



Earl Stewart, Jr.



Graham Ross



Mickey Wright

# Blizzard Howls As Snug Texans Go To School

**T**exas professionals made it plain at the Texas PGA Education-Teaching program in the Statler-Hilton hotel in Dallas, Jan. 7-9, that they are determined to attain the same high standing as club pros they long have enjoyed as playing pros.

Nearly 200 pros and salesmen came to Dallas for the merchandise display and classroom sessions. A paralyzing blizzard held down attendance the final day and also delayed departures.

The section's pres., Ross Collins, its vp Doug Higgins, and its education committee chmn., Bill Weber, stressed the organization's objective of providing professionals of whom clubs could be proud.

## Learning What Customer Wants

"What the Customer Wants" is the most difficult and important question for the pro to answer, Herb Graffis, GOLF-DOM editor, told the Texas pros. Job performances that do not please the members or pay-play customers are the result of not knowing what the players want, Graffis remarked in summarizing years of study of the pro business. The pro should know every club is different, yet some-

times neglects to identify the differences and adjust his personal relations and business operations to several variations.

The successful pro knows his market by experience, observation, instinct and deliberate, organized study in just about the same manner the successful playing pro learns a course in practice rounds, the GOLF-DOM editor declared. He added: "Club pros ought to study what's in their bag racks and what their members wear and play as thoroughly as Jerry Barber studied Olympia Fields before playing and winning the PGA championship."

Graffis said that pros who spend in advertising and sales promotion about the same percentage of the sales dollar as competing stores seldom complain about cut-price competition beating them out of much business. He referred to the merchandise exhibits at the meeting as a possible means of reducing costs of selling to pros. This is a matter of greater and more urgent importance than is generally realized.

Member education is a pressing need for the good of golf as a game and as a business, Graffis emphasized. The pro

and his club officials share the responsibility of schooling golfers in what is expected of private club members and in how members can get full value from pro and other club services.

### Mickey Takes Most Lessons

Mickey Wright, top woman pro for 1961, in Dallas between LPGA tournaments for study and practice with Earl Stewart, told the Texas pros how she plays and gave her opinions on pro instruction of women. She said she thought she'd had more lessons than any other man or woman pro. These started from the time she was 11 years old when Johnny Bellante began teaching her at La Jolla so she could play with her father. Harry Pressler, Harvey Penick and Earl Stewart, especially, have given her a lot of time and help.

This pretty and pleasant young woman has her game well organized. She says she has worked on eliminating excess motions. She moves away in one piece, initiating her swing with her left foot rolling and pushing at the instep to transfer weight to her right foot.

She makes quite a point of standing to the ball with her knees gripped in to prevent sway, and with her elbows as close together as possible. She has devised an elastic harness to keep her elbows from spreading and often practices with it. The gimmick works so well she now has Wilson making it and selling it.

Mickey says she feels the stopping point of her left hip, shoulders and hands in the backswing, then makes the next check-point that of working the right elbow in front of the hip coming down so the hands will get in best position for action.

### Help From Betsy

Mickey related that she has built her swing mechanically and once was seriously disturbed when everything wasn't working perfectly. She was put back on the right track by Betsy Rawls who advised her to change her attitude: to quit being a frustrated perfectionist and work on her short game so she could scramble if necessary.

Too many women are inclined to forget that scoring is the purpose of the game, Mickey remarked. Women take to golf for companionship, social status and to get a change from household duties. They come into the game without the athletic attitude and aptitude of the male, Miss Wright told the Texas pros. She said she'd watched Ernest Jones for hours



Fred Haas, Jr. (2nd from left), who won the first Crescent City "Life Begins at 40" tournament recently, was awarded with a 1962 Chevrolet Impala. With him, from left are Archie Gonzales, who won amateur honors in the event; Louis Palermo, tournament committeeman, and Jim Guthrie, pres. of the New Orleans GA.

teaching women to get the feeling of swinging the club, a prime necessity for the woman who needs physical "kindergarten" in golf.

### Pros Command Prestige Market

Greg Draddy of Izod, Ltd., in talking about merchandising sportswear in the pro shop, said the pro has the best captive market in merchandising. It's the richest, most influential, quickest spending group in the country in the case of the majority of private club members. At clubs of lesser prestige and at the pay-play courses there are many people who aspire to be rich leaders.

Draddy was refreshingly blunt in giving his idea of the score on pro shop quality merchandising and stirred up some policy arguments among the shop merchants. Draddy's cases won most of the decisions.

He said that the initial impression the potential customer gets when he walks into a shop settles what the future of the pros' business relations and profits are going to be. Greg urged that the first thing pros do when merchandise is received is to ticket it with a price tag. He said he and his brother, Vincent, have gone into many shops wanting to buy merchandise that had been recently received and not yet priced. After pawing around for the bills, the pro or assistant often gave up and guessed at a retail price. It may, or may not, have been correct.

Draddy also stressed that the pro dress well. If he wears anything cheap he gives his customers a license to wear

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## Texans Go to School

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cheap clothes. He warned against the shop selling cheap goods. On a basis of low prices for inferior merchandise, there are too many merchants who can beat the pro.

The Texas pros were impressed by Draddy's references to training assistants in display, selling and other phases of merchandising. "If you are running a pro department as a business you don't have to do all the shop merchandising job yourself" Greg said, "but you've got to have somebody who will run the shop properly and do what you want done when it should be done."

### Cars Mutually Profitable

Graham Ross, pro at the Dallas Athletic Club CC, gave an invaluable round-up of his seven years' experience in maintenance and operation of golf cars, summarizing his findings by telling what proved to be best for the pro also was best for the club in the golf car set-up. Ross has a larger operation than at most clubs with 70 cars going out on busy days at a 36-hole club. He has tried a number of cars since he began using them in 1954 and has had reports from members as well as watched his own costs and service records closely.

Batteries weren't suitable for the earlier cars, Ross said. Nor were parts available. Graham had to work on the cars himself. Members criticized him for tending the cars when they thought he should be working at being a pro. Eventually he learned the answers and learned them the hard way with \$60,000 to \$70,000 invested in cars, many of which were inoperative on the big days when they should have been making money. He learned that it is costly to have inexperienced help and an inadequate operating plan just as a club learns, Ross noted, that it costs money to conduct the car operation without proper and interested management.

### Hires A Mechanic

Ross said an electrical expert showed him what a generator would do in improving his battery charging situation. He also made a deal to pay a fixed fee monthly for batteries. The operation began to get straightened out on a sound basis when Graham hired a man who "could do anything in the world to a golf car." The fellow was a combination mechanic and electrician and a good supervising

housekeeper so the cars are kept looking good and are in A-1 operating condition.

Ross told of an arrangement he and the club made for a slight increase in rates to pay for asphalt car trails. He also told of taking an old car, adding batteries and making it a tow car for delivering and returning cars to the garage.

Ross emphasized the importance of insurance for the pro on every possible risk involved in car operation. "You can go broke forever if you don't have it," Ross warned.

Ross referred to the big figures printed about one club's operation by saying a regimented operation of that sort wouldn't go at a club of Dallas AC's prestige. Its members are independent individuals who sometimes prefer to walk and use caddies. As an operation conducted primarily for the owner's profit, compulsory car rental is a good money-maker, Ross admitted. The situation at the Dallas AC CC, Ross said is satisfactory; the club and the pro share the belief that both should be paid for serving golfers.

### Pro Must Keep Score

Herb Pohl, business mgr., Northwood CC, Dallas, PGA member and accountant for several pros and clubs in the Dallas area, went into detail on new tax legislation involving Texas pros.

Pohl described the Texas state sales tax situation, which is confusing in some respects and talked about state and federal unemployment tax, and about the social security and other changes in federal tax reports.

He also told pros how to keep records on inventories, insurance, interest on business investments, advertising, publicity and member relations, shop, teaching and range expenses, tournament and car expenses so they have data for taking full advantage of deductible allowances. Pohl added that the tax allowance for advertising very rarely is utilized by pros.

The value of simple but sufficient records as signals of business improvement or decline, and of buying needs, was noted in Pohl's talk. He told how to watch inventory and sales to see if buying is being properly done. Pohl also spoke of pro budgeting on the basis of previous experience, and on a plan similar to that of the well managed club's budgeting.

### It Takes Patience

The Texas meeting was completed with a demonstration by the Dallas Open champion, Earl Stewart, of "How I Play



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and Teach." Earl said that "patience" is a key word in playing golf and in teaching. You have to be patient until you get a good chance to make your move in tournament scoring. In stroking the ball you have to be patient until one phase of the swing is completed before going into the next stage.

Only a small percentage of players have pronounced aptitude for the game and of those, few apply themselves to making the most of their talents, Steward observed.

### Won't Give Group Lessons

Earl expressed particular gratitude to Bill McConnell, pro at Cedarcrest when Stewart was at LSU and on his way to winning the 1941 National Intercollegiate, and to Graham Ross, for their instruction. He said he used to write Mr. Mac about his problems and get replies giving suggestions for working out the answers. Stewart believes that teaching is as individualistic as playing. He says every good golf instructor he ever has seen is emphatically positive and has an air of being as good in his profession as the pupil is in his field.

The Oak Cliff CC pro is so firm in his

attitude about the individual nature of a golf swing that he will not give group lessons. He says an essential of effective teaching is for the pro to make his personality fit that of the pupil. The teacher, in Stewart's opinion, never should let the pupil know that golf is tough but should get him thinking that the game is natural and easy.

### Matter of Percentage

Earl considers hitting a golf ball to be a matter of percentage: 33% percent standing to the ball (grip, posture, relation of feet and body to ball); another one-third the backswing; and the downswing, even though it's the payoff, the least troublesome third of the performance. He thinks Doug Sanders has one of the best working swings in golf. "It's so short and simple there's little that can go wrong," Stewart said.

Stewart is an advocate of encouragement and humor in golf instruction to ease tension and make golf a game instead of a struggle for the pupil. He says a woman member who takes care of her family and home and can come out and shoot in the 90s is doing "one hell of a fine job."