

If funds aren't immediately available to build 18 quality holes, a leading golf architect gives this advice . . .

Settle for 9

By GEOFFREY S. CORNISH

BECAUSE numerous golf courses are worth from half to a million dollars or more and even would be a bargain at these prices, many groups contemplating new layouts often feel they could never raise sufficient capital to bring their projects to successful conclusions.

Actually, new courses can be put into play at relatively modest figures with further construction making the investment appreciate over the years. During this same period a qualified golf course supt., backed by correct design and construction, all the maintenance equipment he needs and an adequate budget, will greatly increase the value of the part of the course already built.

One of the first questions to be settled in the earliest organization and planning stage is whether the initial layout is to be 9 or 18 holes. When sufficient funds are available or can be raised it is wise in most cases to strive for 18. But if funds are restricted, 9 quality holes are vastly preferable to an inferior 18, while even 6 holes to start may get the project rolling. Dissipating limited funds for 18 holes can prove disastrous with the final result that there is either no golf course at all or a very mediocre one.

Safe and Sane Program

The following figures illustrate a wise program adopted by one New England club whose committee realized there was a limit to what could be raised. First, the following estimate was prepared:

a. Known cost of 160 acres required for 18 holes	\$ 16,000
b. Estimated cost of building 18 holes	90,000
c. Course furnishings and initial maintenance equipment	5,000
d. Estimated cost of modest clubhouse	60,000
e. Estimated cost of parking lot and very small swimming pool	13,000

f. Expediency figure 10% of b, c, d, and e	16,800
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Total capital required ...\$200,800

Attempting to raise this total was considered an overwhelming task by this particular group. Instead, 9 holes were promoted in line with the following estimates:

a. Known cost of 160 acres land required for 18 holes	\$16,000
b. Estimated cost 9 holes obtaining plans for 18	47,000
c. Course furnishings and initial maintenance equipment	5,000
d. Estimated cost small building to act as temporary clubhouse and later to be used as pro shop	8,000
e. Expediency figure 10% of b, c, and d	6,000

Total capital required ...\$82,000

Although land values vary widely and other groups may require a much more lavish clubhouse than this group had in mind, the above figures provide relative planning data for other committees with restricted funds. Note that sufficient acreage was purchased for 18 holes. Note, too, that plans were drawn for the second nine. This latter point is occasionally overlooked. When the time comes to expand to 18, holes have to be sacrificed at the very time turf on greens and fairways is reaching maximum perfection. Consequent loss is then even greater than the dollars involved.

The New England club has excellent terrain and soil. The estimated \$90,000 provided for a high quality 18 of championship length on this ideal land plus a water system for greens and tees. On less desirable land the cost would be higher as it also would be if a fairway water system was installed. Moreover, exorbitant costs and waste arising from inadequate

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TORO

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planning and natural errors could raise the total far beyond this figure.

Poor choice of land not only increases construction costs but raises future maintenance budgets and more often than not produces an inferior layout. Poor land at bargain prices may be no bargain at all for the cost of preparing it may far exceed the cost of good land.

Taking care to select the right property is worth the time and money involved. More than once a new club has purchased poor land, converted it to a golf course at tremendous expense and then found that all the time an ideal farm was available nearby at a reasonable price.

Some groups reject forested areas. My own experience leads me to believe that when the area is suitable in other respects the forest, though more expensive to clear and prepare for seed, should not be ruled out. In fact, courses cut from the forest have one obvious advantage in that tree bordered fairways add much to a layout.

Clearing costs with modern equipment need not be exorbitant. If slashing and

burning can be left until winter months when there is seldom any fire restriction, and bulldozing of stumps done in late autumn or early spring when heavy equipment is available at low rental, the cost can be even less than in summer.

On newly cleared soil the catch of grass is frequently poor. Therefore, when time permits, a cover crop of cereal rye for winter or buckwheat for summer will be found most valuable for conditioning the raw forest soil for turfgrasses.

The club whose planning figures were given above raised its \$82,000 by issuing shares to 200 members at \$200 each and obtained the balance through low interest bearing bonds. It was felt that 9 holes could accommodate 200 adult male playing members in addition to women and juniors. At first it was thought that 200 shares might be sold for \$410 each or an initiation fee charged for this amount. After surveying the situation, however, the committee found that \$410 was too great for its general membership. In raising capital, new clubs must take into account state and federal regulations and tax laws relative to shares, bonds and initiation fees.

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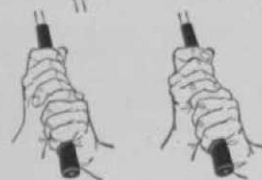
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Some clubs have offset real estate costs by purchasing additional land adjoining their courses and subdividing and selling it. Many have realized the cost of their initial real estate but others found this undertaking did not pay off. Before embarking upon this additional project it is wise to study all factors involved and by all means seek advice of real estate men or others experienced in property valuation and promotion.

Quality Lasts Longer

There's always the chance some groups feel that a skimpy 18 will serve their purpose better than a quality nine. But a manufacturer who cuts the quality of his product because it is enjoying the greatest sales in its history will not have record sales for long. Similarly, with golf layouts, thought must be given to the future and for lasting satisfaction the course must be designed and built well.

If, at first, the problems of raising sufficient funds appear insurmountable it has been demonstrated time and again that where there is a will there is a way. Once started, a fund raising committee composed of resourceful, hard working individuals can make the drive snowball. Without doubt the present era is an excellent time to start a new golf club.

Blunt Heads Western

Carleton Blunt, Chicago attorney and for the last six years chmn. of the Evans Scholars Foundation, was elected pres. of the Western Golf Assn. at its 58th annual meeting. He succeeds James L. O'Keefe.

Elected with Blunt as WGA officers were: Vps: Norman G. Copland, Cameron Eddy, Harold A. Moore and James M. Royer, all of Chicago; Frank H. Hoy, Milwaukee, and George K. Whyte, St. Louis. Secy.: A. R. Garman, Jr., Chicago; Treas. Walter W. Cruttenden, Chicago; Gen'l. Counsel: Lynford Lardner, Jr., Milwaukee.

Squire Sponsors PGA Tourney

PGA Club Championship, scheduled for Feb. 10-15 in Dunedin, Fla. will be sponsored by Squire Slacks, 18 W. 20th st., New York. Squire is offering \$850 in merchandise certificates, redeemable in cash totaling \$500, to the winner and runnerup. The winner of the tournament, if he wears Squire slacks, stands to get an additional \$150 in certificates. Golfers in the tournament also will be competing for the Frank Strazza trophy.