



Denny Shute (r) and Bob Buchanan, his assistant at Portage in Akron, discuss some mutual teaching problems.

Pupils Need More of These

Denny Suggests More Lessons in Strategy

A Young teaching pro can further his education and get a much better grasp of what he should be trying to accomplish if, occasionally, he can corner a pair of knowledgeable instructors and induce them to discuss their teaching methods. Actually, this isn't a very difficult thing to do because once a man (or two of them) has qualified to preside at the instruction tee, it doesn't take much prompting to get him started in spewing out reams about his techniques, and in recalling many of the hundreds of students who have taken lessons from him.

In fact, the real trick may lie in getting the old pro to turn it off once he has warmed up to the discussion. This is not necessarily due to his inclination to be verbose, but simply because the teaching of golf, with all its fascinations, has become one of our great talking sports.

In the following paragraphs you'll get an idea of what two seasoned pros like Denny Shute, who is pretty well weighed down with medals from both his American and British golf triumphs in the '30s, and young Bob Buchanan, his assistant at Portage CC in Akron, O., talk about when you can get them off in a corner. The implication of the above paragraphs, incidentally, doesn't particularly apply to this pair. Shute, with all the modesty inherent in a man who knows what it is like to win major championships, is naturally a reticent sort and it takes a fairly long warmup session to get him talking.

Buchanan, a Purdue University graduate and typical of many of the young pros who have proceeded from campus to course in the last decade, certainly isn't given to rambling.

Here's What They Say

If you were to listen in on one of their discussion of teaching, here is what you would hear:

Denny: Many times I've thought that our ideas about teaching golf are all wrong — but if we tried to change them our pupils wouldn't hold still for it.

Bob: How's that?

Denny: We're forced to dwell too much on the mechanics of swinging a club. We should be giving more playing lessons.

Bob: Since I've been more or less brought up under Denny Shute, I can anticipate what you mean. You're referring to strategy.

Denny: Amen. Did you ever notice, for example, how many players here tee up on the wrong side of the first tee?

Bob: I've never kept track of it, but I'd guess most of them do.

Denny: Most is right. I'd say three out of four do. And the trouble is, you can't get them to move over to where they should tee up and stay there.

Bob: There's an explanation for that. If the first fellow in a foursome tees up on the wrong side, usually the other three will do it. I learned that in a Psychology class.

Denny: That costs many of them a stroke before they ever swing a club. Along with this and other errors of strategy that people who play in the 80s and 90s make, a good six strokes a round are lost.

Should Play Bogie Golf

Bob: To use one of your favorite remarks, "They shoot bogie golf but they don't play it."

Denny: You're stealing my lines, Bob, but it's all right. Maybe I should explain that. To play bogie golf, you're not afraid to baby up when the occasion calls for it. On the tough holes, the average player really doesn't go for the green if he's 160 or 180 yards out. He's going for the traps, but he isn't smart enough to admit it. If he'd go down a club or two and play up to the opening, he'd probably save himself at least one stroke. From safe ground he can play to run the short approach up close and then go for one putt. His chances of ending up with a par are much better if he plays it this way than if he goes for the green with that long approach shot.

Bob: Our own 18th hole proves what you say. That narrow opening is hard to hit unless you're in precisely the right position to go for it. You only have to stand over there for a short time and you can see how much trouble people get into — needlessly.

Denny: Well, at least most of the women are smart enough to steer around those traps.

Try to Copy the Stars

Bob: Yes, you're right. I think the trouble with most men is that they see the tournament players hit the greens from a couple hundred yards out and they think they can do it. If a fellow would only stop to think of it, he only has to go for bogies on maybe six or seven of 18 holes on the average course. And, as you say, the fact that a golfer goes for a bogie doesn't mean that he can't get a par with a little luck.

Denny: It's hard to sell people on that idea.

Bob: When it comes to teaching people how to swing, Denny, what do you feel is the biggest problem?

Denny: You run into a lot of grip faults. The grip is the first thing I check. After that, I concentrate on trying to get my students to improve their balance. Poor balance ruins more would-be golfers than anything else.



Tommy McDonnell, hotel executive, Howard Capps, golf dir., and Ken Bricknell, supt., planted a "good luck" cylinder when the Stardust GC in Las Vegas was officially opened about a month ago. In it are a shoe worn by Al Basselink when he won the first Tournament of Champions; one of Bob Hope's golf caps; a Sam Snead hat band; a ball used by Jimmy Demaret when he scored an ace in the Champions event, and other mementos.

Bob: Why do you say that?

Denny: Simply if a person doesn't have proper balance he doesn't come into a shot correctly. Instead of coming into the ball, he's falling away from it.

Bob: What suggestions do you have for correcting poor balance?

Poor Body Turn

Denny: You have to make the student visualize what he is doing that causes poor balance. In most cases he sways his body rather than turns it. By moving his hips to the right before starting to turn he throws too much weight on his right leg and becomes locked. This displaces the axis of his swing too far to the right, throwing him off balance, and from then on he never is in position to deliver good right side power to the hit. When he comes into the hitting area he's actually falling away from the ball rather than putting his weight into it.

Bob: What do you show him to get away from swaying?

Denny: I drill him to immediately start turning those hips without first giving them that little lateral movement that so many golfers do. I constantly tell him that power is generated with a tight turning of the body.

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More Strategy Lessons

(Continued from page 32)

Bob: What if a student comes back and says something to the effect that the tournament pros supposedly concentrate more on coiling or turning their shoulders while minimizing the hip turn?

Denny: I agree with him 100 per cent. But I point out that it takes a terrific amount of coordination for a man to be able to do that. And, I add, that since so many present day stars swing that way you see a lot more activity on the practice tee today than you did 20 or 25 years ago. They have to keep practicing so they don't lose that coordination.

Bob: Do you resent the fellow who questions your methods of teaching, or tries to tell you what or how to teach?

Some Slow to React

Denny: I suppose I do, but I guess as long as he's paying me for the lesson I shouldn't. But I think any golf teacher should recognize that some people question your methods because they don't fully grasp what you're driving at or they want to get a better understanding of them. And, too, it's tough for many of them to react to the things you are trying to teach them. They've been doing things a certain way for so long that even the little changes you make in their swing seem to be completely revolutionary to them.

Bob: I agree with you there. Most people have to actually feel what those changes are before they can appreciate that they are helpful. That feel is a big thing in this game. I had one of our members tell me not long ago that after taking lessons from me for several months he had only a hazy idea of what I was trying to get him to do. Then, all of a sudden, he got the feel of it and he was all right. After that he was able to go back to some of the things I had drilled him on and really appreciate for the first time why I had concentrated on teaching him certain things.

Denny: A fellow like that is a good student. If he plays enough golf from now on he'll probably never lose that feel.

Bob: I hope he doesn't. Speaking of students, how many persons who take lessons from you are what you consider to be good students?

Denny: That, I can't say. I think most



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persons are interested in improving their games. But I've suspected a few women and, for that matter, even a few men of taking lessons just because their friends were doing it. And, of course, you always have a small percentage who are primarily interested in hearing you say they have a nice swing. If you don't get that in during the lesson they're awfully disappointed.

Bob: Yes, I guess you have to romance some of them. But in fairness to them, you shouldn't overdo it. You know, Denny, a few weeks ago I had what I thought came close to being the best student I ever taught. I said, "Nice shot," several times after he hit the ball on the button. Finally, he said, "Bob, I don't want you to stand there and compliment me when I do things right; I want you to figure out what I'm doing wrong."

Denny: A fellow like that is easy to work with.

Bob: One more question. Have you ever had a student tell you to scream at him and raise hell when he wasn't doing things right?

Denny: Fellows like that have been few and far between. The trouble is that you wouldn't dare to scream at the people you'd really like to.

Len Wirtz Foresees Record Prize Year for Ladies PGA

The Ladies PGA hopes to set a record for prize money in 1962, according to Len F. Wirtz, tournament dir. In the first six months more than \$100,000 in purses will be offered, and the second half of the season is expected to be even more lucrative. The richest winter-spring tournament lined up to date is the Dallas Civitan Open, to be played May 24-27. Prize money in this one is \$10,000. Three of the four major tournaments will be played before the end of June. They are the Titleholders, Apr. 26-29; Western Open, May 10-13; and USGA Open, June 28-30. The fourth major event, the Ladies PGA Championship, will be played in Las Vegas in Oct.

L.I. PGA Officers

Pete Cassella of Brookville CC has succeeded Pat Cici, Lido GC, as pres. of the L. I. PGA. Tony Kaczinski, Westhampton Beach, is 1st vp and Tony Marco, Middle Bay, 2nd vp. Joe Watrous, Nassau County Park is sec. and Dick DeMaue, Engineers CC, treas.