

Love: Pro's Best Friend May be a Word-Finder

More precise expressions are needed to remove the communications barrier between teacher and pupil, says Charlotte professional

By JOE DOAN

- A teaching professional should stay on the lesson tee for only as many hours a day as his enthusiasm holds out;

- No attempt should be made to teach the pupil in the image of the instructor — the pupil should be studied in the light of his physique, temperament and athletic agility, and his swing fitted accordingly;

- One phase of the swing should not be overemphasized if it can be avoided — best results come in trying to get the pupil to think of the swing in terms of a whole and unified motion;

- The language of golf teaching needs to be improved — there is too much groping for the right explanations on the part of the pro, and too much groping by the pupil for what is specifically meant by the phrases the pro uses;

- Every lesson should be undertaken with the idea that the pupil not only is there to learn, but is capable of teaching the pro something new.

The above five points sum up to a large extent the teaching views of Davis Love, Jr., the intense young professional at Char-



Dave Love

You have to have enthusiasm.

lotte (N.C.) CC who, even though he is only a few years removed from the apprentice stage, already has solidly established himself as one of the most capable instructors in the Carolinas section.

Love has been a professional for no more than eight years. The first three of these he spent on the circuit. Then, he moved in as an assistant to Wes Ellis, now head pro at Mountain Ridge CC in West Caldwell, N.J. and for two years concentrated almost exclusively on teaching. He came to Charlotte in 1962 and although that meant assuming the responsibilities of a head pro position, Love hasn't allowed it to interfere with what he feels is the traditional and primary obligation of a man in his profession — teaching golf.

Complete Pro

"I try to be a complete pro," he says. "But I've pointedly avoided the temptation to become an inside man, a dry goods merchant, as sometimes happens to fellows in our business. I've been lucky to

have competent assistants who do an exceptionally fine job of running the shop. That enables me to devote much of my time to teaching."

The shop at Charlotte CC, it should be noted, is one of the finest in the mid-South. And, Jim Van Norman, who has been Love's No. 1 assistant for the last two years, recently was named head pro at Asheville (N.C.) CC.

Love's preparation for teaching goes somewhat beyond the five years he has worked as an assistant and head pro and the three years he played the circuit. He at-

tended the University of Texas and played collegiate golf for three years under Harvey Penick, the CC of Austin professional who doubles as the Longhorn coach. Penick does more than teach the young men on his team how to improve their games and win matches for old U of T. He is as much interested in imbuing them with an appreciation of the game and a deep-rooted knowledge of how it should be played as he is in knocking over the opposition. Penick, in short, teaches a player how to teach.

Heard It Before

"It's a funny thing," says Davis Love about his former coach, "but every time I come up with what I think is a new idea about teaching, it eventually occurs to me that I learned it from Harvey Penick. Wes Ellis will tell you the same thing."

After getting his degree, Love planned to immediately get into professional golf but he was derailed for two years by the Army. But even with that he came up smelling of persimmon, as the saying goes. Somebody somewhere in a G. I. personnel office decided that since Dave had a golf background in college, he should be assigned to teaching golf and not misplacing parts as an aircraft mechanic. It was one of those rare departures from the Army's usual snafued way of doing things.

Love ended up in Korea running a 9-hole course for American G. I.s and Korean officers. Most of his time was occupied with teaching. The Koreans, by the way, proved to be exceptionally agile players and many of them shot in the 90s after only two or three months of instruction and practice. "It is too bad," says Love, "that the country doesn't have more than two or three courses and that more Koreans aren't able to play golf. They'd produce some brilliant golfers in a few years.



You learn from the pupil.

Many are gymnasts and tumblers and their sense of timing is far superior to ours."

Used an Interpreter

The Charlotte pro imparted his instruction to the Korean players through an interpreter. This gave him a new appreciation of the value of communication, the inadequacy of which he feels greatly hampers golf instruction. "While I was teaching there," he says, "I realized that I had to learn to express myself more precisely than I ever had before. But even that was not adequate. As teachers we just can't find the words many times to describe the feel or sensation we want to impart to the pupil. If the pupil accidentally stumbles upon it he, in turn, can't always tell us if he has grasped it. All either of us can do is try to describe it as precisely as we can and hope to come close in getting through to each other."

As an example of the communication barrier, Love tells how last summer he was working with a pupil who simply couldn't pivot correctly. "I explained that I wanted him to pivot without swaying," Davis recalls. "I used 'spin', 'pivot', 'turn' — every word I could think of, but to no avail.

Word Was Elusive

"Finally it dawned on the pupil. 'Oh, you want me to twist,' he said. That was it exactly, only I wouldn't have thought of the word, simple as it is, all afternoon. When the pupil grasped exactly what I was after he had no more trouble.

"Which brings me to the conclusion," Love adds, "that most pros should occasionally sit down with a dictionary or a word-finder and enlarge their vocabularies. Someday I hope somebody is able to write an instruction book that describes the precise feeling that is felt in the different parts of the swing rather than the mere mechanics. It would probably take a genius to do it."

Next to knowing how to express himself, the Charlotte shopmaster thinks the best thing a teacher can bring to the lesson tee is enthusiasm. If it begins to wane after five or six hours, or less, the pro is better off to go back to the shop for the rest of the day and send his assistant out. Love's reasoning is that the pupil

Ladies PGA Spring-Summer Schedule

- Mar. 18-21—St. Petersburg Inv., Sunset GC—\$10,000
 26-28—Allstate Ladies Inv., Colonial CC, Jackson, Miss.—\$8,500
- April 2-4—To be announced
 9-11—To be announced
 16-18—To be announced
 23-25—Pensacola Ladies Inv., Scenic Hills CC—\$8,500
- April 30—May 2—Peach Blossom Inv., Spartanburg (S.C.) CC—\$8,500
- May 7-9—Shreveport Kiwanis Inv., Palmetto CC, Benton, La.—\$8,500
 14-16—Muskogee Civitan Inv., Muskogee (Okla.) CC—\$8,500
 20-23—Dallas Civitan Open, Glen Lakes CC—\$14,000
 28-30—Babe Zaharias Open, Bayou Din CC, Beaumont, Tex.—\$8,500
- June 4-6—Blue Grass Inv., Hunting Creek CC, Louisville—\$8,500
 10-13—Women's Western Open, Beverly CC, Chicago—\$8,000
 18-20—Cosmopolitan Women's Open, Mactown GC, Rockton, Ill.—\$8,500
 25-27—Lady Carling Open, Turf Valley CC, Ellicott City, Md.—\$10,000
- July 1-3—USGA Women's Open, Atlantic City CC, Northfield, N. J.—\$10,000 (min.)
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has as much right to expect five dollars worth of attention and interest at five in the afternoon as he does at nine in the morning.

So, how does a pro maintain his enthusiasm for lesson giving?

Desire Counts Here, Too

First, he has to like to teach. Second, he has to be devoted to teaching on a regular schedule and not treat it as a fill-in or a favor he is granting the player. Third, there is a little bit of good in the worst of golfers. The pro has to learn to look for it and, after discovering it, get the golfer himself enthused over the one thing he may be able to do well. The pro has to be honest about it; he shouldn't fabricate the good movement just to make the golfer happy.

The reward in getting the golfer enthused comes in making the lesson easier
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Robert Trent Jones revising Oakmont's famous course near Pittsburgh to restore original concept . . . Jones also building 18 at Tarlac resort, near Manila . . . Due for play this fall . . . He's also building 18 Soto Grande for McMicking brothers' resort near Algeciras, Spain and 18 for Marabella CC, resort near Malaga, Spain. . . Soto Grande due to open in April.

Benkelman, Imperial and Wauneta, Neb. residents are investigating the possibility of a local country club at Enders Lake . . . 18 holes are planned . . . Maybrook, N. Y. will be the site of a gigantic housing development with a proposed nine as its central feature . . . The goal of 200 members has been reached by the Gordon (Neb.) G & CC . . . Financing can now go ahead for construction of a grass greens course and clubhouse.

Love on Teaching

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for both the teacher and the pupil.

Love's next enjoinder is: Please don't try to make the golfer over! After playing the tour for three years and being exposed to just about every conceivable type of swing, Davis, like so many other people who make a study of the game, is convinced that there is no copyrighted way of hitting a golf ball.

A professional who becomes snarled in flailing arms, flying elbows and throws himself completely off center when he swings may hit the ball just as efficiently as a Littler or a Snead, so allowances should be made for the awkward amateur. He is never going to be converted to becoming a graceful swinger because neither he nor the pro will ever find the time to correct all his faults. But this person may have remarkable power, or strong hand action, or some other unusual endowment and his swing should be developed around whichever of these attributes he has.

Parallel Palms

It's hard to manufacture a golf swing, Love declares. The pro who tries to superimpose his swing on the pupil only confuses him and retards his progress. If a teacher is sincerely interested in helping a golfer he works to bring out whatever

native ability is there and, thereafter, helps the player to refine it. If Love insists on anything, it is to get the player to hold the club with the palms parallel and the grip securely held by the fingers.

Love has an obsession with club grips. He constantly checks his members to make sure that the grips on their clubs are as near perfectly fitted to their hands as possible. He feels that grips deteriorate from constant use and that a set that may have been right for a player when he bought his clubs isn't necessarily right two years later. "Golfers," says Dave, "should be just as fastidious about the grips of their clubs as they are about their shoe size."

What The Pro Learns

The Charlotte professional doesn't go along with the theory that a home pro's game has to suffer because he is exposed to so many different and, in some cases, inept swings that he sees on the practice tee. A poor effort by a student in coming into the ball, he maintains, should only serve to reaffirm what the teacher is convinced is the correct way of doing it. The same thing applies to all other components of the swing.

As for being just a little bored by having to suffer through a lesson period with a high handicap player, Love will have none of this. "A fellow who shoots 100 plus," he says, "occasionally comes up with a shot that is simply amazing. One of the best wedge shots I have ever seen was hit by one of my members who couldn't break 110. I was lucky enough to catch it and now I try to visualize or recapture how he did it every time I play a wedge."

Enough of the good shots he has seen around the practice range plus those that he has been able to concoct himself have enabled Dave Love to make a respectable showing in competition. He is the current Carolinas Open champion, and won the Carolinas PGA title in 1962. On a more grandiose level, he finished 13th in the 1963 USGA Open and the same year captured 12th in the Cleveland Open. In the 1964 Masters, Love was tied for the lead after the first round. In his eight years as a pro, Dave has qualified for four Opens and two PGA Championships.