

Why We Need Junior Golfers

By GEORGE LAKE

PROFESSIONAL, RECREATION PARK COURSES, LONG BEACH, CAL.
VICE-PRESIDENT, PROFESSIONAL GOLFERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Foresighted club officials and professionals are seeing in the development of junior golf pleasant and substantial assurance of a tremendous future for the game.

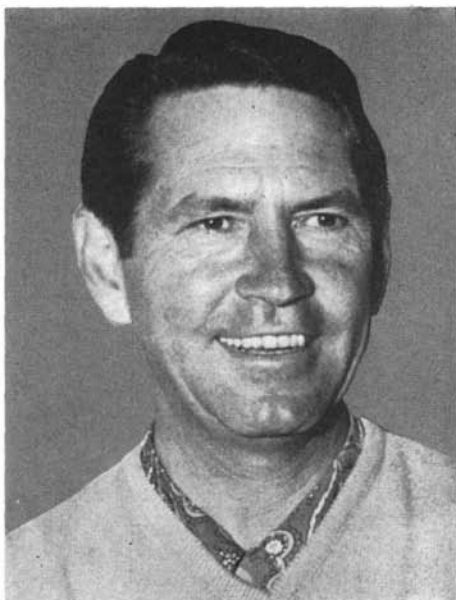
Our successful junior promotion was undertaken when it became apparent that something had to be done to provide clubs with desirable new membership material. One result of World War II was that the average age of club members increased. The necessity of financing new families meant that many returning veterans were unable to afford private-club memberships. There was danger that a generation might be skipped in golf.

Members' children and grandchildren and thousands of other youngsters whose parents were not golfers therefore became the beneficiaries of a thorough and enthusiastic recruiting and training campaign. This has been a prime objective of professionals for almost ten years, and the results are most impressive.

Great impetus was given to the junior promotion by the USGA in establishing Junior Amateur and Girls' Junior Championships. The general improvement in scoring reflects professional instruction. Many of us who began as caddies and learned golf by imitation, casual instruction and patient study think today's juniors are advanced far beyond the standard we set as kids.

The junior influence already is being felt in the demand for more and better public courses.

Since the start of the last war and the conscripting of men for service or war work, caddie ranks have become depleted. Even though caddie fees are the highest ever, many clubs have a caddie shortage. This has affected adult play in some areas. Junior golfers often are eager to pick up spending money by caddying.



George Lake

Not so long ago, 90 per cent of professionals were graduates of the caddie house. Now few professional recruits come from that source. We must encourage younger golfers, so inclined, to fill this void in both club and playing professional ranks. The average young golfer, with higher education, will be well equipped to fill the assistant's job and eventually the head professional's job. An assistant and a professional today must know bookkeeping, accounting, business law, typing, salesmanship and merchandise display. He must be an expert instructor. He can learn only part of this at the golf course and shop. The balance must be learned in school or college.

The field is open, the game is young and we should encourage youth to help keep the game abreast with the times.