



## ***New Frontier Market***

**T**HIS year, more than ever before, the spotlight of the golf market will be on the kids.

The juniors have long been the "new frontier" of the golf business. This goes back to the days when caddies, growing up, expanded American golf from a "society" game and a pastime for displaced Scots to a popular sport.

There has been for some time a feeling among pros that the caddie has passed his crest as the No. 1 replacement and market insurance element in the golf market.

At representative clubs in metropolitan districts where the population explosion produced more potential caddies than golf could use, the caddie recruiting problem has been beating caddiemasters, caddy chairmen and professionals. This is in spite of the invitation of Evans scholarships and similar programs designed to channel alert kids into caddying.

Numerous professionals remark that the opportunity of playing a private course on

The kids shown in these photos took part in the Junior Divot Derby held last summer at Reid GC located on the Naval Air Base, Pensacola, Fla.

*Official photos — U. S. Navy*

*With caddies vanishing from the scene, it's lucky that some pros and the National Golf Foundation started promoting Junior programs*

Monday (caddies' day) is the prime incentive in getting a lot of excellent caddies to carry clubs. Many of these pros reserve their Mondays to watch kids tee off and practice and to give them instruction.

### **Future Getting Dimmer**

Generally, though, the caddie aspect of the golf market's future appears to be getting dimmer because of:

(1) Higher caddie rates and reluctance of kids to caddie unless they can carry double. Especially with women who are more "careful" than men are with money, caddies fees are pricing the kids out of business. It used to be considered that it was declassé for a woman at a first class private club to haul a bag cart instead of hiring a caddie. One thing that changed this was the big growth of women's golf during the months when caddies weren't available because of school hours;





(Above) Scoreboard and press section at Junior Divot Derby were strictly big league. (Left) Girls not only demonstrated golfing prowess but were refreshing to behold. Junior golf programs at military courses are helping to keep valuable technicians in service.



(2) Something else that has changed the attitude of women is motorized equipment. The golf car has met the caddie demand in private clubs and at pay-play courses during school hours when caddies are not available. The cars have accounted for considerable revenue for clubs and courses from players who wouldn't be out if they had to carry their own bags. The meal and bar revenue, pro shop sales and revenue from golf car rentals bring the money in. The caddie fee goes out. It was, and still is, a great thing to have money as an incentive for a kid to be evangelized for golf, and that is why the majority of private clubs where caddies are available insist on having a caddie assigned to each golf car in use.

#### Saw Accent Switching

The foresighted professional saw the accent switching from caddying to Junior programs for girls and boys. In collabora-

tion with the National Golf Foundation, he worked on pioneer programs in getting golf into the school and college picture.

One of the primary objectives of the National Golf Foundation was the promotion of Junior golf. The late Glenn Morris, first managing dir. of the Foundation, outlined the plan that, in general, is the procedure effectively followed by the Foundation today. Rex McMorris is Morris' successor.

Here is the latest and most reliable data on Junior golf:

- Boys and girls under 18 in parks recreation or school golf programs at public courses or at schools 86,000
- Students playing on 143 courses at universities, colleges and prep schools
- Juniors attending classes conducted as market promotion by pros at semi-private courses and ranges 92,000
- Juniors in golf classes and playing at private courses 142,000

That is a pretty good showing for junior golf in a field of \_\_\_\_\_ 18-hole (or larger) clubs and \_\_\_\_\_ 9-hole courses.

The percentage of youngsters among the 4,500,000 active golfers in U. S. should be

(Continued on page 146)

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(Continued from page 82)

and would be higher but heavy adult play at many private and public courses is pushing the kid golf program into a corner. Many older golfers regard the kids as nuisances and many women would sooner park their kids at the pool while playing themselves.

Kid programs aren't easy going for the pros. Some kids take to golf eagerly and aptly; others are as tough to teach as adults. But it is the kids who highlight pro teaching reputations. For example, Glenna Collett was a star pupil of Alex Smith, Jones was a protege of Douglas Edgar, Lawson Little of Tommy Armour and Virginia Van Wie of Ernest Jones. Today's roster of rising young players would greatly swell this list.

Junior championships have grown steadily of late and have grown well beyond the size imagined by the Western Golf Assn. and the Women's Western Golf Assn., which established the first of the kid championships.

### Still Much to Be Done

Although the growth of Junior golf has presented a brighter picture of a sports market future than Junior baseball promotions, the increase of kid golfers in numbers and play is a long way from being satisfactory to pros who are looking toward future business.

One of the veterans at a PGA gathering during the Phoenix meeting remarked: "Pros would have saved and made millions for themselves if they had stuck to the idea of taking in parents' old clubs, cutting down the shafts, reducing the head weights and regripping these clubs for kids. Then there would have been millions of clubs given to the kids, encouraging their play and the parents wouldn't have expected big allowances for old junk. We let that idea get away from us and now we've got the trade-in headache and fewer clubs for kids. I am going to push it again and see if I can't get golf clubs into the hands of every school kid in our town."

### Make Own Repairs

If you had to wait four or five weeks for repairs to your car you wouldn't drive a car of your own — you'd take a cab. The pro can't expect a member to wait that long for a club to be factory-repaired but should be able to make the repairs himself. — Bill Hardy.