

# Investment for the future

*PGA pro Bill Farkas teaches each new summer class not only how to play golf, but how to run a pro shop and how to maintain a course*

by Robert Joseph Allen

**W**ith the trend to establishing something to occupy each member of the family at the golf club these days, PGA pro Bill Farkas has come up with something unique for the teenager during the summer.

Bill, his chief assistant Nelson Tooker, and teaching assistant John Doi, have taught an advanced golf class during a seven-week period for the last two summers. (The 1968 class is now in session).

The school opens up a new train of thought for both the golf club manager and the pro.

From the manager's point of view, he could consider setting up a limited golf camp or school during the summer. It could and would bring some or all of the following results:

1. Additional money if it was run for profit
2. Additional junior members
3. Increased membership through good will
4. More family memberships
5. A better image and numerous intangible benefits created by the public relations aspect

From the pro's point of view:

1. Additional money if run for profit
2. The satisfaction of teaching youngsters
3. More golf business
4. Running more tournaments for the club (which means more money)
5. Tying in the school or camp and tournaments to golf shop promotions

But, it should be noted, that the main objective should always be to teach the youngsters all aspects of golf (including the business side) as well as deportment. The class should not be used by the club for pure commercialism with profit the only object. For then the school would, in the long run, do more damage than good for the sport.

Following is the story of how Bill started and now works his school, which is run for free, and for teenagers who aren't starting from scratch. The school is located at the Maryvale Municipal Golf Course, Phoenix, Arizona. (Bill does not get paid).

To Bill's way of thinking, in any class consisting of youngsters who come prepared to be good golfers, there are bound to be quite a few who will turn out to prefer the business and teaching side, if they are given a fair chance to see the many opportunities there are. Thus, he feels that the pro who has the best interests of his profession at heart, should teach teenagers who have advanced beyond the beginning stage, but have not become polished swingers, many more things than just how to groove a golf swing.

They should also be taught things that will be use-

ful to them if they ever become professionals, such as how to buy the golf merchandise they would need in a golf shop, how to sell it, how to stage tournaments, and how to be effective in giving lessons.

"I have long thought," says Bill, "that we golf professionals are often only scratching the surface as far as advancing the business side of golf is concerned. Therefore, we endeavored this time to get as many youngsters into the class as we could get serious commitments from—those who really wanted to learn all they could about the game.

"We combed the entire city of Phoenix for recruits by means of publicity through the newspapers and radio, inviting all youngsters who were interested to get in touch with us. We stressed that there would be no charge for the instruction and only a nominal greens fee of \$8 a month that carried unlimited playing privileges. We emphasized that we were not too concerned with any possible degree of efficiency that may have been previously attained nor interested with those who would have to start from scratch.

"We received applications from 48 youngsters that first year. But during our interviews with them we learned that some were there only because their fathers wanted them to learn how to play. These we eliminated at once. We finally accepted 22—21 boys and one girl, Pam Tyner, 14, all of whom we felt we could work with seriously. They came

*Continued on page 36*



Each student gets a putter of his choice, with his name engraved on it, on graduation day from school founder Bill Farkas.

## Investment for the future Continued from page 34

from ten different high schools in the Phoenix area.

"We satisfied ourselves that our first class was there of its own volition, and that the youngsters really wanted to learn. At the end of the seven weeks, I'm happy to say we ended up with 22 graduates."

Now that the school is in its third year, it's easier to establish direction. "The class in 1967 had 28 members," says Bill, but "we have held the 1968 class to 20 members as we have found from experience that this permits us to give the amount of attention to each member that we deem is being fair to them. We're also expanding the class to include more things. We want our pupils to be kept abreast of all these things insofar as we are able to guide them."

However, as for the first school, the training was as follows.

"First of all," relates Bill, "we told them we would try to make the course of instruction as interesting as possible and keep the game aspect of it alive. At all times we tried to keep the action from becoming too dull or routine." Self-control and firm discipline regarding temper tantrums was stressed. A severe lecture usually resulted, but did not have to be repeated in a single instance.

"All of the actual teaching sessions were under the direct supervision of either myself or one of the other instructors," said Bill. "The seven-week period was based on a 40-hour week. Each youngster reported at 8 a.m. promptly and was sent home at 4 p.m. In the morning, after registration and briefing, they went out to play some golf. While on the course, they were required not only to put into practice what they had learned the day before, but to remember and utilize all they had learned in previous days."

Each day in the week was devoted to something else.

Monday: "We set up a basic schedule from the first Monday," says Bill, "with what I believe to be the number one fundamental—the grip. We drilled them thoroughly on it and then I had them play nine holes, during which I continued to hammer on the grip I recommend, which is the Vardon."



Bill is standing at far left, and Nelson Tooker, his assistant, at far right in this picture of his first class.

Tuesday: "We taught them pro shop operation, covering such subjects as merchandising, wise buying, the handling of the public, and welcoming players. Incidentally, we had them take written notes from the beginning, whether they were listening to discussions on pro shop operation, the correct golf swing, golf etiquette, rules of golf, course maintenance or out on field trips."

Wednesday: "We set up two-hour sessions with our golf course superintendent, covering a separate phase of course maintenance each week. We wanted them to realize also that there is an advantage to a player to be able to recognize the different kinds of grasses that grow on a course, and the degree to which a green has been mowed so they could judge the putting surface of that green. These details are rarely discussed with people learning how to play the game."

Thursday: "We made our field trips to some of the club-making factories in town to see how clubs are made; including the plant where John Reuter makes his famous Bulls Eye putter. John did a remarkable job of explaining each step of the manufacture of his putter as he escorted them step-by-step through the entire operation it takes to produce his product.

"The students were also shown by Karsten Solheim how he makes his Ping Putters, which are now being used by several touring pros.

"We also went to see Steve Biltz's shop where he makes his most unusual woods—they have triangular heads."

Friday: "This was our day for reviewing. We checked their notes to see if they had been paying attention."

This was how it went for awhile. "After the third week," continues Bill, "we gradually increased their practice time. By the fourth week they showed us that they had learned enough to let us advance their playing instruction a bit.

"One of the most common signs of a poor player is that more often than not he rolls the ball onto the green instead of knowing how to fly it there. So we sent them out with instructions to use enough club, on what might reasonably be considered their approach shots, to fly their ball onto the back of the green. They were to hit short pitch or chip-and-run shots right at the pin, of course. We required them to make a note of all their full approach shots from the nine iron on, and then to keep track of the number of greens they hit short or over so that on Fridays they could tell us how they had clubbed themselves and we would clinic accordingly.

"They were amazed to find out that the few times they tried to play the ball only to the green, the ball landed short of the green. It was a great lesson for them to learn: that there is no way—without luck, that is—to get a ball in in par strokes if you aren't always trying to hit it up to and a little past the hole.

"Having the girl, Pam, proved to be a blessing in disguise. Her average score after the first three

*Continued on page 64*

## Investment for the future

Continued from page 36

weeks was between 78 and 80, beating quite a number of boys. This provided the fellows with a challenge and had a great deal to do with the success of the class as a whole because the boys really knuckled down trying to beat her scores. (Shortly after she gradu-

ated, she won the Arizona Junior Championship, and in 1967 went to the finals in the State Women's Amateur).

"However, she'd only tee off first when she earned it, and they quickly adjusted to the fact that she was a golfer first of all. She was well accepted by them in every respect and they treated her like a lady. She became one of them, and

I think she helped particularly to make the many hours we spent on etiquette and behavior on the golf course pay off to a greater extent than might otherwise have been the case.

"It was also obvious that the challenge of this one girl kept prodding the boys on to greater heights. One result of her experience with us seems sure; we'll have more girl applicants.

"The students were also taught the importance of fair play. Such conduct, they were repeatedly assured, would tend to reflect and overflow into their daily lives.

"In order to bring home the point of how miserable the feeling of encountering bad manners is, we had them devote one day to giving the needle to each other on the course. We wanted them to become acquainted with it also because occasionally they're going to get it in golf and their daily lives. It was amusingly obvious that on the day we held this, the procedure didn't seem nearly as cutey-pie to them as some of them might have thought it would be.

"For their graduating day ceremony we not only planned some suitable decorative certificates to attest to their proficiency, but gave some medallions to those who had made what we felt was outstanding progress: lowering their score from the 100's and high 90's into the 70's. This we felt was quite an accomplishment in seven weeks.

"Also, everyone in the class was asked in advance to tell John Reuter exactly what kind of putter he would like if he was given his druthers. Then John engraved the name of each member on the back of the kind of putter he had asked for, and the name of the school, 'The Bill Farkas Golf School,' and asked that the putters be given to them at graduation.

"Mr. Reuter addressed the class and got a nationally known golf writer to say a few words. I talked briefly. Mr. Tooker talked briefly. Then we presented the medallions and putters.

"I might conclude by saying, when we started out, only five of the 22 were capable of breaking 80. At the conclusion, 18 were breaking 80 regularly."

# BOLENS GK



**GOES**  
anywhere for  
you . . .

**DOES**  
everything you  
want it to . . .

**CUTS**  
costs on every  
job!

Center-Pivot Steering is one of the big reasons why the Bolens GK outworks all other commercial/industrial tractors. You'll get more work per hour from the GK because of its exceptional maneuverability. The terrain-hugging 72" front-mounted rotary mower makes fast, clean work of any mowing job. And it's not only a mower—it powers a variety of attachments such as snow caster, blade, rotary broom, and more. Unique . . . powerful . . . versatile . . . the Bolens GK saves money on operating costs and equipment outlay by replacing as many as three units formerly needed to do the variety of jobs in the GroundsKeeping category! The Bolens GK cuts the cost . . . you get the credit! Prove to yourself that the Bolens GK is the first truly new piece of commercial GroundsKeeping equipment to be introduced in many years. Mail the reply coupon today.



## BOLENS

18-67

BOLENS DIVISION, FMC CORPORATION  
Dept. C15-GE Port Washington, Wis.

I'd like to hear more about the new  
Bolens GK. Please send literature.

Name

Address

City

State  Zip



For more information circle number 156 on card