

It's Not What You Have Lost but What You Have Left

by

DALE S. BOURISSEAU

*Chairman, National Amputee
Golf Program*

THE COMPLETE rehabilitation of many amputees has been made a reality through the amputee golf program. Having its humble beginning as a Cleveland, Ohio, project of Possibilities Unlimited, Inc., with but a handful of the more venturesome, the program has grown to encompass the nation.

Amputees are proving that "It's not what you have lost but what you have left that counts."

This slogan can well be applied to all persons—amputees or not. The emphasis has been placed on what one does with what he has left.

Useful citizens and better employees are created when an amputee competes on equal terms with others. Respect by his fellow golfer replaces pity when an amputee plays a respectable game without special favors or preferred lies.

The era of pencil pushers and apple knockers will be a thing of the past, insofar as these amputees are concerned. Golf has a way of making one self-reliant and humble. No other competitive sport can do as much for an amputee in as pleasant surroundings.

The fundamental objects of the program work in practice, and this fact is demonstrable in the manner in which the amputees accept their misfortunes.

Taking It Lightly

One of the players, Harold Carlson, of Buffalo, N.Y., was discussing his poor showing in the first round of our championship last summer and explained that he had discovered he had been holding "his hands" too low to complete a good arc. Carlson has no hands and plays with gripping devices he himself designed.

Incidentally, Carlson, who has played in the last two tournaments and has stolen

the show, was awarded at the last championship the R. E. Britt Trophy and a set of woods donated by Henry Picard, professional at the Canterbury Golf Club, in Cleveland, as the most improved golfer.

Another player, Jack Harrison, of Royal Oak, Mich., a leg amputee who has won the championship each of the last two years, belted out a particularly good drive last summer and remarked: "I hit that ball so hard I could feel the screws jump in my leg."

During a tournament dance an arm amputee was overheard chiding a leg amputee: "You have the edge on us on the golf course, but we can put it all over you on the dance floor."

The program which brought this about didn't just happen. George Chalmers, professional at the Chagrin Valley Country Club, Chagrin Falls, Ohio, encouraged and helped me. R. E. Britt, of Solon, Ohio, gave a financial assist and that put the program on its feet. Henry Picard helps many amputees each year on the practice tee. Paul Hahn has given his exhibition twice, and Jimmy Nichols has been on hand to assist twice.

New Classifications

The first major advance in our tournament program was made in 1953 when Jack A. Ahern, of Buffalo, N.Y., president of the New York State Golf Association, projected his thinking and himself into the hearts of all the amputees. Under his guidance and that of Alex Perley, professional at the Wanakah Country Club, Hamburg, N.Y., the field was divided into two classes wherein twelve played thirty-six holes of stroke play for the championship and the remaining twenty-two competed for net prizes. Many of the latter group played

competitive golf for the first time, and the results were most gratifying.

In order to broaden the scope and to interest more amputees, the senior flight and junior flight also came into being last year. They, added to the championship and the handicap flights, have added immeasurably to the potential. It is conceivable that several flight classifications will be developed and provide even greater interest.

James Milewski, 14, of Royal Oak, played his first competitive golf on crutches, as his artificial limb was damaged a few days prior to the tournament. Jim is the first junior champion and deserves considerable credit for displaying the type of determination that will keep him from ever being handicapped.

One of the main objectives now is to interest enough amputees to make regional tournaments necessary. This would encourage many who are now reticent about traveling long distances to get out and play.

Report of Progress

My chairmanship of the golf program dates from 1948, and I set about then to organize it as a national affair, as it was and still is my belief that golf can do more toward making an amputee self-reliant than any other sport.

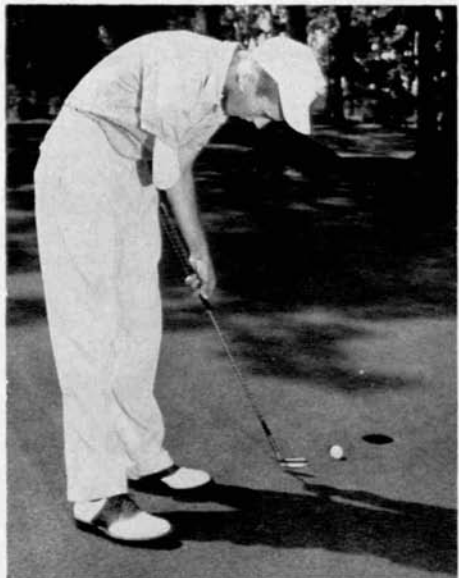
The first national tournament was held at Chagrin Valley Country Club in 1949. It was an 18-hole stroke-play affair, with about a dozen entrants. John Cipriani, of Lackawanna, N.Y., an arm amputee, won.

It was again an 18-hole stroke-play tournament in 1950 and was won by George Campbell, of Belmont, Mass., at the Ridge-wood Country Club, Cleveland. Nineteen persons competed.

The third year, 1951, it was again held at Chagrin Valley Country Club, with twenty-three competitors. George Campbell again won the 18-hole stroke-play event.

Aurora Country Club, in Aurora, Ohio, was the scene in 1952. Twenty-eight players came out, and John Cipriani won again.

Jack Harrison, who lost his leg and incurred a broken back in an automobile accident, won the first 36-hole stroke-play championship, with an 80-76—156, at the



Putting one-handed and left-handed, Burgess Windsor, of Stockton, Cal., went around in 82 and 89 to tie for second in the amputee championship last summer.

Wanakah Country Club in 1953. Harrison is a radio announcer and plays left-handed. Thirty-four players took part.

The membership of Red Run Golf Club, in Royal Oak, put on a great event last year. Sixty-three took part. Harrison won the championship a second time and the Jack A. Ahern Trophy with an 82-75—157. Tied for second were Burgess Windsor, an arm amputee from Stockton, Cal., and Paul Hentz, of Phoenix, Ariz., a leg amputee. Windsor had 82-89—171 and Hentz 90-81—171. James Lloyd, of Wrightsville, Pa., won the net trophy with a 204-68—136; R. Paul Miller, of Winged Foot Golf Club, Mamaroneck, N.Y., won the senior championship, and Milewski, of course, won the Henry Picard Junior Trophy in the two new divisions.

Actually, the process of determining a champion is incidental to the conduct of the tournament. We are primarily concerned in getting amputees to prove to themselves and to the public that they are not handicapped.

The champion, Jack Harrison, has absorbed this idea enthusiastically. He said

Loss of Hands Doesn't Stop Him



Harold Carlson of Buffalo, N.Y., compares grips with Alex Perley, professional at the Wanakah Country Club, Hamburg, N.Y. Despite the lack of hands, Carlson does very well.

graciously after winning at Red Run Golf Club last summer: "Winning is strictly secondary. The main thing is to get out and play instead of moping around. Spirit more than makes up for whatever flesh may be gone".

Needless to say, the manner in which this tournament has grown is due to the assistance given by the National Golf Fund, Inc., R. E. Britt, Jack Ahern and Watson Brown, and the advice and direction given by Henry Picard, Alex Perley, Stan Kuznik, Frank Metzger and George Chalmers. Then, too, many friends have been most generous in giving prizes in the form of clubs, bags and so forth.

NOTE: The author lost a leg in World War II and, before developing this golf program for other amputees, learned himself through golf that "no one need be handicapped."

NEW MEMBERS OF THE USGA

Regular

- AEDC Volunteer Golf Club, Tenn.
- Clear Lake Golf Club, Iowa.
- Francis E. Warren Air Force Base Golf Association, Wyo.
- Freeport Country Club, Ill.
- Green Meadow Country Club, Ky.
- Greenwood Golf Club, S. C.
- Italian American Golf Association of Ohio, Ohio
- Norbeck Country Club, D.C.
- Pasadena Golf Course, Inc., Fla.
- Seattle Business Women's Golf Club, Wash.
- Spring Hill Country Club, N. J.
- Southmoor Country Club, Ill.

Associate

- Highland View Golf Club, Mont.
- Naples Golf and Beach Club, Fla.