



Artist's portrayal of Little St. Andrews, 18-hole approach course and adjoining Driving Range at Shrewsbury, Mass., opened for play May 20, 1950.

Short Approach Course Community Asset

By GEOFFREY CORNISH

New construction and development of regulation 9 and 18-hole golf course facilities although progressing at what may be termed an encouraging rate when considered alone nevertheless fail to make any appreciable gain over and above the sum total of all golf course facilities, according to records maintained by Golfdom. A check of all new golf course construction and additions to existing facilities made by the National Golf Foundation shows a total of 108 golf courses or additions in some stage of construction or completed in 1950. Of this number 72 courses are known to have been completed and 17 additions made to existing facilities. On the other hand total number of golf courses in the United States reported by Golfdom as of November 1, 1950 is 4931 as against an overall total for the same date in 1949 of 4926.

New subdivisions and real estate developments continue to swallow up golf course after golf course in heavily populated metropolitan areas to the point where today there are actually 10 to 25

per cent fewer courses in those areas than there were a little more than a decade ago.

Real estate values and the scarcity of suitable areas in close proximity to concentrated populations rule out most possibilities of new golf course construction.

Increasing interest in golf on the part of schools and colleges and industrial leagues and the promotion of junior golf bring new recruits into the game to further tax already crowded courses.

What of these new recruits? Are they to be introduced to a new game and shortly lose interest because practice and playing facilities are not at hand? And what of the more experienced golfer who wants to get in a mid-week practice round or two? The golf driving range may be a partial answer but there is a comparatively new type of golf facility which more nearly affords the player situations experienced under actual playing conditions.

The pitch and putt or short approach course is becoming a popular golf facility

that requires a comparatively small area yet provides grass fairways, regulation greens, sand traps and water hazards and calls for a variety of important golf shots. Lighted for night play it's the answer to the golfer who wants to get in some mid-week practice but who can't get away from his job during the day and it brings out the beginner and the inexperienced who want to learn the game or are out for an evening of pleasure.

Such a course is Little St. Andrews, an 18-hole layout, opened in 1950 by Paul J. Murphy, a former greenkeeper and graduate of the Univ. of Massachusetts Two Year Course in Greenkeeping, in Shrewsbury, Mass. It has made a great hit with golfers and beginners.

Green fees are 50 cents. A player is given a putter and a ball. An 8- or 9-iron is placed at each tee for the player's first shot and he carries his putter with him for the round. Left-handers are provided with a 9-iron which they carry with them.

Holes vary from 20 to 60 yards for a total yardage of 580 yds. The entire course is laid out on 3½ acres. Parties are limited to foursomes or less, and an average time for a mixed foursome of ladies and men to play 18 holes is 45 minutes, although this may be considerably longer when play is heavy.

Little St. Andrews was popular in its first year of operation. With green watered fairways, low evergreen shrubs and white sand traps it is also a picturesque landscape feature on the Boston-Worcester Turnpike.

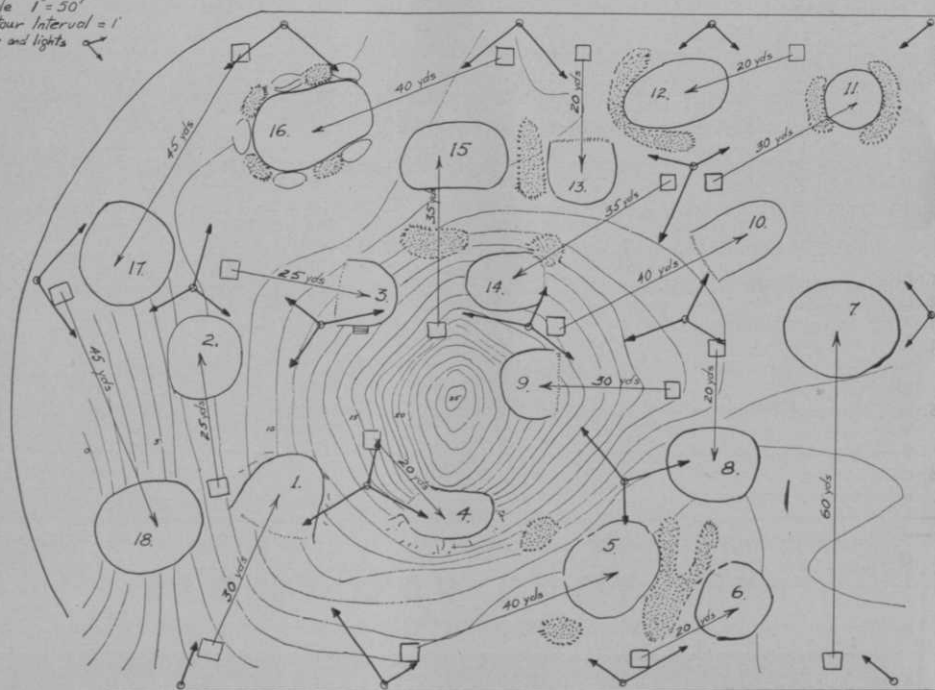
Laid out by the writer and Paul J. Murphy, who operates it, it was opened on Saturday, May 20, 1950. Throughout the season a great deal of interest was shown in it by potential owners of similar courses. In the autumn of 1950 Murphy and Cornish designed and commenced construction of a 9 hole layout for a company at Groton, Massachusetts. This short course, to be known as The Midway, occupies 2 acres of land and will open for play Memorial Day. The season's experience at Little St. Andrews was especially valuable in designing and constructing the new layout.

Cost of Construction

In a tour through the West last autumn, Murphy made a study of similar layouts, but found they were few and far between. Murphy, a low handicap player, says that short courses for chipping and putting are a decided asset to a community and will attract many newcomers to the game of golf.

They are not expensive to construct and are economical to maintain and operate if

Scale 1" = 50'
Contour Interval = 1'
Pole and lights ↗



LITTLE ST. ANDREWS
18 HOLE FLOODLIT APPROACH COURSE

Diagram showing layout of Little St. Andrews approach course and arrangement of light poles and floodlights. Chain link type fence surrounding course serves as boundary of playing area.

properly designed. For a 9 hole layout the average construction cost per hole is about \$1,000 including soil preparation, seeding, lighting, fencing, water system, parking lot, small cabin maintenance and playing equipment, but excluding real estate. For an 18 hole course the cost per hole is roughly three-quarters of this.

Principles of Design

The ideal terrain is fairly flat land with a few low rolls. It is important that the entire course be visible from at least one vantage point, preferably the cabin, because constant supervision of play is necessary. Steep rolling and hilly land is costly to light.

In designing a course for chipping and putting, the principles to be observed are:

- a) Interest for the experienced player and novice
- b) Safety
- c) Economy of maintenance
- d) Economy of lighting

A short course laid out attractively will continue to draw the same players night after night. Varying length of holes, their orientation, and utilization of different levels are all important. But interest can be increased and greater skill called for by addition of such hazards as low shrubs, shallow ponds and sand traps. A word of caution is required in regard to the latter. Deep traps would be impossible to play with the equipment provided, and the danger also exists of a player picking up an iron on a nearby tee and blasting out at considerable risk to other players and spectators. Shallow traps however are quite safe and contribute much to the interest of the game and beauty of the course.

To assure safety, careful orientation of holes is required. A hole on which the line of play is directed towards another is dangerous on these compact courses, as also are holes much over 60 yards in length.

Economy of maintenance is secured by designing the course so that it can all be mowed with a power mower. Furthermore, a green should not be under 1,000 square feet in area because grass cannot be maintained on smaller greens. Even with the relatively large greens at Little St. Andrews this is the greatest single maintenance problem. These greens were originally seeded with Colonial Bent together with a small percentage of Creeping Red Fescue. From time to time they are spiked and Red Top is seeded into them. Greens at The Midway are being sodded with Kernwood Velvet Bent from the Mitchell Brothers Nursery. On several Sundays when play was particularly heavy at Little St. Andrews, not only was the grass around the cups worn away, but the soil was depressed for almost an inch by the excessive tramping.

Economy in lighting requires careful attention. Dead areas on the course must be avoided. Correct design utilizes every square foot. Power at Little St. Andrews runs about \$1.50 an hour. The course is lighted with 37 lights on 17 poles. This includes 1,000 and 1,500 watt lamps.

Maintenance and Equipment

Green grass, particularly in hot summer weather, attracts players by night and day. Both greens and fairways should therefore be watered in dry weather.

The major pieces of maintenance equipment required for either a 9 or an 18 hole short course in addition to small tools include a power mower for cutting the fairways, at least one hand putting green mower, a hand tee mower, a fertilizer spreader, a spike disc and aerating machinery to relieve the unbelievable compaction on both greens and fairways. Course furnishings include direction markers, signs, benches, regulation flags, poles, and hole cups.

Playing equipment at Little St. Andrews includes 30 irons, 8 left-handed irons, 100 putters, score cards, wooden tees, and balls. Although 72 players is the course capacity, people waiting should be given their putters and balls; otherwise they may decide to go elsewhere. Play is concentrated just after dark when lights are first turned on, and Sunday afternoons. This year Pau Murphy intends to keep 125 putters on hand, since he lost customers on several occasions last season when he had insufficient putters for rush periods.

Operation and Playing Season

Little St. Andrews was open from 12 noon to 12 midnight last season. The last players were allowed to start around 11 P.M. It was found that two men were needed to operate and maintain the course and it is believed that the same number will be required for a 9 hole layout if it is open 12 hours a day.

Many players were new to the game. Usually Murphy was on hand to give limited instructions and also directions to new players to prevent congestion. It is of interest to note that beginners took quickly to the game and a number were playing and taking lessons from professional golfers at clubs and public courses before the season was over. Homer Darling, Jr., professional golfer at nearby Juniper Hill Golf Course gave lessons at night by appointment on the short course and attached driving range.

Experienced players also patronized Little St. Andrews. The floodlights gave them an opportunity of enjoying golf at night. Last season Murphy permitted players to use their own irons if they wished. This season he anticipates restricting them to use of Little St. Andrews' irons because of the divot problem on the small

fairways. Spectators were always allowed to accompany players and it is intended to continue this practice this year.

The biggest crowds were obtained on the hottest summer nights. Approximately 85% of the season's play was from June 10 when the weather turned warm until September 9 when it turned cool. A cool night and even a single shower of rain in the evening appeared to keep the largest part of the crowd away. Little St. Andrews will open early in May this year and will probably close late in September. Undoubtedly the season for a course located further south would be considerably longer than this.

Sound Business Venture

A short course correctly designed should pay for itself and return a profit despite the relatively short season if located near any medium sized or large city, provided of course real estate charges are not excessive. Little St. Andrews is located next door to The Moors, a famous eating house, five miles from downtown Worcester. The Midway is centrally located between Nashua, New Hampshire, Lowell and Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and next door to the Boots and Saddle, another well-known eating place. Both locations are considered ideal.

For a few weeks after opening, the first season costs are relatively high because

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young turf takes greater upkeep. A certain amount of costly experimentation may also be necessary to ascertain the correct number of men required, the hours for turning off the lights, the kind of evening (wet or very cold) when it is advisable not to turn on the lights at all, and the most effective means of publicity. As the first season advances it will undoubtedly be found that the course can be operated more and more efficiently.

Besides paying for itself, a short course is a useful adjunct to better eating places located on the outskirts of cities, and to driving ranges and resort hotels. Golf clubs and public courses might also consider installations of this type to attract night play and to secure additional revenue.

AVOID TROUBLE WITH GREENS

(Continued from page 33)

feet, per month. Clover is not a problem in these greens even though the reaction is nearly pH 7.5.

Both phosphate and potash become fixed in the soil. Potash is taken up by the clay and the organic colloidal material. The phosphate is fixed as calcium phosphate if the soil is not too acid, otherwise probably in part as iron or aluminum phosphate. They are far less subject to leaching than the nitrogen. We talk a lot about leaching of potash. Personally, I do not think it a big factor, provided there is at least 15 per cent of colloidal material in the soil derived from

silt, clay or organic matter. Because the soil colloids pick up and later release plant food elements, it would be unwise to grow grass in pure sand. However, there should be enough sand present to insure a well ventilated soil.

Some phosphoric acid and potash can be supplied each month or it can be applied in two applications once in the spring and once in the fall. All but two of the greens at Brynwood in Milwaukee receive 5 pounds of 20 per cent grade superphosphate and about the same amount of 60 per cent grade muriate of potash per 1,000 square feet at the start of the season and a like amount during September. So far, the grass is behaving normally and seems to be getting enough of both elements. Then nitrogen is supplied as needed during the season.

Soil Testing

A few remarks about soil and plant tissue testing: Soil testing has been in vogue for quite a few years. Many states have laboratories which are equipped to do testing for farmers. They test thousands of samples every year, advise the farmers and, I am sure, the farmer is benefited as a result. Soil testing never will reach the point where you can be told to put on 152 pounds of 20 per cent grade superphosphate and that the yield of wheat will be 28.5 bushels per acre. Soil tests provide an inventory of the plant food content of the soil. If properly done, they furnish valuable information so far as phosphorous

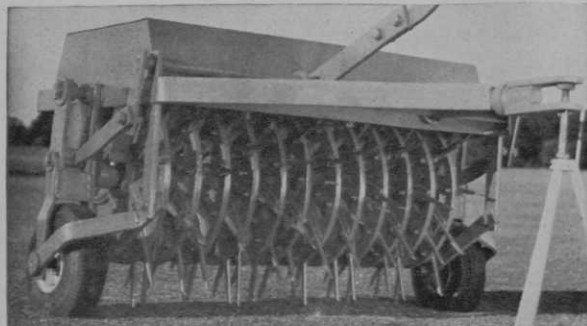
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