

Figures Show Juniors Are Golf's Neglected Segment

By HERB GRAFFIS

WHAT do you know about the Junior golf situation?

Junior golf is the insurance of the golf business. It is undergoing change due to the bag cart and golf car altering the traditional caddie picture, the big increase in women's golf reducing summer time available for Junior play on many courses, private and public, and the swimming pools at private clubs providing a welcome for the kids that often is not extended at the golf course.

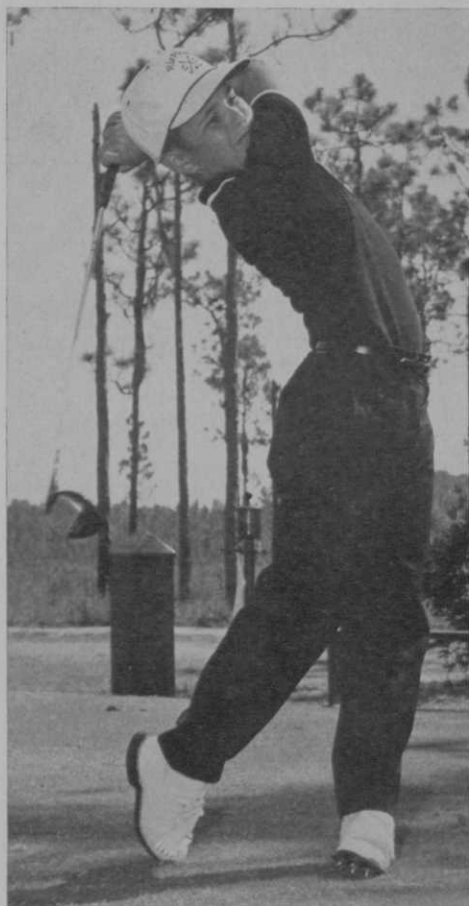
Any phase of the golf business is of urgent importance to the professional, course supt. or mgr. who qualifies as a golf businessman. Being qualified only in one's specialized field as a professional, supt. or clubhouse mgr. is not enough to do the job exceptionally well at a club of any size or character these days. The man who is serving his club best and getting a better than average salary is the golf businessman.

When the golf businessman looks at the figures on golf play, as recently compiled after a COLFDOM survey, he sees that there are 3,200,000 men, 857,000 women and 341,000 Juniors playing at least 15 rounds of golf a season.

Figures Are Conservative

These figures are conservative. Since 1927 COLFDOM has been making surveys with the cooperation of pros, supts., mgrs. and club officials or owners in an effort to determine what the score actually is in the golf business. The surveys often are used in establishing marketing quotas and checking results, so they can't be the wild guesswork that sometimes is handed out as golf market data.

Comparing the latest available U. S. Bureau of the Census estimates of U. S. population by age with the estimates of golfers, it appears that there is about 4 per cent of the U. S. population between 10 and 74 years playing golf but the 10-19 age group seems to have fewer than one per cent as golfers.



Ralph Colla, Jr., Youngstown, O., is a star among the Junior set. He finished second in the 10-12 age class in the 1960 Orlando (Fla.) Pee Wee tourney.

The figures on juvenile golf activity probably are more nearly generous than the estimates on other age groups. When the youngsters get the benefit of coordinated municipal course and high school physical education programs they get to play a fair amount of golf after school and during summer vacations. Otherwise, pros have to get the kids into 9 holes of play one morning a week during the summer, usually after their junior class lessons are held.

Colleges Lend A Hand

An increasingly large part of the Junior golf development is being done at the 140 college and university courses and as promotion by enterprising owners and professionals at daily fee courses, Par 3 and miniature courses. The miniature courses
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Junior Golfers

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do more of a job in this respect than generally is realized. They give the kids bargain prices in off-hours, especially on summer mornings.

In smaller communities the Juniors generally seem to be getting a better break than kid golfers get at many metropolitan district clubs. The kids are part of the plan in the smaller towns and at the busy larger clubs are frequently considered nuisances.

The most successful Junior golf programs at private clubs usually are those in which women members work with professionals in getting the kids interested and in sustaining their interest.

Golf ranges have been strong promoters of Junior golf with classes of kids from pee-wee ages up through the teens. Parents bring children to the classes and stay to hit balls. Operators who were afraid of the kid class risk of ball theft usually report the pleasant experience of kids not stealing as many balls as adults do.

Figures in the latest GOLFDOM survey show men, women and juniors under 18:

Private Club Courses

9 hole . . . 1607 — 18 or larger . . . 1555
— Total . . . 3162

Golfers

Men . . . 605,000 — Women . . . 161,000
— Juniors . . . 64,000 — Total . . . 830,000

Semi-Private Courses

9 hole . . . 1372 — 18 or larger . . . 625 —
Total . . . 1997

Golfers

Men . . . 1,148,000 — Women . . . 325,000
Juniors . . . 108,000 — Total . . . 1,581,000

Public Golf Courses

9 hole . . . 406 — 18 and larger . . . 446 —
Total . . . 582

Golfers

Men . . . 1,449,000 — Women . . . 371,000
Juniors . . . 169,000 — Total . . . 1,989,000

Figures on individuals accounting for play on the semi-private and public courses represent the estimates of experienced officials and pros at representative courses.

Rounds of golf played in 1960 are estimated as having been 86,805,500, divided as follows:

Private clubs	29,338,500
Semi-private courses	34,875,000
Public courses	22,592,000