

Make Your Lessons FIT the Pupil

By Al. Hollern



AL. HOLLERN

WITH a new season not far ahead at many clubs, it's high time that the pro begin to think about what he can do to make his members happy. We all are conscious of the job we have to do in making the new member feel at home, but sometimes I suspect that we take the old members too much as matters of course.

The better we do with our old members, the more certain we are of getting new members at our clubs. Out of an experience that embraces more than 10,000 lessons, I've noted some things that I'm recording for whatever good other pros and all our members may get from these observations.

Consider a group of 100 pupils that come to the pro for help during the course of a season. Out of this 100 there are at least 65 who have played for a number of years. The other 35 are made up of about 20 younger pupils and 15 that are along in years: usually all beginners. The 65 old timers come for a spring tune-up, or later in the season to correct a sudden outbreak of slicing, hooking, or some other fault that has put their score above what they have been making in that hot foursome that is assembled by telephone. What do these players want most? They want that bad case of theirs corrected with the least time and effort possible.

Golf Is Faster Today

And that is just exactly what should be done for them. Golf of today is not that leisurely stroll 'round the course with nobody in front or pressing from behind. This game has developed into more hurry and speed to keep up with the increased number playing.

The average player can hardly take time off to practice let alone take a bunch of lessons. He wants to get out and play along with his friends. This does not even hint that he could not improve his game if he did take time, but after he has played all these years he is satisfied to keep his handicap going down a point or two during the whole season.

The pro should remember that he is the doctor of golf and should accordingly comply with this code when instructing. If

you went to a doctor with a bad ulcer, he would recommend specific treatment to correct the evil. He would not try to remodel your entire form even though it did need a good deal of correction. And so it is with golf.

There are always one or two outstanding faults when you go about correcting an individual case. Work on this obvious fault. Show him how to correct it and always give a good explanation of just why it is necessary.

I once had a golfer, and a fairly good one, come to me all upset about his game. Every long shot not only went to the right but also had a slight fade at the end of the shot. It only took a few minutes to correct this ailment. It was only necessary to have the player pivot a trifle more on the back-swing. This brought his hips and swing into the shot with the proper timing instead of letting his hips in too far ahead of the club. The results were more than satisfying to this player. His form, taken as a model, would not meet with 100 per cent approval, but he had played too long to be made over entirely. He wanted the fade corrected into a shot down the middle and was delighted to be back on his own game. Let's not forget that as soon as this type of player is back in form, he plays more, uses the club more, and that is what both the club and the pro need—a maximum of play.

With this easy method of keeping players happy, why should we, the pros, try to entirely remodel every pupil to a set form or standard? There are only a few that are potential champions, and nearly every one of these is a youngster or beginner who is not too far along in years.

The fact of the matter is that each individual has a certain type of form that fits his own case. Can you get a heavy fellow to pivot like a thin youngster? Absolutely not. Let's look at some of the top-notchers.

Farrell was tall and not heavy. He used

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a long sweeping swing with a good turn of the hips for a pivot. Tom Vardon, in his later years, was a trifle heavy around the waist. He used a much more upright swing and the turning of his hips was not so obvious. Jim Barnes was tall and thin. He used a much flatter swing with considerable turning of the hips. Jones was stocky and used more of an intermediate swing with a lot of hip power. All these players were outstanding and yet none of them used the same type of swing or pivot.

Do these facts impress on the mind that the swing must fit the player—not vice versa? Make it easy for the old timers to get back on their game. Develop them into a fair player the easy way by using what they, as an individual, have to offer. You will then have them boasting that golf is not too tough to learn even if their paunch does say 46.

Keep the old timers happy and playing. They are the backbone of any club.

Chicago Handicap Method Being Tried in Florida

THE Chicago District Golf Association's official handicap system which is combined with a method of rating member courses of the association, is being extended to Florida. David J. Molloy, one of the veterans in Chicago district golf officialdom and an executive at Knollwood (Chicago district) and Indian Creek, Miami Beach, is prime mover in the Florida test.

Chicago's system, devised by a committee headed by Thomas G. MacMahon, began on the basis of the 20 lowest scores. Twenty was found to be too many for practical use so the handicap basis was reduced to the ten lowest scores. This did away with the unfair penalty that one super-hot round put on the ordinary golfer in the former CDGA handicapping system. Formerly the 90-shooter who caught a miracle and happened to shoot one round in the middle seventies carried that burden the rest of the season, if he recorded the miracle on his handicap record card.

Inter-club competition of individuals has been put on a fair and completely satisfactory basis in the Chicago district by use of the present system. Adjustments of district handicaps are made on the basis of course ratings established by yardage, course difficulty and experience. The latter factor has been taken out of the guess category so far as possible by extensive research done on intra-club and

other tournament performances. In establishing its basis of course rating MacMahon's committee analyzed yardage and par of 30 outstanding golf clubs outside the Chicago district, as well as of Chicago District clubs. The national examination revealed A. D. Lasker's Mill Road Farm course as having the toughest fractional par in the country—76.32. Oakmont was second with 76.28. Canterbury at Cleveland, where the 1940 National Open will be held, is rated at 75.84. Pine Valley is rated at 73.19.

Molloy believes that adoption of the system by Indian Creek will be instrumental in extending it to other golfing sections, inasmuch as many of Indian Creek's members are active officials of clubs in the northeastern and central states.

Peace Descends; "Down Under" Squabble Settled

AUSTRALIAN golf has had an unpleasant wrangle between the Victorian Golf Association (the amateur governing body) and the Victorian Section of the PGA. After eight months harmony has been restored and with harmony, the VGA financial support of the Victorian PGA championship.

The mess was started when the PGA disciplined a member for playing at other courses without first receiving permission of PGA member pros at the courses, and for going after a job held by another PGA member. The Victorian Golf Association contended that the disciplined pro had been invited to play by amateur members of the club, and was solicited by club officials to take the job in question.

A threat of a split of the PGA into two organizations developed from the controversy. By a vote of 15 to 10 PGA members agreed to accede to the amateur association's request that the pro organization modify its regulations so the amateurs would have the privilege of running their own clubs.

From this far away, the set-to seemed to have comic opera aspects and American friends of Australian pro and amateur golfers are pleased to learn that the civil war has been called off before casualties have occurred or good friendships wrecked.

KEEP a watch over members who are in the habit of leaving the club in the summer to go for vacations. See that they leave plentifully supplied with golf merchandise out of your shop.

Diary Keeps Pro Pushing

By Karl Sutphin

THERE is a pro at a club in a moderate-sized Eastern city whose salary has been raised for this season. The raise wasn't much. It amounted to \$250. But the increase and the pro's income from lessons, sales and club-cleaning give the pro an income in excess of that of some of his members.

Such a situation normally is not without its danger to a pro. We mentioned this peril to one of the pro's officials who was proudly exhibiting his club's financial statement for 1939. Curiosity was expressed at the voluntary offer of an increase to the pro. "Aren't some of the members jealous of the pro? They can get a pretty fair idea of his income since the club collects accounts and shows the pro operations in its annual statement," we commented.

The club official replied, "He is in as long as he wants to hold the job. He knows how to handle a job so well that I've heard members talk to him about their own business problems."

That was a most unusual remark to come from an official of a golf club, but we later learned why it was made. By the pro himself we were told of a success secret well worth pro attention. The secret is simply a diary. This pro has been keeping one for more than 9 years, so he told us. GOLFDOM'S staff had an opportunity to examine this diary, in confidence. By pledging not to reveal anything that will enable the pro or his club to be identified, we secured the privilege of passing on a month's diary entries.

The date, weather, number of rounds played on the course, special events, sales and operating costs and purchases for the day were entered at the top of each page. Other data from the pages follows:

1 . . . Offered free lesson to each of two highest scorers ladies' day. Mrs. . . . , Mrs. . . . tied at 130 for 9 holes. First time out for any of them. Mrs. . . . wants 6 lessons in addition to her prize. Wants beginners clubs.

2 . . . University Club booked tournament for 25th. Arranged to sell them prizes. Gave them list of golf events.

3 . . . Men and women's handicap chairmen met. Arranged ball prizes for three

men and three women turning in most scores for month.

4 . . . Started class lessons for seniors at high school. See Mr. . . . to get Board to allow high school 4-man team to play 3 matches a month with out-of-town high school teams. Starting time 3:15.

5 . . . Put out putter display by practice green, offering free trials. Sold 4 putters.

6 . . . Drew mixed Sunday mixed foursome out of hat at lunch. Biggest Sunday lunch business club had for 4 years.

7 . . . Lunch with Mr. . . . , mgr. . . . Store. Got idea about changing location of ball case in the shop. Saw fly-casting short. Could use similar idea for a movie at the club.

8 . . . Ladies' day. Played with women who are trying for team. Booked 12 lessons.

9 . . . No smoking in shop for me and asst. . . . blew cigarette smoke in Mrs. . . . 's face and I saw a sale ruined by carelessness.

10 . . . Telephoned Mr. . . . and Mr. . . . and arranged a game with them. They are trying to fix a deal but are scared of each other.

11 . . . High school lesson. Mr. . . . asked me to talk to Parent-Teachers Association next meeting on golf and citizenship.

12 . . . On practice tee from 12 to 1:30 for free tips. Sign about service on bulletin board brought 35 to the tee for free dope. Twenty-one had never taken lessons. Booked 15 lessons. Mr. . . . and Mr. . . . say they're figuring on new clubs.

13 . . . First Sunday golfers breakfast. Had day's prizes on display in the grill. Also had boxes of balls and club boots for sale. Sold 3 dozen balls, 5 sets club boots before players went out to tee.

14 . . . Went to pro-amateur at . . . In the morning picked up 8 sets of lightweight woods and irons close-out discontinued models at the . . . branch. Will feature them for women beginners. . . . who played with one of his amateurs against Mr. . . . and me, gave me something to think about. He said all his pupils learn short shafted clubs much

INSIDE GOLF

by
L. B. ICELY

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My dear..... :

Thanks for sending me your club's financial statement and the tentative grounds and house budgets for 1940.

You and the other officials of your club are to be congratulated on the fine condition of your club. Although golf club bookkeeping methods vary so widely it is difficult to make the comparisons you request, your figures clearly show that your club has come a long way since 1933.

You ask for suggestions, and I'll give you one that many club officials overlook although it's vital to every good club's operation.

I see in your letter and its enclosures no reference to a pro department budget for 1940, other than the item of \$..... for pro salary.

You, as president, and your sports and pastimes committee should sit in a few sessions with your pro, then draft a pro departmental operating budget that would be a great factor in the success of your club's year. You, as many other clubs, now compel your pro to operate almost as an independent unit instead of as a closely joined keystone of the club structure.

I know your pro very well. His standing as a business man in his field is comparable with your own high standing in banking. His work in compiling the competitive schedule, keeping handicaps up-to-date, getting entries, coaching members, maintaining their interest in club events, and in conducting the events, is one of the most important jobs around the club.

I also happen to know that when your club's membership was at low ebb in 1933, suggestions and work by your pro put a new sparkle into your club's attractiveness. You will recall that there wasn't much interest shown by club officials and committee members then. They had other troubles.

Now that things are better all around, it may be that you are not making full use of one of the expert pro services that helped to bring the establishment out of the depression.

Let's look at the arithmetic of this matter. In talks with your pro I have learned that entries in competitive events at your club increased from 54 on week-ends in 1933 to 246 in 1936, then slumped to 201 this year. Your pro knows those figures and their significance, but are they common knowledge to your club's officials and committee members?

Looking over your club's restaurant and bar receipts I see good reason for estimating that the character of a member who participates in club events is worth more than \$3 in club-house income each time he visits the club. That's a very conservative reckoning.

Figuring the number of event days in your season, the added house income that might be credited to pro influence in helping to formulate an attractive competitive schedule and in conducting the same satisfactorily, will easily reach \$6,000. Now, \$6,000 at your club is equal to the initiation fees of 30 new members.

What do you want to do in your budgeting; have to figure on getting 30 new members or getting the same amount of money by employing a pro's expert services to keep the old members happy and active and advertising their club by their enthusiastic expressions of club interest?

Obviously, your board members and committee members have been in frequent conferences with your club manager and green-keeper in preparing the 1940 budget. That is as it should be. There is, however, no evidence of any of you having consulted your pro concerning a program of pro department activities in 1940. I suggest that you do this at once because your man is one who has made golf his sole business, and he does know his business of golf.

I've known.....since at least five years prior to the time he became your club's pro. He's one of the best. You ought to use him more.

With best regards to you and to Mrs....., I am

Sincerely,

L B Jely

President

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better than woods and long irons. So do mine. Why?

15 . . . Two movies of ladies teeing off and some of approach shots on ninth. Mrs. . . . broke 100 for first time today. I should have a prize for men and women breaking 100 for first time. She has been taking lessons. She talks a lot. Mrs. . . . and Mrs. . . ., who have no use for Mrs. . . . signed up for lesson series.

16 . . . Played 9 holes with Mr. . . . and Mr. . . ., new members, and Mr. . . . and Mr. . . . who sponsored them. Mr. . . . was terrible and tried to blame it on his caddie. I kidded him out of it and bet the rest of them a half-buck apiece he would beat his 9-holes by 10 strokes the next time out. Next caddie training session I must tell the kids how to act when their guy is bad and passes the buck.

17 . . . Made up memo with (club manager) and (greenkeeper) on entertainment and golf program and letting trap to right of eighth be filled in, to give to board meeting. Rearranged shop display to give good showing to new shipment of bags.

18 . . . Rain. Took raincoats and spiked rubbers into locker-room. Sold six raincoats. Played in the rain myself to set example. Should have storm proof shelter for lesson tee.

19 . . . Free tips again as warm-up. It is making a hit with members. I should try it on ladies' days. Learned Mr. . . . is getting balls wholesale for his friends. Must make date to play with him.

20 . . . Started out at 3:30 in exhibition 9 holes with two boys and two girls from the high school classes. Three of the kids were members' children. Had a gallery of about 15. Young . . . got a 39. That's great for him. Other kids had stage-fright, but little . . . was worst with 46. Not bad for her second year. Mr. . . . and Mrs. . . . asked me about giving lessons to their kids.

21 . . . Went to . . . and visited leading stores. The stores pay more attention to training sales people than I do. I must tell . . . more about how to handle the shop as my assistant.

22 . . . Ladies district team-matches. (Manager) and I arranged to give players tea between ninth green and tenth tee. It made a hit. Gave each woman scorecard, pencil and 6 wooden tees at first tee. Had display of new bags and new oil-

skin rain jacket, over-skirts and slacks on table at first tee. Gave caddies early session on being careful to do great job for visiting women.

23 . . . Got . . . to come over and play with Mr. . . . and Mr. . . . who has been getting balls wholesale. Knew that . . . as tournament big-shot would impress Mr. . . ., and told . . . what the idea was. . . . said to his caddie about every third hole, "give me a new ball." I told Mr. . . . that . . . had won so much money playing with the best that even in a friendly round he couldn't get used to playing with anything else. Tipped off Mr. . . . that I was selling balls in my shop for 35 cents that were same construction as balls that were being peddled at gyp prices as 75 cent balls. . . . asked me if any gypts had been making my members on ball business. I told him we weren't troubled much because most of our members were in businesses where they didn't want to encourage phoney price rackets or the gyping would backfire on them. When we were through and were sitting around . . . said he was offered some cheap insurance that listened good. I said I would stay off it and keep with well-known companies and let the salesmen make a living. Mr. . . . is an insurance agent. I think . . . and I gave him idea of staying with his insurance business and out of the golf ball business. It was a pleasant game. Educational, too, in a nice way.

24 . . . Put on the movies I took ladies' day. After dinner the screen was put up in the lounge. Gave each woman favorable mention about some part of her swing. Used Hagen's old stuff of saying "your course is one of the finest of its kind" every place he played.

25 . . . University club tournament. An hour at starting tee. Another hour finding who won prizes. They bought \$85 in shop prizes. Helped give a selling talk to 4 membership prospects.

26 . . . Put ball display on table alongside starting and score sheets. Only one box of 3-for-\$1 balls displayed at a time. Sold 27 balls of different prices. Gravy business. Balls usually bought at shop before players come to tee. Must do this every Sat., Sun. and holiday.

27 . . . Ran new member vs. old event, average score per team member counting. Entered everybody who played, except guests. Old members won, averaging 92. Still need lessons. Lot of talk about event

at lunch. Will run husband-wife teams of old vs. new members later in summer.

28 . . . Took high school squad tos course for practice round after school. The kids behave well and replace divots. Went to Greenkeepers' dinner and meeting with (greenkeeper). On way home planned cup location to make course play easier on ladies' days and Saturdays and Sundays when mostly members are playing.

29 . . . Ladies day. Gave them lecture and demonstration on common faults, after their lunch before they started their bridge. Was kept answering questions for an hour.

30 . . . Decoration Day events worked out as planned. Six prizes won by men who haven't won anything for last 2 seasons. Displayed on bulletin board pair of golf sox and can of foot-powder as prize for Civil War golfer who came nearest to going out in 61 and back in 65. Mr. won it with 62-60. He is a new member. Got very drunk and jolly bragging about first golf prize he ever won. A lot of laughs.

31 . . . Shop sales, lessons and club cleaning, 14 per cent ahead of same month last year. Expenses 5 per cent higher. Two sets of men's clubs and one women's came into shop, bought outside this month. Checked up on sales prospects by looking over clubs in bags in rack.

Ball Trade-In Offer Knocks Out Store Sales

JOE FRASCA, assistant to Johnny Inglis at Johnny's winter job at Aiken (S. C.) GC, has an idea worth considering. Joe suggests that pros who are having trouble getting what they think should be their share of their players' ball business, put up a shop sign reading:

*Trade In Your Old Golf Balls
10 cents per ball allowed on used balls
When applied on new ball purchases
of 75c or 50c balls.*

Joe admits that the 10c allowance may be plenty generous in view of what the pro can get for used balls, but as a proposition for getting ball business away from cut-price stores, the deal may be justified.

He believes that the trade-in offer at the start might be applied to all balls, but after a month or so of use the sign should be changed limiting the trade-in

to 50c and 75c balls bought from the pro-shop. In making the change Joe suggests that the shop sign carry, in smaller type, something on this line:

"Due to quality and price standards of balls sold to our members by retailers other than this pro-shop being misrepresented by the sellers, the ball trade-in allowance of 10c per ball hereafter applies only to balls bought in this shop.

"Golf balls are honestly priced by the pro.

"Protect yourself against golf ball so-called bargains that gyp you in money and performance, by buying standard balls at lowest prices through our old-ball trade-in allowance."

Frasca is confident that many who now use balls that are pretty well marred by several rounds of play would take advantage of a trade-in offer.

Clubs, Bags, Cash Result from Wooden Cup Tourney

WOODEN Cup tournaments held by Chicago District GA member clubs during 1939 for the development of junior golf, showed results that were very encouraging, according to a report by Mel Keim, Chicago District GA official in charge of junior promotion.

From 14 C.D.G.A. clubs and from other sources, the Wooden Cup tournaments brought in a total of 740 golf clubs, 38 golf bags, and \$61 cash. Considering the fact the tournaments did not get under way until late in the season, the results of the contest appear even more impressive.

Purpose of Wooden Cup tournaments is to get used clubs from adult players for use of students in high school golf classes. Plan, as worked out successfully by the National Golf Foundation, Chicago District GA and physical education dept. of the Chicago Bd. of Education, calls for entrants in the tournaments held by the various clubs to pay entry fees in the form of one old club or \$1. Clubs are re-conditioned and given to high school physical education department; cash from entry fees is used to purchase golf equipment for the students. Prize of the tournament is a wooden cup, made by manual training students at high schools.

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Walter Hagen

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