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## Better Than 1,000 Words

*Bob Fry of the Ft. Madison (Iowa) CC uses "on the spot" photos to show his players what's good and bad about their swings*

**B**usy Bob Fry, professional at the Ft. Madison (Ia.) CC, course supt., club manager, occasional cook and bartender, doesn't have any Oriental blood in his veins but is 100 per cent sold on the old Chinese proverb that a "picture is worth 1,000 words."

A 16-hour a day, 7-day a week workman from early spring until Christmastime, Fry ordinarily is engaged in so many activities that he just doesn't have time for involved discussions or explanations of his pupils' faults or strong points on the lesson tee. The Polaroid camera, he feels, was invented especially for him because he uses it extensively in showing his 160 players, most of whom enroll in his teaching program at some time or other dur-

ing the season, just what they are doing, whether it is right or wrong.

"It's a great thing for the golf instructor," Bob says, "to be able to take a photo, develop it in a minute and show the pupil the point you are trying to put across. It does away with a lot of long winded and confusing explanations. What's more," Fry continues, "it's almost amazing how even rather unathletic people can look at a photo, study a fault, and after being told what is wrong and what should be done to correct it, quickly get straightened out."

Fry's only regret is that Polaroid hasn't developed a motion picture camera for swing sequence purposes.

In shooting his subjects, Bob ordinarily

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concentrates on five things: Catching them as they take the club back; at the top; as they start down; at impact; and following through. He, of course, fills in with other aspects of the swing when he feels that it is necessary or helpful. With many players, for example, Fry works at some length to get them properly set up at address, has them hold the pose and then photographs it so that they will always have a photographic record of just what they should do, or the position they should be in, when they step up to the ball.

One of the secrets of taking photos of the swing, Fry explains, is to pose the player in front of a tree or a flagpole or similar object so that a checkpoint is established. With one of these in the background it is easier to explain where the player's arms, legs or body should be in different parts of the swing in relation to the object.

### Freedom from Tension

As far as the swing is concerned, the Ft. Madison pro is pretty well convinced after 10 years of teaching, that its actual execution is a secondary thing. "What really counts," he says, "is to get people to the point where they feel free of tension. I work as hard in doing this as in showing them how the club should be gripped, taken back and whipped through. With many golfers, and especially the less experienced ones, I start a lesson simply by having them pick up their clubs and start swinging without regard to footwork, whether or not their heads are bobbing, or anything else. The whole idea is to have them get their muscles warmed up so that they'll be able to whip the club around with a free and easy feeling. Once this is accomplished, the lesson seems to go better."

Ft. Madison is a medium size Mississippi river town, largely supported by the Shaeffer Pen Co. Living here probably is on the easy side, or at least, people find plenty of time to indulge in golf, which is only second in popularity to boating. The club, situated on a bluff overlooking the river, annually plays host to the Southeast Iowa Women's Amateur which attracts about 100 contestants from as far away as Kansas City, Chicago and Dubuque. Both men and women members are strong for tournaments, special events and golf leagues. Just about every cardholding woman player turns out for the regular weekly Ladies' Day and it is rare when at least 75 feminine swingers aren't playing the 9-hole course on Tuesdays. There



Frank Dodge (r), shown with Fry, greatly improved his game when he bought a new set of cut-down clubs.

are two evening leagues and from June through September there usually is some kind of a handicap tournament being held on Wednesday afternoons. Sixteen men play from November through March in a winter league.

### Little League Golf

Until 1958, Junior play was just about as heavy as the course capacity would permit. But it has slipped off a little in the last two years, probably due to the lure of the Chriscrafts in the river below. However, Fry has had a Little Golf League operating for several years and in 1958 and 1959 interest in it seemed just as great as ever before. Two products of Ft. Madison CC's Junior activity were Mike Phelan and Jack Litvay, mainstays of the University of Iowa golf team.

Two other students of Fry who recently got nationwide attention through articles that appeared in GOLFING are Pete Kern and Frank Dodge. Kern, now 75, never played golf until he was 67, but under Bob's tutelage quickly developed into a player who comes very close on occasions to shooting his age. Pete, a retired insurance broker, plays at Ft. Madison during the summer months and then spends the winter touring the Florida, Arizona and California courses.

Frank Dodge, a midget who measures only 47 inches, was never much of a golfer

(Continued on page 81)

# Pros and Presidents Agree



Spotswood Country Club, Harrisonburg, Virginia. Club President Hamilton Shea (left) is also President of the Shenandoah Valley Broadcasting Co., and a former Vice-President of NBC. Pro Norwood Thompson, a pro for sixteen years, is a member of the Virginia Golf Professionals Association, and has been a mainstay at Spotswood for six years.

## “New Push-Button Victors won't spin or skid, are easy on upkeep”

“One of the important features that sold us on Victors,” says Club President Hamilton Shea, “is that they don't scuff-up our turf. This means a tidy saving on fairway maintenance. Most important, our members are 100% happy with them. They tell us that Victors give a safe and exceptionally smooth ride.”

“I've learned,” reports Pro Norwood Thompson, “that I can depend on my Victors to

keep going day after day, and they seem to be built to last forever. Victors are easy to take care of, too. You can do it yourself with Victor. That's important because we service our Victor fleet ourselves. And less service, fewer repairs, mean greater profits.”

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# Flower of the South

*As golf shops go, that is an apt description of the new installation at Vestavia CC. It's the latest thing in design for pro merchandising*

By **JACK MURPHY**

Professional, Vestavia CC, Birmingham, Ala.

Many persons who have seen our new pro shop say that there is nothing quite like it in the South. Some enthusiasts have compared it with the finest shops they have seen in the U.S. I, of course, am not going to argue with either group because as you can note from looking at the photos on these pages, a pro couldn't ask for more beautiful surroundings. What's more, they are air conditioned.

We're knee deep in beige carpeting. When you walk on it the effect is a little like walking across soft turf. The entire



On this and the facing page are six views of Vestavia. The island panel is perhaps the most striking thing about the shop. It adds wall space for display purposes, yet gives the illusion of not being there. New shop was opened last July.

shop is panelled in natural birch and it is nicely divided by another island type panel that splits the shop and enables us to departmentalize our merchandise. The divider is shown in the two top photos on page 37. Almost half of our shop is exposed to natural light which is supplemented by fluorescent fixtures and three spots that are strategically located to dramatize both playing equipment and sportswear. A white, planked ceiling adds to the lighting effect.

*(Continued on page 87)*





# Champions GC

## Burke and Demaret Have Carried Over Their Success on the Circuit to Launching and Operating A Club

By TOM DAVISON

The flowers that bloom in the spring-time are precisely on schedule at Champions GC where Jimmy Demaret and Jackie Burke, with the help of some bulldozers and over \$800,000, carved a wonderfully fine golf course from a forest of pine, sweet gum and oak trees.

The scent of spring's flowers is no sweeter to Demaret and Burke than the feeling that their investment is a good one. For the Champions, despite a relatively isolated location 20 miles from Houston, is literally teeming with golfers.

"We don't have a gin rummy player in

the bunch," laughs Burke of his 715 members. "All they want to do is play golf."

This despite the fact that the \$125,000 Champions Lodge has one of the most beautiful men's lockerrooms of any clubhouse in the nation.

The pro-mgrs. of the new club have set 750 as their membership goal for present facilities. The maximum should be reached very soon. When demand calls for a membership increase over 750, Burke and Demaret plan another 18-hole course on their ample 532 acres of heavily-timbered, well-watered sandy loam terrain.

Memberships sell for \$1,200, plus tax. Dues are \$30 monthly.

### Good by Comparison

The \$800,000 spent on the Champions facilities is considered money well applied, since another club built in the Houston area about the same time cost over twice as much.

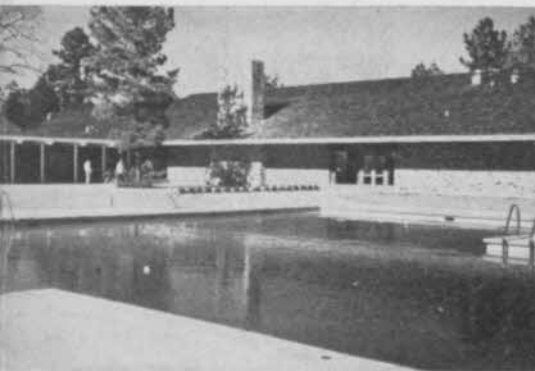
Burke says 100 per cent of his male members are golfers, and since the Champions Wo-

*(Continued on page 40)*



Jack Burke, Jr., Jimmy Demaret and Don White, supt. (l to r) keep things going smoothly at The Champions.





Pool and pro shop are very much in keeping with the classy atmosphere at The Champions. In the oval is the first tee area where there is a traffic jam almost daily. Below are a couple holes that can curl your hair — The 153-yard No. 8 that presents a frightening approach and No. 4, a 222-yard par 3, that doesn't permit liberties with a hook.



men's Golf Association has over 300 active members, the course is usually crowded, even on week days.

"What's more," Burke adds, "I'll bet our club has as young a membership as any in the country. I'd say our average age is 40."

Burke also takes pride in the fact his clubhouse mgr., Mickey Attas, and Don White, his supt., are active golfers, and good ones. Both shoot in the 70's.

#### **In Excellent Condition**

Opened in Nov. 1958, the lush Champions layout must be one of the best-conditioned new golf courses in the world. Both the spacious fairways and the unusually large greens are grassed in Tifgreen 328, the turf that has proved itself the best for southeast Texas' humid climate.

Don White has kept the big, deeply-contoured greens consistently good, both in summer and winter. Tifgreen, as any Bermudagrass, becomes dormant during the winter season, and White keeps things green by supplementing Red Top every Oct. This lasts through April, when warm nights kill the bent and bring out the luxuriant Tifgreen again.

"Tifgreen gets a little brown, and its growing slows down during the winter," White explains, "but it never stops growing entirely and it comes back far quicker than regular Bermuda after a cold snap."

White has found that a quick washdown job on his greens after a winter frost keeps the grass from freezing out.

"We're up many a cold winter morning at 4:30 washing the frost off those greens," White says. The Champions layout is of course, open 12 months a year.

#### **Cooperative Use of Equipment**

White, who aerifies his golf course every May and Sept., uses a cooperative system with other supts. in the area.

"Since we have only one aerifying machine, we borrow three others twice a year, then let them use ours when they're ready. It works out real fine for all of us," White says.

Every time the Champions greens are verticut there are 18 pickup truckloads of valuable Tifgreen clippings available to the growing number of Houston area courses converting to the new grass.

Architect Ralph Plummer built the Champions course, after collaborating with Burke and Demaret on its design. The famed pros sought to incorporate the best features of courses they have played over the world in their own course. Champions has the wide fairways of Augusta National, the gentle pine-bordered roll of Pinehurst, some of the trouble a stray-

ing shot encounters at Pine Valley, even a hole that would challenge the famous oceanside 12th at Pebble Beach.

#### **Built for Easy Maintenance**

Despite its great size, the course is a model of efficiency for the maintenance man. The course area totals about 250 acres, with 100 of those acres in teeing, fairway and greens area. The greens average 11,000 sq. ft. The smallest is 8,500 and the largest a monstrous 19,000 sq. ft.

Great care was taken to build the course for easy maintenance, with a minimum of handwork required. One large mower cuts the entire fairway and rough area.

Forty-two sand bunkers were installed a year after the course was built following careful planning to assure that they would be properly placed. Even so, Burke figures they cost about \$100 a year each in maintenance, for every bunker requires some handcutting.

Burke and White agree that the use of rubber-spiked rakes, stationed at each bunker for players to use, eases the maintenance problems.

"We plan to add about 10 more traps soon, but we're going at it carefully, for that means another \$1,000 to our annual overhead," the moneywise Burke said. "So far, we haven't put a single trap in the wrong place," he added.

#### **Glare Is Reduced**

Demaret is chiefly responsible for a new kind of sand used in the traps at Champions. Wearing from the glare of white sand through the estimated 1,500 tournaments he's played in, Demaret decided to try some gray-white mortar sand, sifted through 18-gauge screen. The sand has proven very satisfactory and the off-white color greatly reduces glare while not detracting from the beauty of the course.

The teeing areas, stretching from 35 to 75 yards in length, are mostly unelevated, decreasing maintenance costs substantially.

Plummer, who has built 18 golf courses in the Houston area during the last 10 years, was 15 months on the job at Champions. After six months were spent clearing and outlining the fairways, White moved in for his first planting in July, 1958. Due to heavy rains the fairways had to be replanted three times within a three-month period.

#### **Four-Acre Nursery**

A four-acre Tifgreen nursery had already been established in the practice  
(Continued on page 76)