

# Pros Study How And What to Teach

WITH the session being open to the public the PGA's Teaching committee program on Dec. 6 was presented to a "Standing Room Only" gathering of 500 pros and amateurs.

Bud Geoghegan, pro, Crestmont CC, West Orange, N. J., and Joe Hunsberger, pro, Juniata CC, Philadelphia, Pa., were introduced by Teaching committee chairman Harold Sargent and presented their Group Instruction methods.

Geoghegan and Hunsberger are credited by fellow professionals with conducting more classes and teaching more individuals through these classes and groups than any other two professionals. Hunsberger has 16 classes of 40 pupils each which he teaches every week through the winter months. All these classes are composed of Philadelphia school adult education students. Geoghegan's group instruction work is not confined exclusively to schools but includes industrial and YMCA groups as well.

Interest and attention was maintained at a high level by the use of questions and answers; Geoghegan serving primarily as the questioner with Hunsberger outlining his procedure and giving the details of his program by answering questions put to him by Geoghegan.

## Group Lesson Methods

Hunsberger pointed out that as all of his classes are made up of students the school handles the enrollment of the students and collects the fees and pays Hunsberger for his services at the rate of \$10 per hour.

Geoghegan, in teaching his different groups, serves as his own collector and enrolls the students, charging a fee of \$10 for 10 lessons, limiting his group to 25 persons and two classes an evening.

Hunsberger's classes are composed of mixed groups, all adults, and include beginners and individuals with some experience. Classes are set up on a weekly schedule with nine lessons being given indoors and five lessons outdoors. Classes are conducted at the same time on the same day each week. Hunsberger told how he started his classes; on the first night teaching the fundamentals, beginning with the

full swing and using calisthenics to improve body movement.

For the second class he uses movies to break up the instruction routine and build up interest in the game. The third session is devoted to the etiquette of golf and following sessions are devoted to different clubs with a brief review of what had gone on in the previous sessions.

In setting up his classes for instruction, Hunsberger assigns four people to a mat with 20 pupils to an instructor. The instructor moves from group to group of four people, teaching one at a time at each mat while the other three students look on.

## Instruction Procedure

For his outdoor sessions, Hunsberger devotes his first two lessons to driving, the third lesson to use of the irons, the fourth lesson to chipping and the fifth lesson to putting.

In answer to a question about the progress the students make, Joe indicated that at least 75 per cent of his students do very well after the fifth or sixth week. Although there are drop-offs from time to time he holds about 75 per cent of his pupils through the entire series of lessons. For the absentees at single sessions, he reviews the previous lesson each time so that the student will not get behind, lose interest and drop out because of failure to keep up with the remainder of the class.

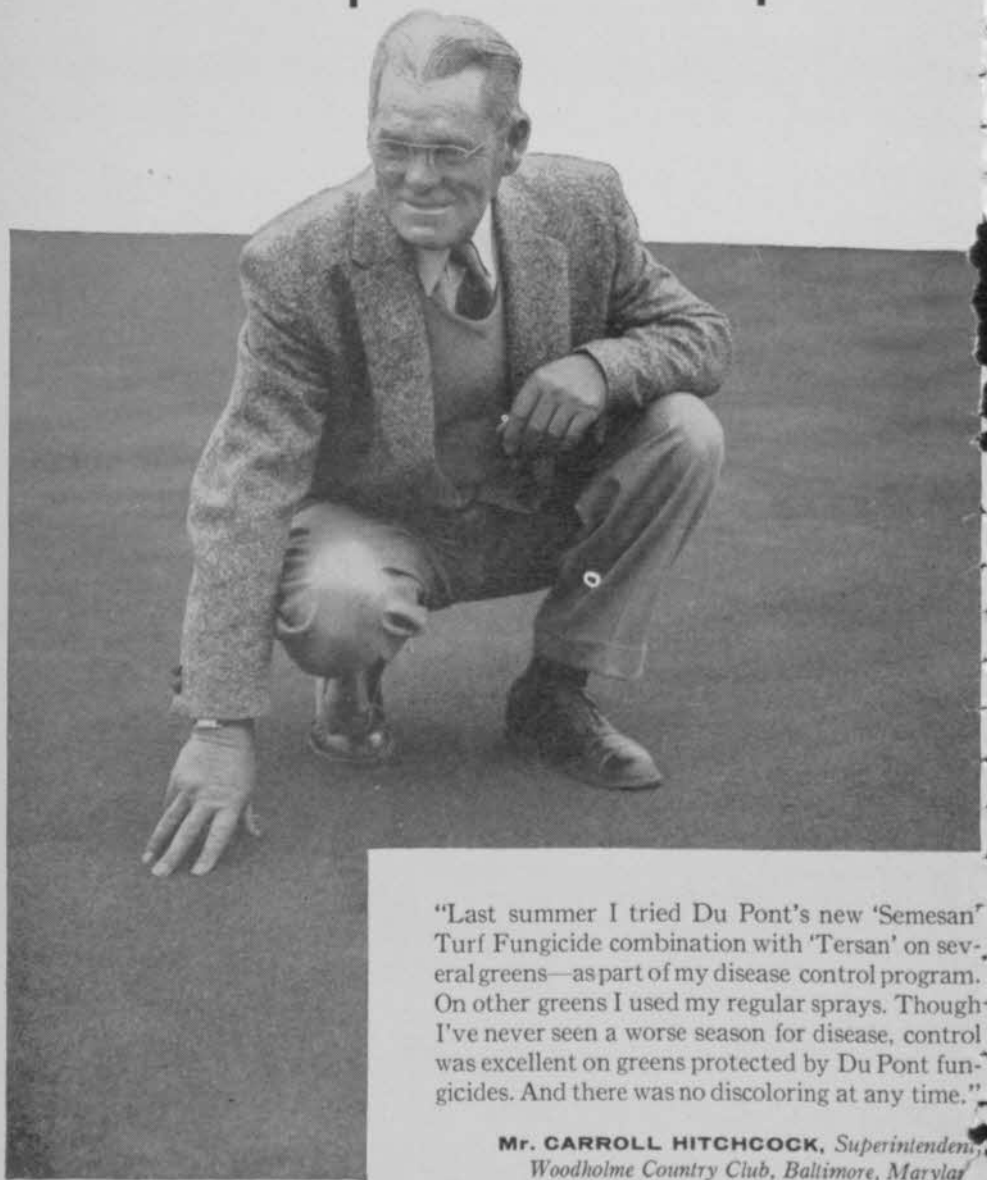
Geoghegan outlined the methods and procedures he uses in setting up his groups and the pattern of instruction he follows. In his work with schools and industry, he tries not to overlook every means of advertising and promotion. He uses literature, newspapers, television, radio and movies. He supplies everything for his groups including the clubs, balls, mats and tees, if necessary.

The group classes which he conducts for industrial employees are arranged first through the personnel director of the plant involved who generally, in turn, calls in the recreation director through whom announcements and registration are handled. Geoghegan explained in most instances

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recreation departments preferred that he handle the registration personally and arrange to collect the fees for the ten-weeks course.

Geoghegan pointed out that he follows the PGA teaching policy, stressing the five fundamentals.

### Hit Ball Forward

After the elements of the swing are put together and Geoghegan feels the student or player has developed a sense of the swing, he accents the one piece turning of the body and bringing the clubface in square to the ball. He finds that using the hard, or regulation, ball, after the second lesson builds interest on the part of the player. From the big swing he moves on to the demonstration of the 5- or 6-iron, then the short swing with the short irons and chipping practice, and by the seventh or eighth lesson has the students using the longer irons, so when he's finished with the course the student has a good basic idea of the swing and that he's got to hit the ball forward and not down on it.

Both Hunsberger and Geoghegan reported that their extensive work in group instruction generally resulted in very fine business for themselves in sales and recommended professionals everywhere investigate the possibilities of conducting classes in their respective locales for the two-fold rewards that are potentially theirs if they apply the effort.

### On Teaching Women

Mrs. Dorothy Germaine Porter, 1949 Women's Amateur champion and winner of the Women's Western Amateur titles in 1943 and 1944 gave the pros what many of them said was the best lesson they've ever had on teaching women and girls.

Mrs. Porter's remarks were based on her experience as a physical education major graduated from Beaver College, Jenkintown, Pa., and instructing women and girls in sports other than golf.

Salient features of her address:

Most girls show a lack of natural athletic coordination and sports timing and approach golf with a negative attitude. The girl who is a "natural" athlete can be easily taught but for the majority of girl and women pupils the pro must use a positive approach in finding a substitute for natural ability.

As all women at least think they can dance or move to rhythm their swings should be based on a definite rhythm. The opening measures of Blue Danube waltz

provide good golf swing music which eliminates tension and jerkiness and gives the girl pupil something definite to think about.

Practice and exercises should be to music.

Mrs. Porter recommended that the grip be taught so the reasons for it will be understood and that head position be treated in the same illuminating way.

The girls should be taught to think of the swing as a whole instead of a patching together of parts.

Keep each point simple and clear.

Get the woman pupil to make a habit of an orderly procedure in lining up the ball, then (in the cases of the elementary pupils) taking a square stance with the ball about in the middle and using the same swing with the various clubs determining the distances.

### Course Etiquette

Women who have had no previous competitive experience in golf or other sports must be taught the etiquette and spirit of the game on the tees, fairways, greens and traps; the right of way on the course, and calling rules on oneself, etc., along with the lessons in hitting the ball.

Women often are baffled by the problem of distance. Their education must begin with impressing upon them that all references to distances from different clubs are based on the premise that the hit is square.

Women get the feel of control of distance best through practice from 25 to 50 yds. from a green. This practice should be done with music.

Hand action is best taught to girls and women by beginning with a half swing.

Tension and the tendency to pull up with head and shoulders are most common faults with women's putting after they've learned how to line-up putts.

### Scoring Tactics

Women should be taught something about scoring tactics — not to be afraid of trap shots, to have faith in the club, not to depend on sheer strength, and to think in selection of the right club and about staying, or getting, out of trouble.

Mrs. Porter said the professional to teach girl and women beginners should be patient, use a lot of encouragement, keep the teaching simple and present short-term goals that are easily reached by the pupil.

She urged that pros extend golf instruction in schools and colleges and keep increasing the junior classes as the young, who do not have the fears and inhibitions

*(Continued on page 62)*

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## Oklahoma's 10th Conference Big Help to State Courses

THE 10th annual turfgrass conference held at Oklahoma A&M college, Stillwater, Okla., by the Oklahoma Turfgrass Assn., Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station and the USGA Green Section, well warranted the record attendance of 120.

The Oklahoma conference program was based on a survey of golf course maintenance problems made by Bob Dunning. More than 175 questions were submitted. The discussions and answers to these questions produced information of immense value to the state's golf courses.

Several of the nationally noted turf experts who were at the Stillwater meeting declared it had a freshness and on-the-job practical value that might well be studied by those responsible for national and sectional golf turf conferences.

Construction problems came in for considerable attention. Examination and discussion of maintenance problems emphasized a point brought out by Dr. Spencer Davis, Dept. of Plant Pathology, in urging that superintendents keep work records that can give them clues to the causes of successes or failures in course operations.

At the annual dinner John Winters, jr., of the USGA Executive committee warned that unless southwestern golf clubs give the USGA Green Section service program more support the USGA may have to discontinue the service in that territory. Superintendents are seriously concerned about the prospect of losing Green Section help.

The problem in the southwest seems to be getting action from club officials. The matter of Green Section service is discussed and approved by the Green chairman, his committee and the superintendent, but then action stops.

Herb Graffis, *Golfdom's* editor, in talking on whether clubs and officials take advantage of what superintendents learn at the conferences, said the answer is a sad and flat "no" in many cases. He added that increasing costs of maintenance and increasing demands of players make it highly advisable that club officials take fullest advantage of any information available for sound economy in top grade maintenance.

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## Penn State's 25th Turf Conference, Feb. 20-23

The annual turfgrass conference at Penn State, scheduled for Feb. 20-23, will have many extra features this year to mark the 25th anniversary of these programs. Sparked in 1929 by golf course supts., the meetings have been held annually, except for 1943-45.

The conference is sponsored jointly by the Turfgrass Research Advisory Committee composed of representatives of local golf course supts. associations and Pennsylvania State University. Joe Valentine, Merion GC, chairman of the Advisory Committee, has appointed a special committee to assist in developing the program and properly celebrate the silver anniversary. The committee he has named includes Harry Drennan, Buck Hills GC, chmn.; Marshall Farnham, Philadelphia CC, Paul Leix, Allegheny CC and Charles Hallowell, Eastern Director of the Green Section, USGA.

### Review Experimental Work

A special program will include a review of the extensive experimental work under way at Penn State and research reports from other states. A highlight of the conference will be the banquet on Wednesday night, Feb. 22. As special guests there will be representatives from the eastern states which have been active in the turf-research field and from the Green Section of the Royal Canadian Golf Assn. The guest list also includes representatives of industry and former Penn State personalities associated with early work in turfgrass research.

All meetings will be staged in the assembly room of the Nittany Lion Inn on the campus.

The Advisory Committee and Penn State staff extends a cordial invitation to everyone interested in turfgrasses to attend the conference.

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## Golf Architects' Society to Meet at Nassau

The annual meeting of the American Society of Golf Course Architects will be held Jan. 10, 11 and 12 at the Emerald Beach hotel, Nassau, Bahamas.

Officers of the Society are: James Gilmore Harrison, Turtle Creek, Pa., pres.; Robt. F. Lawrence, Miami Beach, Fla., vp; Wm. F. Bell, Pasadena, Calif., sec.-treas.



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British Ryder Cup players begin warming up for their U.S. campaign by practice at the Atlantic City (N.J.) CC prior to their first exhibition match.

## Ryder Cup Matches Reflected British Pro Handicaps

By **WILLIE HUNTER**

Professional, Riviera Country Club, Pacific Palisades, Calif.

**T**HE 1955 Ryder Cup matches played at Thunderbird CC, Palm Springs, Cal., were closer than the 8-4 score might indicate but I doubt if anyone thought that the British team had any kind of chance to win even though the golf course is on the easy side and playing conditions well nigh perfect.

The United States probably could have fielded another four teams of about equal strength to the one competing at the desert spa.

Young players\* (unless we count Jackie Burke as young) were not included in the United States team because of the qualifying period of five years demanded by the P.G.A. The British included a few newcomers like Jacobs, O'Connor, Fallon and Scott, but otherwise relied on their best tournament players of the past few years.

To attempt an analysis of the reason for the domination of international golf by the United States we must start at the first world war era from 1914-1919 when Great Britain cancelled all tournament play. The period before that was strongly taken care of by the great British triumvirate of Vardon, Braid and Taylor, who between them garnered 16 British Opens from 1894 through 1914 and who were by far the outstanding professionals in the world.

I personally know that during from 1914 into 1919 period there was practically no golf played in Great Britain. All available manpower either was in the armed services

or in war work. There were no easy jobs for anyone. During that time when I got home I played nine holes of golf in just under five years.

With the resumption of golf after the war there was no one amongst the British pros to take the place of the Vardon-Braid-Taylor trio. George Duncan flashed streaks of brilliance but somehow could not attain the same dominance that his illustrious predecessors displayed. Duncan won the British Open in 1920, then the U. S. took over with Hagen, Jones and Sarazen all showing marked superiority over their British cousins.

### Cotton Gave British Boost

The Americans won 12 of 13 British Opens from 1922 to 1933 and then came a period when the British improved somewhat, with Henry Cotton leading the way. As a matter of fact Cotton has been the only great British player since Vardon, Braid and Taylor.

Along came World War II with an impact even more vicious than WWI on the tight little isle and golf again closed down; this time from 1940 to 1945. When I state golf closed down it means that there was absolutely no competition and leading pros did not get special assignments.

Taking up in 1946 we find Sam Snead winning his lone Open Championship at St. Andrews and he was the last American to win until Hogan made his one visit successful at Carnoustie. However, the rea-



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son why Americans have not won the British Open so much in recent years is because very few now take time out of their money tournaments in the U.S. to play for so small a purse. Maybe Bobby Locke the South Africa player who won three British Opens might have beaten the best of the Americans, but I doubt if any one else could.

### Circuit Test Too Much

It is doubtful also if any of the British team who competed in the Ryder Cup Matches could make a go of it in the stern test of American tournament circuit play against the superior experience and shot-making of so many U.S. pros who do nothing but play golf all the year around.

Dai Rees is a strong competitive player who is now getting too advanced in years to try our circuit, but I believe he might have done pretty good if he had taken a shot at it ten years ago. Rees is a surprising player who gets the ball in the hole at the right time without making any effort at looking like an expert. Eric Brown who has been publicised strongly in the old country is not strong enough as a tee shot player. Jacobs might become very good if he gets an opportunity to compete over an extended period with the U.S. pros, but he isn't going to get anywhere against our men unless he plays with them enough and learns how to get the ball in the hole in the simplest possible manner.

Weetman hits the ball very hard and has good scoring potentiality. O'Connor has a good swing. Bradshaw with his unorthodox grip has fine record and is a good competitor. Bousfield one of the best British short game players was unfortunately sick and couldn't compete at Palm Springs.

All in all they are not as good as the Americans in any department of the game but more especially in backspin shots. Show me an American pro who wins money and I shall be looking at an expert wedge player. In this country a player can forget the run-up shot and still fare pretty good if he learns to play the wedge. Our fairways are not generally suitable for run-up shots and our greens are usually soft enough to hold a wedge shot within a few feet.

There is also another club which the tournament players call the 'Texas Wedge' (putter) which they use very effectually off the edges. Anyone can prove the Texas Wedge has a decisive advantage over a lofted club by trying out a dozen balls with each club.

The U.S. professionals average longer and straighter off the tee than the British altho I am not discounting Rees and Weetman who are really long.

### Different Pro Game Today

We must face the fact that pro golf today is an entirely different game than of old. Now the high earning incentive brings many very well educated men into the field. They leave very little to instinct, but cultivate by assiduous practice and competition the simple approach to holing out in the least number of strokes. The most striking part of American golf is the directness with which our professionals tackle the problem of each hole and the terrific concentration they develop as if they are shutting out everything else in the world except the one shot they are making.

British players were noticeably pleasant and quite willing to converse with anyone who wished to talk but the Americans, although affable off the course, do not allow anyone to interrupt them while they're at their work. Frankly, I believe that the British lack the deadly determination and concentration of the good American players.

British players were noticeably less severe numerical handicap on the basis of population but may be able to offset some of that disadvantage by adopting American policies and methods of encouraging younger players and making expert instruction cheerfully and easily available to youngsters.

### Shake Psychological Handicap

There are some indications of the British professionals breaking free from the psychological drag of a long record of defeats by Americans and making a fresh start by looking at competitive golf as a harshly demanding business that asks a lot but which will give a lot to the one who can compete successfully in Britain and the United States. The British professional possibly has been penalized by tardiness in distinguishing between golf as a game and golf as a business.

Some American professionals considered the British Ryder Cup team definitely handicapped by superiority of American equipment. I believe that the British have to a noticeable degree overcome the inferiority of their equipment evident for many years after clubmaking changed from a bench craft to factory precision.

The U.S. players used the regulation American ball and the British players the