

# SNAG NEW BUSINESS WITH KID-FRIENDLY SNAG GOLF GAME

BY BOB SPIWAK

A couple of ex-Tour players, Wally Armstrong and Terry Anton, have come up with an idea that could add dollars to the coffers of golf range operators. It is called SNAG, and will probably be a hit (no pun intended) at some unused place at your range. Maybe the parking lot, maybe a tent, perhaps a vacant dining room. It can draw potential golfers from post-diaper to senior citizens.

## What's A 'Flagsticky'?

To begin with, there are only two clubs, the Launcher and the Roller, euphemisms for wedge and putter. With durable plastic oversized heads, fiberglass shafts and training grips, these are used to propel a ball to the flagstick – er, "Flagsticky." The ball is a little smaller than a tennis ball and is covered with a Velcro™-like loop material. The object of the game is to make the ball stick to a cylindrical base (which holds the flag) covered with a hook material, again, like Velcro. You've probably seen safety dart sets made in this manner.

Rather than a conventional tee, the ball is placed on the "Launch Pad," a mat with an oversized rubber tee. You hit with the Launcher off this to holes that can be measured from feet to yards, and can be of any number on the "Course." Everything is portable and can be used in different permutations. The Roller is used to putt the ball to the sticky base.

The system can be used as basic training in using a golf club. The grips are five-sided and color-coded, so that muscle memory can begin with a consistent grip. If lessons are to be given, instruction can go from stroking a putt right up to the full swing, a sort of preamble to regular golf equipment.

The SNAG system can be used as a place for kids of any age to participate while mom and dad are on the range hitting balls. You could charge for this, or offer it as a gratis amenity. As the makers insist, this product is primarily for fun.

## An Entry Level Tool For Teaching

Anton and Armstrong came up with the idea of SNAG in 1995. "We were looking for an entry level tool for



*Some SNAG Golf components*

teaching," said Anton. "We looked at the challenges that faced entry level golf. Every sport but golf has a beginning phase for kids: Training wheels on bikes, T-ball for baseball, short skis for learning. We wanted golf equipment that was scaled down for youngsters and easy to use, as well as portable." Calling it "a first cousin to golf," he emphasized the fun aspect of the system even while it is being used as a learning tool.

In addition to the conventional golf

approach, the company, 3G Golf Ventures, offers a catalog of related products to add to the fun and while at it, the skill level of the golfer. Some of these are a bit off-the-wall (one is literally off the head) but all are completely safe, it is said. Offered, for example, are two targets. One is a conventional round bullseye affair covered with the hook stuff. Dead center is about four feet off the ground, and it would be used to practice with the Launcher. The other, "Rollerama," is a ground level elongated triangle with a small bullseye in the middle and brightly colored broad stripes to each side. Use the Roller here. Think of putting to a spot on the wall. Scores are printed on both targets' various areas. But wait, there's more.

## Kids Can Suit Up As Safe 'Target'

A player can suit up with a sticky helmet complete with face guard, and a stick jacket and become a human target. The game can be played whereby this person attempts to catch as many balls as possible with the loop covered apparel, or the onus could be on the hitters to see how good their aim is.

SNAG golf offers everything for every budget. For example, the Starter Pack wholesales for \$89.99 (add \$30 for retail) and includes a bag, Launcher, Roller, launch pad with three tees, a Flagsticky (base, pole and flag), 6 SNAG balls, an instructional video, information booklet, master scorecard, roller brush and two interesting items. The Snapper, a long plastic ribbon which attaches to the club and when swung adds a certain sound when the swing is done properly, and the SNAGazoo, an independently swung apparatus that emits a kazoo like sound when swung correctly.

## The Portability Of The Concept

Aside from the conventional applications of the system, consider the good will that could be received by taking a small outfit to a senior center or convalescent home with one of your employees. Arrangements could be made with the local elementary (or any) school to offer it for use at recess, or P.E. class. Use a small range as a sort of child care area to bring in more golfers to the range.

And it has other applications. "We tested the system with blind kids," Anton said, "and found it to be quite successful. Now, the U.S. Blind Golfers Association is testing it for their Junior Golf program.

Wally Armstrong noted, "It is really a great promotional vehicle for ranges and courses. A lot of marketing ideas



*Kids take aim with the Roller*

can come from SNAG," he said, two days before he was on a plane to Venezuela with the president of Chiquita Banana to introduce the system there and in Costa Rica.

## Range Orders Stacked Up at the PGA Show

As the system made its debut at the January PGA Merchandise Show, there are none currently in use on any ranges,

according to Anton. "We have gotten orders, but most are from northern areas, and they want delivery when the weather warms." Armstrong noted that the company had over 70 orders for the coaching system in the U.S. and another dozen waiting to be shipped to the U.K. With this system in place a teaching pro can accommodate up to 16 students at a time, and with SNAG's built in portability, it can be done anywhere in a minimal amount of space, indoors or out.

Contact the company, 3G Golf Ventures, toll-free at 866-SNAGGOLF or 863-859-1554. On the web, go to [www.snaggolf.com](http://www.snaggolf.com). Let them know you're a range owner, and be sure to ask for the video at least, if not the entire sales package. It's all free. And you might well get — er, stuck on the SNAG system. □