

COUNTRY CLUB LIFE FOR EVERYONE

by JERRY CLAUSSEN

Through a great variety of economical plans, Heather Ridge CC is putting the "good life" within the reach of more people—and profiting from it

Heather Ridge as a "new" image of country club has caused a stir in Denver. Says Heather Ridge golf professional Dick Hartman, "Lots of people are moving here or joining the club who never played golf before. Now they can and at a cost they never thought they could afford. It's the atmosphere they have always wanted."

A golf member, pausing between nines on a frequent midweek round with friends, enthuses, "I spend more time on the golf course than I do in the office and once in a while make more money here, too."

As of last May, the club had signed up about 2,000 members (1,400 non-resident). That included about 300 non-resident golf and 400 non-resident tennis members. The goal is 1,500 golf and 750 tennis.

Residents pay \$12 a year for club membership, plus golf and tennis fees, when they use those facilities. Heather Ridge has four non-resident membership categories. As the living units fill up, non-residents will be dropped, and early joiners will have the longest option.

The choices for non-residents are: golf-tennis-social, \$300 for one adult or a couple, plus \$50 per child under 21 years; golf-social only, \$200 plus \$50 per child; tennis-social, same as golf; social only \$25 plus \$30 annual dues, no extra for children. Annual fees do not include use fees for tennis and golf. Those charges are the same for everyone.

A "FUN COURSE"

The golf course itself is one of the strongest of Heather Ridge's many drawing cards and is different than anything else in Denver. All 27 holes were available for play this year and golfers loved it.

The main 18, playing out of the clubhouse, is a short hazard filled par 70. Length is just 5,879 yards for men from the middle tees and is 5,585 yards for women.

It covers only 93 acres, while winding through apartment buildings and townhouses, over and around five lakes and 50 traps. It starts with a par-three of 190 yards, finishes with a narrow 318-yard par four, has four other par fours under 320 yards and two par fives. Greens are large and difficult to read.

Denver Post golf writer Ralph Moore, who briefly held the back nine course record of 37 on opening day, July 4, 1972, reported the course "treats the player's ego much like the attention a pampered lap dog receives."

His counterpart at the Rocky Mountain News, Dave Nelson, views it as "a fun course which will present a distinct challenge without the demoralizing dimension of length."

Both the front nine of the 18 and the adjoining Heather Gardens executive nine (par 32, 2,220 yards), officially opened Memorial Day this year. The short nine, operating from a separate clubhouse, covers 42 acres of the rolling, sandy terrain overlooking Denver. It is, incidentally, Denver's first executive length course.

VARIED GOLF PROGRAM

The golf program under Hartman offers something for everyone.

For tournament play and a computerized handicap, men may join the Men's Golf Assn. for \$20; women pay \$16 for their association.

Men are grouped into three handicap classes (0 to 10, 11 to 17 and 18 and over). Tournaments go on every Saturday and Sunday. In one recent month, events included three point pars, an 18-hole medal gross and net and a best 18 of 36 net over one three-day weekend. The women are divided between nine-hole and 18-hole players, four handicap groups and compete Tuesdays and Fridays.

Hartman also had extensive group lessons scheduled this year for beginners. Men's and women's



classes, up to 10 at a time, worked on fundamentals in series of five one hour sessions. The fee was \$15 apiece.

The always smiling professional takes a great interest in juniors, too. He conducted two junior lesson series to open the season. One offered six one hour lessons plus six tournaments on Saturday afternoons for \$15. The other consisted of eight half-hour lessons, no tournaments, for \$10. Age groups were 10 to 12, 13 to 15 and 16 to 17.

His individual lessons are priced \$6 per half-hour for members, \$7 for non-members. The practice tee is large and located directly in front of the pro shop next to the number 10 tee.

All golfers, resident, non-resident members or guests, pay green fees of \$1.75 for nine holes on weekdays, \$2.50 weekends and holidays, \$3.50 for 18 holes on weekdays, and \$5 on weekends or holidays.

A member may bring an unlimited number of guests; but each guest may be invited only twice a month. Young people may play any time, the only restriction is that those under 13 years must be accompanied by an adult. Otherwise, there are no time blocks reserved just for men or just for women, except tournaments. Reservations are encouraged by phone before 4 p.m. the day before.

Hartman holds a standard PGA-sanctioned contract with Environmental Developers, Inc., owners of Heather Ridge. He runs the pro shop and club storage, which has room for only 125 bags, rent free. He gets a percentage of the fees from the 45-car electric fleet, all driving range and lessons income and profit from sales in the pro shop.

ACTIVITIES NON-STOP

The clubhouse at Heather Ridge is a modern, two story brick-and-glass structure of 25,000 square feet. The dining room is upstairs and has a capacity of about 225, lounge seating 70, kitchen and offices.



Pro Dick Hartman, above, practices in front of the pro shop. The entrance, below, of this "new image" of country club.

Downstairs are the swimming pool, saunas, locker rooms and golf shop.

Activities are coordinated by General Manager James Gatewood; the new Heather Gardens clubhouse has its own general manager, Wayne Bishop. They both report to EPI Vice President Norman Sheldon.

Food and beverage operations are leased out to a concessionaire. Club manager is Jack Fishburn, formerly at Lakewood (Colo.) CC. He and Chev Joseph Thurston came from Lakewood to Heather Ridge when the clubhouse opened in November, 1971.

Food service for members and their guests is available from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5:30 to 10 p.m., everyday except Monday. Volume runs about 2,000 covers a week, Fishburn reports. Reservations are requested. There is no monthly minimum use charge.

Sandwiches and à la carte items are available in the afternoon. The menu offers variety—30 selections for lunch alone. Wednesday is buffet night, with themes such as Polynesian Nite and Fiesta Nite. Sunday brunch is served 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. There is live music and dancing in the dining room on Friday and Saturday nights, and nightly entertainment in the lounge.

The club does not solicit outside party business. Members may arrange for private events Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights or weekend mornings or afternoons. Minimum size of such an event is set at 100 persons.

All tabs must be paid in cash, by personal check or through one of three specified credit cards. No signing for later billing is allowed.

Along with golf, tennis is a major attraction to a growing membership. Near the clubhouse is a complex of 10 lighted outdoor courts surrounding a large

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hangar-like pavilion housing five indoor courts. The indoor courts played 90 per cent capacity last winter.

The fee schedule is different for winter and summer, prime or non-prime time and indoors or outdoors. Outdoors, court charges are \$2 an hour weekdays after 6 p.m. and all day weekends and holidays, or \$19 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays. Indoors in winter, rates are \$6 an hour weekdays until 6 p.m., \$8 an hour at night and on weekends. Half rates apply indoors for the five summer months.

A staff of seven professionals, three year-around, is headed by Dr. Irwin Hoffman. The pavilion houses a well-stocked, although small, shop, and the new wing of locker rooms added last spring.

The swimming program also is extensive. Classes include beginning swimming for children, advanced classes, adult "learn to

swim," mother tot, water survival, life saving, diving and swimming teams. Hours are 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. in summer, indoors year-around. Aquatic Director Ruthie Seylmaker heads a staff of 12 in winter, 25 in summer. Open swimming is free to members, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. indoors, 12:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. outdoors. Guests pay \$1 weekdays, \$2 weekends.

A variety of other kinds of recreation and classes is headed up by Activity Director Cathy Hepler. Members are kept informed about these events by regular newsletters and calendar reminders.

For adults, there are bridge classes and competition, painting, exercising, yoga, arts and crafts, theater and concert parties, lectures, fashion shows, movies and ski trips.

A child day care center for ages one and up is available Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The summer youth program in-

cludes horseback riding, sailing, roller skating, bowling, ballet, macramé, bachelor survival courses, baton and cheerleading classes, charm and modeling courses.

They all add up to the reason Heather Ridge is such an attractive way of life, why people of all ages move to and/or join such a club. Golfers and non-golfers alike can appreciate the good life as described in this Heather Ridge brochure:

"We've created a place for you here that's unlike any other country club in Colorado. Heather Ridge has been built on the basic premise that trees are prettier than cars; that grass is nicer than pavement; that a good time is always twice as good when it happens in beautiful surroundings. . . . Add the sheer physical exhilaration of a hard-won game of golf or tennis or a sun soaked afternoon of relaxation . . . and you'll know what makes Heather Ridge a very extraordinary place indeed." □



Tennis at Heather Ridge is inexpensive and popular, and players are well served by this attractive shop.

THE HISTORY AND FUTURE OF HEATHER RIDGE

The original plan called for Heather Ridge's 320 acres to be used for rental apartments. Market studies made in the late 1960s showed that more apartments would be needed in Denver, so the community was planned to accommodate 4,000 units in 135 buildings.

In the last two years the market changed. After 741 apartments were completed—about 90 per cent rented—the original plans were revised to include townhouse development. Future construction, phased over the next five years, will be geared solely to townhouses.

Of the first section of 176 townhouses, 90 per cent were sold before

completion. Advertising was minimal. More effective was word of mouth promotion of the new concept with lots of amenities at low prices.

Prices for townhouses range from \$23,000 to \$29,000 for smaller units in one section, to \$33,000 to \$45,000 for large units in another. Units facing the golf course fairways cost \$4,500 more than those off the course. Monthly apartment rentals go from \$186 for a buffet unit to \$575 for a three bedroom unit.

One unique feature of the community plan is the grouping of "neighborhoods" for residents with similar interests. Each will have its own swimming pool and barbecue/picnic area. Some will even have children's play areas.

By 1978 Heather Ridge will house about 15,000 people, predicts Howard Farkas, president of Environmental Developers, Inc., the owner. Affiliated with Transunion Corp. of Chicago, EDI is building seven other new communities, including two in Chicago and one in Phoenix.

More than \$100 million will be spent at Heather Ridge by the end of the decade. Future amenities will include a shopette, movie theater and ice skating rink. More than \$2 million was spent even before the first apartment was occupied. The designed team was made up of three engineers, land planner, architect and golf course architect Richard Phelps of Denver.