

Palmer, Spork Say 'Amen' to Penick's Methods

A great and modest guy who makes the words, "old pro" a tribute to savvy as well as a term of affection, headlined the PGA education-teaching program at the PGA's 1960 annual meeting.

Harvey Penick of Austin (Tex.) CC and for about 30 years golf coach for the University of Texas, and more recently famed as the



Penick

professor to whom several of the women pro stars have come for finishing school courses, was the "old pro" who gave the lesson.

To Penick's instruction, Arnold Palmer, the Open and Masters champion and the PGA pro-golfer-of-the-year, said "amen." Also echoing this was the girl pro on the program, Shirley Spork. There were many excellent teachers among the 100 who attended the session over which John Reuter, jr., Pres., Southwest Section, PGA, and Don Fischesser, chmn., PGA education-teaching program, presided.

Keeps It Simple

There was nothing revolutionary or fancy about the way Penick gives a lesson. He adjusts the individual to the simplest possible application of fundamentals. Penick says he never has seen two kids or two adults swing the same or play the same. He added that he has seen many good teachers and they, too, differ.

The path of the club, the angle of the clubface and the clubhead speed at impact are the three things for the teacher to keep in mind, Penick said.

"You haven't got a thing unless you have a good grip," the Texas mentor declared. This statement was accented later in the session by Arnold Palmer whose father, professional at the Latrobe (Pa.) CC began teaching his son a good grip when the boy was five years old.

Long Right Thumb

Penick stressed placing the right thumb in the hollow of the right hand for better control of the club. He said that a long thumb gives more of a palm grip.

He counseled against getting pupils into the habit of doing as experts do when they walk up to the ball: look at the target then square the club to it as they stand to the ball. Penick remarked that it has taken a long time to learn to teach the simple things and he suspects that he isn't the only pro who has had that experience. To sit down a little with the knees flexed at address, to waggle correctly and relieve tension with a forward press, to turn easier with the feet closer together, to get smoother follow through with an open stance, and a bigger swing with a closed stance, are among the simple points that are not always applied at the right time to the right people Penick pointed out. He noted that on the big shots the wrists of most experts starting cocking as the weight shifts to the right foot.

Establishing Communications

Shirley Spork said the hardest problem of instruction comes in meeting a pupil for the first time and figuring out the pupil's problem and determining a good basis of communication and understanding. More than 50 per cent of golf lessons are given to women, Shirley said, and they need to be schooled in what is frequently and ungrammatically called the "basic fundamentals" by those who forget that "basic" and "fundamental" mean the same thing.

She noted that most women want to hit the ball with "everything they've got" and fail to get a good foundation for the swing. In Miss Spork's observation most women dance at the ball instead of getting set over it as a good man golfer does.

Miss Spork briefly told about the highly successful golf school for women physical education instructors conducted by the Ladies PGA at the University of Michigan.

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Spork

that of diffusion with disposal of all water over field capacity.

3. Design and Principles of Contouring Greens — Design will insure surface drainage in many directions and not in just "several or two or three directions." Surface water will escape from the green to the nearest outlet on all sides or in every direction. It will be carried only a short distance to the nearest outlet at the perimeter of the green. Methods of construction and principles of contouring greens have been published and are available, including multiple pin positions or cup cutting areas to save greens by preventing wear and tear. This combination, including location, will cover drainage in five phases: surface, internal, lateral, by diffusion and by air.

Irrigation Design and Engineering — By having the necessary phases of soil mixture, construction methods and design, it is now possible to combine fully automatic multiple sprinkler systems to obtain the ultimate in maintenance efficiency that was previously impossible. It will save the U. S. courses millions of dollars in maintenance when proper construction in all phases is combined with automatic sprinkling systems. A three to four hour watering job is completed in 15 minutes.

Watering is the greatest labor cost on the course. What do you get in return? Now this loss can be channeled to productive activities. A course never needs to be closed because the greens are too wet.

Golf courses have never had the opportunities that now are offered. Certainly the objective of our older courses should be toward more efficient management by making use of the many advancements developed in recent years.

Penick's Teaching Is A Hit

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There were more applicants for the course than could be admitted.

She emphasized that the job of fitting women's clubs is tremendously important and that pros must be losing considerable club business by not making women aware of this factor.

Don January told of starting in golf by caddying for his father, then getting into fast amateur competition around Dallas and being tutored by Dallas pros before he decided to turn pro himself. He said that the great lessons circuit pros get are from fellow performers. He said Gary Player gave him valuable assistance by

telling him to look at the ball and not around it so as to stay over it longer.

Palmer's Secrets

Arnold Palmer answering a request to reveal the "secret" of being the "best driver" replied that a good deal depends on the grip. He keeps his left elbow straight and high right elbow in. He says that he squeezes the grip if he finds his drives getting off line. When he moves his left hand a bit more on top of the grip to keep from hooking he doesn't have to hold the club so firmly. For longer shots he takes the club away quite slowly. His driver has a 12 degree loft and the shaft is stiff. He takes the driver back from 6 to 12 inches before his wrists start cocking.

Warren Orlick conducted a useful session on the rules, illustrating with diagrams some of the puzzling matters that pros are asked to settle. Orlick also made illuminating comment on the 1961 changes. Orlick, a leading student of the rules and probably the No. 1 practical authority on their application, is a severe critic of the change that permits keeping the flagstick in the hole.

TV Rules Violations

He cited violations of rules in the TV matches as showing that tournament pros need considerably more education in the rules or risk losing public standing as authorities. His remark recalled to several persons a comment Walter Hagen made during the 1960 National Open when a pro sent in from the course for a rules committee decision on a simple case. Said The Haig: "A man who plays golf for a living shouldn't have to ask an amateur for the answer in a case like that."

PGA Meeting

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Rogers of the law firm that unraveled the legal intricacies that led to the PGA brand of equipment being put on the market, reported to the delegates. Schaffner discussed the progress made with the PGA line in 1960 and revealed merchandising plans for the current year, while Rogers brought the delegates up to date on the latest legal developments.

Other business transacted included arrangements made between the PGA and International Golf Sponsors Assn. and William A. Martin and Associates, Chicago, for TV tournament coverage. Miscellaneous circuit details also were worked out by the tournament advisory committee with co-sponsors.