Surprenant: World's Longest Course

Five Sets of Tees on Each Hole

Make 8000-Yard Layout Fair Test
for All Types of Golfers

By GEOFFREY S. CORNISH

Measuring 8005 yards from the back tees, the new Surprenant National G&CC of Massachusetts, now about 75 per cent completed, will be the world's longest golf course.

Located at Bolton, 38 miles west of Boston, this de luxe layout is the brain-child of Albert H. Surprenant, owner of the Surprenant Manufacturing Co. of Boston and Clinton, one of the largest manufacturers of specifications plastic insulated wire and cable for electronic guided missiles and aircraft.

Aim for Perfection

From the inception of the course, perfection in construction and maintenance has been an overriding consideration. When the owner retained the writer as course architect he stated his intention of setting up an advisory committee of non-members to assist in all phases of design and construction.

Under the leadership of Ralph Sawyer, well known amateur golfer of Worcester who has tested the efforts of golf architects on both sides of the Atlantic for some 35 years, the committee included another amateur golfer, Wally Helstrom of Shrewsbury, and touring professional, Paul Harvey, who has represented the not yet completed course on the circuit for the past two seasons.

To insure that no maintenance aspects were overlooked two course supt's, Sime Braio of the Worcester (Mass.) CC and Manuel Francis of the Vesper's CC, Lowell, were included on the committee. In the early planning stages Bob Grant, formerly of the Wayne (N.J.) CC and a graduate of the University of Massachusetts greenkeeping course was appointed construction supervisor and permanent Surprenant supt.

Committee, Architect Team Up

From the start, the writer's plans and specifications were closely studied and discussed by the advisory committee, the owner and supt. One result has been that every known skill and technique in growing of golf grass has been utilized so that there are no known constructional defects in greens, tees, fairways or traps. It is the feeling of the architect that although this arrangement involved a great amount of discussion and argument it is lending to the perfection desired by the owner.

Several pioneering features, having a direct bearing on course maintenance, are the results of these discussions:

1. Fairway water system is being set up to pump 700 gpm at 110 lbs. pressure. While this is not too unusual, the entire system except for the main is being made with a special grade of plastic pipe.

2. At each tee and green, parking spaces are provided for electric golf carts.

3. A network of gravelled maintenance
roads is being installed through woods re-
more from playing areas, but all lead to
destinations on the course.
(4) Teeing surfaces average 8,000 sq.
ft, or better. This is about 1½ times the
average green size at many clubs.
(5) Vesper's bent has been planted on
the greens and on a 20 foot apron sur-
rounding each. This is a strain of velvet
average green size at many clubs,
road is being installed through woods re-
years in Dr. DeFranre's plots at the tlni
CC and subsequently tested for several
the greens and on a 20 foot apron sur-
evitably between the two nines.
of terrain has permitted great variation
(5) Vesper's bent has been planted on
golf course, 30 of an old airport, 15 acres
gently rolling terrain, 5.
selctions) used lor the playing areas, club-
includes over,

Plenty of Room Left
Although the Surprenant tract of land
includes over 500 acres only 210 were ac-
tually used for the playing areas, clubhouse grounds and practice areas. Selection
of land was made with variety in mind as to elevations, scenery, terrain and

Included in the 210 acres are 110 of
gently rolling terrain, 35 of an abandoned
golf course, 30 of an old airport, 15 acres
of grazing land and 20 acres of a deserted
turf range. Selection of different types
of terrain has permitted great variation
in the holes and balance has been achieved
by dividing different terrains more or less
evenly between the two nines.

Two landscape features designed per-
sonally by the owner and built by Bob
Grant and his crew include a chain of
small lakes and a picturesque set of rocke-
ries and grottos. The lakes are connected
by landscaped waterfalls placed so that
the falling water catches the light of the
setting sun during the twilight hours of
golf.

Five-In-One
An immense amount of discussion has
arisen among New England golfers as to
the merits of an 8000 yd. course. As critics have pointed out, only a small per-
centage of golfers can possibly enjoy such
yardages. Actually, however, with five sets of tees the Surprenant course is five courses
in one and players can use the set of tee
positions they normally play at their home
courses.

While it is not within the scope of this
article to deal with the overall architecture of
the course or its individual architectural
features a card is shown below to provide
some idea of the variety of golf offered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super</th>
<th>Hole</th>
<th>Champ.</th>
<th>Champ. Long</th>
<th>Reg.</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Par</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The extent to which Massachusetts' new
National course will be the forerunner of
the golf course of the future is anyone's
guess. Many features are revolutionary
and it will be years before their practic-
ability will be adjudged. Surprenant is
an interesting experiment, well worth
watching.

Sound Financing
Financial statement of the Royal Can-
dian Golf Assn. for 1956 shows the Assn.
to be in sound shape. Income exceeded
expenses by $5,219 for the year and in-
creased the surplus to $49,000. However,
total revenue was down from 1955 by
$3,400 while expenses showed a slight in-
crease of $800.

Make Sure Your Club Officials
Receive Golfdom in 1957
See Page 126