used to be one of the longest hitters among the women around here."

You would think that Big Jim, who admits to 225 pounds but won't concede another single ounce — even to himself, would have clucked in commiseration with a long hitter gone wrong, but he extended no sympathy whatever.

"Mrs. T.," he said, "the trouble with your long game is your short one."

This statement called for an explanation. After hearing what Gantz had to say, the woman agreed that it was logical. She decided to sign up for a series of lessons.

So, the Dubuque pro proceeded to teach her the same way in which he had taught Billy Joe Patton, the North Carolina amateur great, and Cynthia Sullivan, who is making her bow on the Ladies PGA circuit this year.

Hit 125 Yards to Do It

Before going to the practice area, Gantz told Mrs. T. what he has maintained practically from the day he started playing golf. That is: If you can hit a ball only 125 yards, you can shoot 90. But there is a catch. You have to learn to play the short game to do it.

So, teaching what he preached, Gantz started his discouraged woman player hitting with a 9-iron from in close to the green. After reviewing the fundamentals of the grip, address, stance, etc., he had her practice chipping and pitching. Her



Three Views of Jim Gantz's Shop

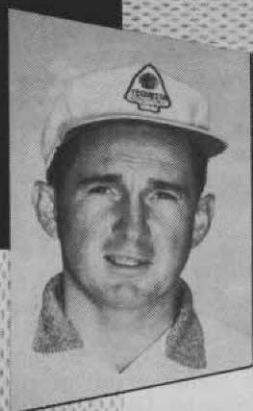
Located across from the men's grill at Dubuque CC, Gantz gets a constant stream of four-way traffic in the corridor opposite his new shop. Large windows face the corridor. So, Jim keeps most of his merchandise on open display to take full advantage of this exposure.

target wasn't necessarily the pin or hole. Rather, Gantz had her try to stop the ball within an eight ft. radius of the cup. The eight ft. radius is suggested by the Dubuque pro because that is the length of the flag pole and makes it easy for the player to envision a general area rather than a pinpoint target.

As the woman player progressed, Jim

had her move back from the green. In addition to chipping and pitching, he instructed her to hit with a one-half and three-quarter swing, the latter depending, of course, on how far she was from the green. As she gradually worked back, Gantz determined how far Mrs. T..... could hit a ball with a 9-iron without press-

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Eagles Move Over and A Course is Built

(Continued from page 70)

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Lateral Water Hazards

The courses measures 6,200 yards and borders on the Atlantic Ocean. Sand traps are numerous and there are no less than 12 lateral water hazards. Lakes front five of the 18 holes, making it a tricky course, but not one to discourage those who shoot in the 90-100 bracket. Par is 35-35-70.

Whillock picks the 390-yard, par 4 seventh hole as the toughest. "The hole is a dogleg to the right, bounded by water and trees on the left and right of the fairway," he says. "The green also is elevated."

Since the course opened in 1955, more than 77,500 golfers have played on the sporty government reservation.

Dick Bury, former golf professional from Detroit, now doing a stint in the Navy, serves as Whillock's assistant.

You, Too, Can Shoot 90

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ing or trying to hit too hard. Jim and his pupil agreed that her maximum comfortable range with the club was about 75 yards.

In lessons that followed, the same procedure was followed with clubs ranging down to the 5-iron. The keynote was accuracy with distance being considered only a secondary factor. By the time the woman pupil had played down to the 5-iron, it was found that she could get about 120 yards with that club and have a reasonable chance of coming close to the target area.

All during this time, no mention was made of the woods. But through the series, Gantz noted that the woman was gaining more confidence with each lesson. Automatically, she began to assume the correct stance. Her timing with each club improved rapidly whether she chipped or took a half swing or went the whole route.

No Trouble With Woods

When it came time for a session with the woods, it didn't surprise Gantz when Mrs. T. started hitting them with authority. After three or four swings with a 2-wood, she began putting the ball out nearly 160 yards.

Most of her drives were straight down the center. When she used her 4-wood she got 140 yards. What pleased Gantz most was that the woman by now was hitting every shot with real confidence. And, like so many women she wasn't trying to out-slug the men.

Even if Mrs. T. . . . hadn't been able to hit wood shots nearly as far as she does, Gantz still insists that she could get around a course in something like 90. That, of course, is provided her short game is reasonably reliable.

Big Jim reasons this way: On the average course of 6,300 yds. there are say 11 holes of from about 350 to 400 yds. Four others probably are par 3s. That leaves three holes that run to around 500 yds.

Any golfer, be it man or woman, who can't hit a ball much farther than 125 yds., can negotiate the 15 shorter holes in 72 or 73 strokes if he or she has learned to play a control game. The remaining long ones can be played in sixes even by a person who is far from being a robust hitter. Add them together and the total comes very close to 90.

The above reasoning assumes that player is going to get down in most cases in two putts and, if he keeps the flagpole radius in mind on approach shots, occasionally in one. Gantz encourages his pupils to putt straight away and firmly, always striving to get within at least putter-shaft distance of the hole (about three feet) on the first effort. If he can come in that close, pressure is reduced on the second putt.

In the year that Big Jim has been at the Iowa course he has been able to persuade a few persons that his theory of learning from the green out is the easiest way to master the game. All, of course, unlike Mrs. T. . . . , don't take a series of lessons to learn the intricacies of the Gantz system, but most of those who take only a single lesson or two are amenable to the idea of starting near the green and working back.

When Gantz is occasionally reminded that his ample dimensions seem to be inconsistent with his theories about teaching the game, his reply is: "I have never maintained that golf is a power or a big man's game. I have no guarantee whatever that I can go out and beat a fellow who is a foot shorter than I, or who weighs 50 pounds less. I sincerely feel that golf is two-thirds finesse and one-third power and so that is why I teach as I do."

This is the first of a series of articles on how pros teach.



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