

Pete Pelcher shows a few putting tricks to Jim Duffy, his assistant. Pelcher's recommendation to his pupils: Practice putting anywhere — on concrete or a hardwood floor. The important thing is that you acquire the touch.



How Pros Teach III

Be A 'Take Charge' Guy **on That Lesson Tee**

Pete Pelcher, another member of the "50,000 Lesson Club" whose experience as a golf instructor goes back to wood shaft days, is of the opinion that many pros haven't realized their potential as teachers because they either don't know how or are reluctant to take full charge on the lesson tee.

Pelcher, who has been the headmaster at the rolling Davenport (Ia.) CC for 14 years, attributes part of this reluctance to the subservient position that many pros feel or imagine they are placed in because they are working for people who are civic or social leaders and are accustomed to a certain amount of deference on the part of those who work for them. "You might call it a slight touch of inferiority complex," explains Pete, "which doesn't really need to exist. If a pro has applied himself to being a capable and conscientious

teacher then he has developed a product, so to speak, that helps others. There shouldn't be any timidity on his part in using a certain amount of authority in selling it."

Reluctance to take charge of the lesson, Pelcher adds, also is due to laziness, indifference, lack of confidence and in some cases, simply because the teaching pro isn't a very forcible type.

Depends on Pupil

The degree of firmness or authority that a pro should exercise in giving lessons, Pelcher declares, should be dictated by the type of person he is teaching. As far as he is concerned, more than 90 per cent of members who take lessons are either easy to teach or eager to learn and instruction sessions with them usually come off in harmonious fashion. A pro, in such cases, goes along, neither trying to give



Construction of Palmetto CC, Miami's newest course, was progressing from the blueprint to the building stage when this photo was taken. In it are (l to r): W. M. Porter, one of the owners; Shelley Mayfield, associate architect; O. J. Frank, building supt.; Dick Wilson, architect; and Henry Russell and F. B. Wagor, owners. The course is now being built and will be ready in November, according to present plans. It has two lakes and a 3,000 ft. waterway, giving course 11 water holes. Length ranges from 6,450 to 6,900.

the impression that he is the man in charge, nor that he is overawed by the importance of the person who is his pupil. Whether it's a housewife or the town banker, he just teaches.

But with the other 10 per cent, the situation may be just a little different. Pupils in this category require a little study on the part of the pro as to their temperament, willingness to learn and similar factors. They include persons who want to teach the pro, those inclined to let their minds wander in the midst of a lesson, people who don't have much confidence because they aren't athletically inclined, and that sort. You have to be firm with these people, often snapping them back with what amounts to gruff commands or treatment. "Some of them naturally resent it," Pelcher observes. "In fact, some of them become quite irritated with you and stay that way for 10 or 15 minutes, but eventually they get over it. Luckily, you're going to find that practically all of your players are intelligent enough to know that you are trying to help them."

Sensible Approach

In his zeal to show who is boss on the lesson tee, the Davenport golfmaster warns, the pro can't have a belligerent or blustering attitude. Members soon re-

sent that and it can quickly lead to job hunting. As Pelcher defines it: "You have to be positive, but not aggressive. If you've had a little difficulty in the past in teaching some of your members, you and not they, have to be the first to forget it. Everytime you go out on that lesson tee, your own attitude should be that you are starting from scratch regardless of what may have happened in the past."

Pelcher, who operates a 5-net downtown winter school, and has been doing so since 1950, is probably more thoroughgoing than most pros. A large percentage of his lessons are preceded by a brief skull session with the pupil in which perhaps two or three of the latter's rounds are reviewed. In not more than a few minutes of this, a pro can pretty well decide just what part of the player's game needs re-touching. About 75 per cent of the time it is his short game.

Except with Juniors and young people who are just starting to play golf, Pete Pelcher teaches to correct faults. His theory is that most people who get around to taking lessons from a pro have so many ingrained swing habits that it is practically impossible to eliminate them. So, the only hope is to get them straightened out as much as possible.

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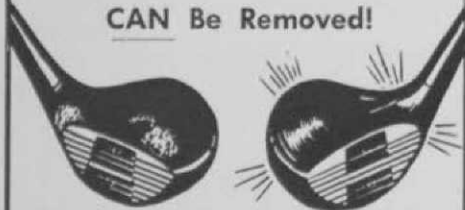
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Jim MacLaughlin is proud of Joe Benner and so are the Miami Shores CC members and the community's officials. The young man does them high credit with a business performance that indicates the growth there will be in pro shop business when business management schooling is applied by college graduates who get into golf.

"Take Charge" Guy

(Continued from page 36)

Pelcher feels that the most glaring faults of golfers, both men and women, revolve around the pivot. In most cases, the player doesn't swing away from the ball correctly and, as a consequence, his follow through is poor. If there is a panacea for this, he thinks it is good footwork. At any rate, he strongly recommends practicing to improve footwork to about 70 or 75 per cent of his players. Along with this, Pelcher preaches, "Think more of the swing than the hit." But he doubts if more than one out of maybe eight persons ever grasps this concept to the extent that he really does just this. If this were to happen on a large scale, the Davenport pro maintains, the number of good golfers in this country would be greatly increased.

If Pelcher has a teaching preference, it is instructing junior golfers. Like most adults, he stands amazed at how rapidly kids learn to do something when they apply themselves to it. The most amenable age group, in his estimation, embraces the 12 and 13-year olds. "Kids of this age," he points out, "are almost as capable of imitation and of absorbing teaching as younger children. But what makes them really interesting is that they are just beginning to flex muscles that give them the power to give the ball a good ride."

Learns from the Kids

A favorite trick of Pelcher's is to have his youngsters study the swings of other Juniors and have them pick out the flaws in them. It's uncanny, he says, how quickly they can detect what is wrong with another kid's swing. "The pro," he adds, "can learn a great deal by selecting a half dozen youngsters to conduct lessons among the Juniors and follow them around and note just what corrections they recommend.

"And while we're on the subject of learning from others," Pelcher continues, "a pro who takes the attitude that he can't learn a great deal from watching the good players at his club is starting on the road down. That, after all, is the way a home pro should further his education since he really doesn't get much opportunity of seeing the great players in action."

Plenty of Club Competition

Thanks to the promotion work Pete Pelcher has done in his 14 years at Davenport CC, it is a very competition-conscious institution. Every year four big match play tournaments are staged for the 200 male members and the same number of events are held for the 100 women players. Davenport CC also belongs to a five club league made up of 16-man teams. The entire roster is changed for each match in league play so that practically the entire membership gets a chance to play in this competition.

Besides these so-called major events, there are numerous lesser competitions at Davenport CC. One of the most popular over the years has been a weekly mixed two-ball affair which starts around three o'clock and is climaxed by a buffet dinner. This is one that most members don't want to miss. So popular has it become, in fact, that it is being converted to a four-ball this year so that more persons will be encouraged to get into the act.

The club tournament season is climaxed by a Pro Trophy dinner at the end of the season at which Pelcher is host to the members, a large percentage of whom have qualified for some kind of an award in the silverware dept.

Evans Birthday Dinner

Western Golf Assn. will pay tribute to Charles (Chick) Evans, Jr., at a testimonial dinner in the Grand Ballroom of the Conrad Hilton Hotel, Chicago, July 18th. It is in observation of Chick's 70th birthday. Proceeds of the affair will be used to establish a special reserve fund for the Evans Scholarship Foundation.

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