

# THE WOULD-BE PRO IN EVERY GAME

by

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THE code of etiquette in golf has done much toward making the game pleasurable, but there is one point of manners which should be covered in the code but isn't. You might phrase it like this:

"No player should give advice to another player on the proper execution of a stroke (even though his analysis would be correct) unless the player asks for his advice."

I realize that giving advice is regulated by Rule 9 of the Rules of Golf. What I have in mind is unsolicited counsel such as often occurs in informal rounds.

I have been teaching golf a number of years. In the early days of my teaching I had the impression that the pupil would get more for his money if I told him everything that was wrong with his swing. And so, if there were ten things wrong with his swing, I would remind him of all ten errors.

As a result, the pupil might look very good with his new swing, but he might not be able to hit the broad side of a barn door. The feeling I experienced in such cases was like that of a doctor who thought his operations were a success but his patients were all dying.

## *Capacity for Thought*

Since those early days I have learned that the minute you have to do too much thinking to execute the proper swing, the pupil can't hit the ball as well as with his old swing with a lot of errors. The reason is that too much thinking causes the player to lose sight of the ball, and he just sees what he is thinking. A player who listens to too much free advice is in-



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viting himself to become blindfolded and should only expect the results that one should expect if he played blindfolded.

I have found that the average golfer's capacity is about three thoughts, if he is still to see the ball. If his swing requires only two deliberate thoughts, he can play better. If only one thought is necessary, he is likely to play his best golf.

If a golfer's swing requires more than three conscious thoughts, he should not play. He should practice swinging until the excess thoughts become mechanical and not more than three deliberate ideas are necessary to make his swing fundamentally correct.

I have learned not to jump at conclusions too quickly in analyzing a swing. I do not give half-hour lessons today for the reason that one-hour lessons allow me time to be more positive of my conclusions.

The reason for citing these experiences is the hope that the would-be professional in every game will curb giving advice to other members of his group.

It is surprising how quickly the would-be professional can analyze a swing. An inferior player has only to miss one shot and the would-be professional tells him what's wrong. This goes on for 18 holes and by the time they end the game this inferior player has received enough advice to fill a book. He is so disgusted and confused that his usual comment coming off the 18th green is: "Do you know anyone who wants to buy a good set of clubs?"

The would-be professional is usually a grand guy and he means well, but he doesn't realize the harm he may be causing those people who used to enjoy golf when advice was not so free.

The would-be professional, upon reading this, might say: "The professional is just jealous because I am stealing his thunder, and he won't get so many lessons."

For this would-be professional's information, 50 per cent of my lessons are what I call confusion lessons. They are made necessary by too much advice given to a player by his friends. My lesson clientele has actually increased because of the would-be professional.

I hope this humble effort will help make more golfers aware of the danger if they do not remember a very necessary point of golf manners. No player should give advice to any other player on the proper execution of a shot (even though his an-

## AUDIENCE REACTION TO USGA FILM

There have been more than 395 bookings thus far of the USGA motion picture entitled "The Rules of Golf—Etiquette." Some of the comments from audiences are:

Ormond Beach, Fla., — "Picture was well liked and we had many compliments."

Shenandoah, Iowa, — "Clever enough to make the audience remember more easily."

Los Angeles, Cal., — General reaction — excellent."

The film, which recently was awarded a Recognition of Merit by the Film Council of America, is a 16 mm. Kodachrome with a running time of 17½ minutes. The importance of etiquette is emphasized visually through portrayal of various violations of the code in the course of a family four-ball match. Robert T. Jones, Jr., makes the introductory statement. Ben Hogan appears in several scenes.

The shipping of prints is handled by National Educational Films, Inc., 165 West 46th Street, New York 16, N. Y., which produced the film in cooperation with the USGA. The rental fee is \$15, which includes the cost of shipping the print to the renter.

alysis would be correct) unless the player asks his advice.

It is, of course, best to see your golf professional and work with him to build a fundamentally sound swing.

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### *All-Consuming Thought*

One thought only can enter every head:  
The thought of golf, to wit—and that engages  
Men of all size, tempers, rank and ages.  
The root—the primum mobile—of all,  
The epidemic of the club and ball;  
The work by day, the source of dreams by night,  
The never-failing fountain of delight.

From "A Chat About Golf" Chamber's Journal  
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