



The Coach Approach

The Newsletter of the Wisconsin High School Golf Coaches Association

Volume X Issue 2

May 1997

From the Clubhouse:

Time for rededication

Recently, approximately 70 coaches attended and enjoyed the Spring Clinic at Western Lakes GC. Kay McMahon, of Palm Springs, California, and Gene Haas, Executive Director of the WSGA, were featured speakers. Both received extremely favorable comments from those attending. The clinic proved to be an excellent learning experience for all.

As we are nearing yet another school year please remember the following deadlines: **May 15:** nominations are due for both the boys and girls academic all-state teams. **June 11:** nominations are to be postmarked for the boys All State Playing team. The June 11 date is an absolute deadline as the seven members of the selection committee will be meeting the following Monday, June 16 to pour over the nomination information put together by Chuck Menzel of Green Bay Preble so that the playing teams can be formulated and

presented to the entire WWSGCA board for discussion that evening. Nominations postmarked after June 11 will not be considered. Please, **for your players benefit**, make sure your nominations are postmarked by June 11. See the nomination forms elsewhere in this issue and please mail to the correct address on the form!

At the March executive board meeting, award winners for the 1996-1997 school year were selected. Bluemound CC and Merrill Hills CC were selected as WWSGCA Friends of Golf and Everett "Gene" Edmundson, of Burlington, was selected for inclusion into the Coaches Hall of Fame posthumously. Additional information on the Coaches Hall of Fame, located at the WSGA office in Brookfield will be found in the next issue of the *Coach Approach*.

Those of us who coach WIAA boy's golf teams have begun another season. It will be interesting to follow the development of our young players during the season. Here in Southeastern Wisconsin, Brookfield Central returns their entire starting five from last year with some outstanding freshmen ready to sweep aside some veterans. Homestead appears ready to battle in their effort to defend their Division 1 title from 1996. Also

strong are Nicolet, Hartland Arrowhead, Mukwonago, Muskego, a couple of Racine teams, Kenosha Tremper and, of course, the always powerful Badgers of Lake Geneva. Who are the strong teams in your area and who will be the surprise teams of 1997? Who will become the Division 1, 2 and 3 State Champions? As always, the young season holds promise of great excitement at all levels throughout the state. As the season begins, it is our opportunity to rededicate ourselves to provide the best coaching and leadership possible for our golfers and to hope that each of them grows in confidence, poise and their ability to focus on the job at hand. This is where our true success will lie. Enjoy the end of the school year and please join us on Tuesday, June 17th at the Springs Golf Club in Spring Green for the WWSGCA annual meeting, clinic and tournament. The site is located in a tranquil Coolie (valley) in West Central Wisconsin. It is a wonderful place to play golf and thoroughly enjoy the serenity of God's country. The Robert Trent Jones course will fully challenge your golfing expertise, while the surroundings offer great peace. We hope you can join us. An entry form is available elsewhere in this issue.

The Practice Tee

Swing finish tells much

In the previous issue, we focused on the all important impact position and stressed the importance of the golfer maintaining balance by putting the weight into the forward heel. We also emphasized the importance of staying connected through impact and keeping forward knee-flexed through impact if the golfer wanted to hit a straight ball or draw. A stiff forward knee at impact is all right if the player intends to produce a fade. In the concluding article, we will explore the finish of a proper golf swing and look at what various improper finishes can tell us about swing errors.

Without doubt, the single most important fundamental in golf is to swing at the target. Ideally, we could all have extension to the target as Mark O'Meara does. He epitomizes "swing the club at the target" as well as anybody in golf. Mark maintains his connection throughout his finish and extends the club down his target line extremely well. As a result, Mark is extremely accurate and is one of the leading money winners on the tour year after year.

As a coach, we must emphasize to our players that on the course they must focus on their target and this entails swinging the club back along the target line and then swinging the clubhead forward through the ball towards the target. If this is done while maintaining connection and the head maintains its correct position behind the ball until impact, it becomes difficult to hit the ball off line. Try to teach your players to turn through the

target so when the club reaches a horizontal position, the three o'clock position, their arms are fully extended toward the target. If their arms are bent at the elbow before the three o'clock position, it is an indicator that they have swung at the ball or their head was in front of the ball prior to impact. Each of these errors prevents a full extension to the target.

It is important that your players do not widen the gap between their elbows at any time during the swing, including the follow through. When the elbows separate, the player ends up in a so called "chicken wing" position but the real problem is that the upper body stops turning and the result is a widening of the space between the elbows. This failure to turn through to the target results in less accurate shotmaking because the entire swing motion is not moving toward the target.

At the full finish of the golf swing the weight must be in the heel and ball of the forward foot. The back foot should have pivoted toward the target and only the toe of the shoe should be in contact with the ground. The laces of the back shoe should be facing the target. The golfer should have turned so that the belt buckle is facing toward the target. I also prefer to see my golfers elbows facing the target at the swing's finish, but if they turn beyond that position it is certainly all right. It is extremely important that the player finish in a balanced position. By finishing in an unbalanced position, the golfer has either made a fairly serious swing error or has swung too hard. Encourage your players to swing with courage and confidence, and to swing hard with the driver, but make sure they do not move their heads prior to impact and insist they finish in a balanced position. They will find their ideal swing speed within those parameters.

Over the past five or six issues I have tried to present some basic swing ideas in hopes that they will increase your understanding of the golf swing or that they may have given you several new ways of looking at swing fundamentals. If you should have any questions concerning any of

these articles or swing problems your golfers may be experiencing, please write to me care of the address on the back page of the Coach Approach.

The First Tee

The Frustrated High School Golfer

We have all experienced the frustrated high school golfer in our program. Their frustration, usually the result of a poorly played hole, generally means an additional number of poorly played holes and, by their definition, a terrible score. How does this situation occur and what can we as golf coaches do to reduce or eliminating these embarrassing rounds for our players?

Our first job as coaches in this situation is to identify the cause of the frustration. Is it poor shotmaking, missed putts, poor scoring or possibly a dislike of their playing companions? Or, could it be something totally unrelated to golf? By taking the player aside and talking quietly in a voice that shows concern and a willingness to understand, you can usually isolate the offending problem. Once the golfer understands your concern for him/her, they will usually be more attentive as you try to help them come to grips with the source of frustration. There are some tricks to use to help calm the player so they have a better opportunity to play reasonably well for the final holes.

If the source of frustration is one or more poorly played holes, telling the player to just forget it usually is not effective because it doesn't give the player something positive to focus on. Try telling the player that you are going to look closely at the scores for each of the remaining holes to see how they finish. Or, if that would put

too much pressure on that particular player, you need to know your players, then have them focus on hitting their drives in the fairway or hitting greens with their short irons, or not taking more than two putts per green. All of these are positive images that the player can focus on which should help them forget the negative experience that caused their frustration.

Another source of frustration is one or more poorly struck shots. How often have we seen a negative reaction to such a situation? A useful method of relieving this cause of frustration is to have the player step back, after a poor shot, and take a relaxed proper practice swing in order to remind himself/herself that they can correctly execute the intended swing. Using this method helps the player relax and rebuild confidence. This method keeps the player focused as opposed to becoming so frustrated that the muscle memory of a proper swing and the concentration necessary to produce lower scores are lost.

Less than accurate shotmaking also cause frustration. Here the player is best advised to slow the swing down and to pick very specific targets at which to aim. Slowing the swing will allow the club and body to stay better connected and should result in many more accurate shots. Focusing on a small target sharpens the mind and allows the player to direct concentration in a very specific direction. It is actually surprising how many high school players, when asked to define their target for a specific shot will respond with "down there" or "out there" instead of citing a specific location. The technique attempts to get your golfer to focus on a specific positive instead of thinking about the negative and becoming more frustrated as a result.

I have had a number of players in my program who have been real head cases when it came to putting. Since putting is probably 90% to 95% mental there is certainly much opportunity for frustration. Usually, the problem occurs if a golfer three putts the first hole or the first couple of holes. Their confidence disappears

and the round may become a total loss. Since the problem is usually one of distance control, the solution is to have the player focus on feeling the distance. Have them walk the length of the putt to get a better feel for the length of putt and then trust their ability to be successful. This method may not work so the round may be lost. If that happens, be sure to get the player on the practice green immediately after turning in their scorecard. Now, under no pressure, they can begin to rebuild their confidence. These players need to understand that how they putt on the first hole does not mean they will putt that way the entire round. Usually a golfer who has this kind of putting problem in reality has very little confidence in themselves and are easily defeated by just a few poor putts. They need to develop mental toughness.

The frustrated golfer is one real opportunity for us to do some coaching on the course. If we can get the player to focus away from their source of frustration and on more positive thoughts then we have taken advantage of an outstanding opportunity to educate our young people to the importance of competing while under control. Not only will their round be more enjoyable and successful but their actions will not interfere with their playing partners ability to focus on their own game. In other words, this is a win-win situation all the way around.

At the turn

Nominations for All State Teams Reminders

Just a few reminders from the All-State nomination committee on filling out the All-State nomination forms.

1. Print or type the entire nomination form. many of the forms are not legible.
2. Fill in all names, addresses and newspaper addresses at the top of the form. This information is used to send all-state certificates to the player's home address as well as sending press releases to the local newspaper.
3. List all invitational results for the nominated player not just the invitationals where the player finished high. Fill in all the information asked for and list the individual finish not the team finish. DO NOT LIST BESTBALL OR SCRAMBLE EVENTS unless individual scores are kept.
4. List the average nine hole score figured to the nearest tenth of a stroke.
5. List conference, regional, and sectional results completely, and as in the invitationals you should list the individual finish, not the team finish.
6. FOR THE WIAA STATE TOURNAMENT RESULTS, These can be omitted due to the nomination deadline. WIAA State Tournament results will be filled in by the committee. WISAA coaches are asked to accurately fill in state results.
7. Make sure you are a member of the association. Nominations are not accepted if the player's coach is not a member of the WHSGCA.
8. Mail forms to the proper committee member:

GIRLS: Don Marx

5319 Frosty Lane
Madison, WI 53705

BOYS: Chuck Menzel

529 Edelweiss Dr
Green Bay, WI 54302-5115

Playing nominations must be **POST-MARKED THE DAY FOLLOWING THE STATE MEET.**

Academic nominations must be postmarked by May 15th.

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The 18th Hole

WHSGCA Spring Board Meeting Minutes Saturday, March 8, 1997, Babes, Madison

Meeting was called to order by Kaz at 10:03.

All present except Ernie Nieman. A letter was read by Kaz from Ernie, who resigned effective the March meeting.

Minutes from the fall meeting were read and approved as read.

Membership Report

At the meeting, we have 234 members, approximately 30 behind last year at this time.

Treasurer's Report

Since we no longer get GMO tickets to sell, we have a couple of options to help make up the difference:

1. continue to look at having a raffle
2. raise dues again (to \$20)

It was moved by Ulrich Adams and seconded by Ted Devine to raise dues to \$20. Passed.

The consensus was to start the raffle one year from today's meeting. It was moved by TJ Dieck and seconded by Bob Schweder to sell the tickets at \$2 each and 3 for \$5. Money raised will go to help support high school golf in Wisconsin. Motion passed.

Friends of HS Golf Nomination Report

Dick McKichen presented the nominations for Coaches Hall of Fame, PGA friends and friends. Ulrich Adams moved and Don Marx seconded to select Everett "Gene" Edmundson of

Burlington for Coaches Hall of Fame. Passed.

Chuck Menzel moved and Mary Beth Nienhaus seconded that Tom Wiese be selected PGA Friend of Golf. Passed.

Ted Devine moved and Tom Conrad seconded that Bluemound CC be selected as a Friend of Golf. Passed. Don Marx moved and Bob Schweder seconded that Merrill Hills CC be selected as a Friend of Golf. Passed.

President's Report

All members agreed to serve another year except Ernie Nieman, who has resigned and will be recognized at the summer tournament.

Kaz moved and Bob Schweder seconded that John Lonergan be asked to replace Ernie Nieman on the Board.

Four more members need to be added to the board. The following were nominated: Ron Sauer from Holmen, Scott Meyer from Sun Prairie, Gayle Wilfong from Fond du Lac. These three will be asked to serve. A fourth will be nominated at the summer meeting. Singh Grewel moved and Muffet Miller seconded that the above three be added to the board. Passed unanimously.

To replace Ernie on the All-State selection committee, the board selected Don Marx.

WIAA Report. WIAA will be coming up with a list of do's and don't's for galleries.

Coach Approach: Kaz is still looking for ideas and articles. Any input would be appreciated.

Spring Clinic Report

Mary Beth Nienhaus gave information on Kay McMahon who will be the featured speaker next Saturday at the Spring Clinic. Gene Haas will be there to give a rules presentation.

Summer Annual Meeting and Tournament

The Springs is all set to host our meeting, clinic and tournament on Tuesday, June 17. Cost will be \$75 per person.

New Business

Retired coaches could also be eligible to serve on the board.

List in the Coach Approach the state colleges that have golf programs.

Moved by Ted Devine and seconded by Chuck Menzel that we adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 1:40.

Respectfully submitted
Bob Lehninger

The Scorecard

Lake Country Invitational

TEAM RESULTS

1. Homestead	332
2. Nicolet	333
3. Brookfield Central	335
4. Kenosha Tremper	336
5. Mukwonago	338
6. Arrowhead	342
7. Wauwatosa	344
8. Muskego	348
9. Watertown	348
10. Kewaskum	348
11. Waukesha South	354
12. Kenosha Bradford	358
13. Menomonee Falls	360
14. West Bend West	363
15. Slinger	363
16. Franklin	364
17. Waukesha West	366
18. Kettle Moraine	368
19. Mayville	369
20. Wisconsin Lutheran	370
21. N B Eisenhower	375
22. Brookfield East	386
23. Waupun	386
24. Oconomowoc	388
25. Racine Horlick	389
26. Grafton	390
27. Cedarburg	390
28. West Bend East	392
29. Wauwatosa West	394
30. Hartford	404
31. Sussex Hamilton	410
32. New Berlin West	DQ

MEDALISTS

74 Jeff Kinzel, Homestead
75 Jake Pasch, Nicolet
78 Eric Mack, NB Eisenhower
79 Mike Everson, Muskego
Matt Hilton, Muskego