Tennis: the 20th hole

There was a time when a private golf club could be launched and thrive with installation of roughly 6,600 yards of greensward and 18 flags. But it was soon discovered that a 19th hole, including locker room and grill as well as tap, was almost mandatory. Today, it seems no less imperative that the facility include tennis courts.

The economic need for the modern club to serve as a family recreational center has combined with the upsurge in the popularity of tennis to make the tennis court an essential "20th hole." Many of the most conservative old-line clubs have felt the need to add tennis to insure the recruitment of new, younger members and the increased utilization of all other club facilities. And it now seems no less imperative that the facility include tennis courts.

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Typical of the pattern is the handsome Rolling Hills Golf and Racquet Club in Montgomery, Ala. This 1,000-acre development along Byron Nelson Blvd. opened in 1976 with one 18-hole course and six all-weather tennis courts. The latter are of the Chevron Laykold surfacing system and are lighted for nighttime play with Chevron's lighting system, which provides an even diffusion of light with no glare, hot spots or stroboscopic effect.

According to principal owner Hugh Smith, these courts were selected for their durability and minimal maintenance under heavy use and in all climatic conditions. "Following a cloudburst," said Smith, "they dry in half an hour, and the only care they've required is an occasional sweeping off of leaves."

In less than 2 years, Rolling Hills has achieved a membership of 350 and expects to reach its optimum of 700 by 1980. So far, 200 homesites abutting the golf course have been developed, and a total of 800 are planned for completion over the next 10 years.

As projected expansion is realized, space has been reserved for a second 18-hole golf course and an additional 20 tennis courts. "Even that may not be the end of it," said Smith. "With a metropolitan population of 400,000, Montgomery is the fastest growing city in Alabama."

Rolling Hills is the ninth private country club in the area. "In starting a new club today," said Smith, "you have to compete for all of the family's recreational demands, and in planning your facilities, the inclusion of tennis is an absolute necessity."