

# Public Links Grow At Lively, Paying Gait

THE Public Links Section of the United States Golf association has just issued the fourth annual edition of the booklet, "*Municipal Golf Courses in the United States*," containing statistical information.

Unfortunately some authorities failed to give figures with regard to the cost of operation, but returns supplied by officials in charge of 198 courses show the expenditure of \$2,717,230. Statistics are missing from 78 courses with respect to the number of rounds played annually, but the total for 191 courses, during the year 1929, shows that 11,627,211 rounds were played. Many of the courses have no green fee charge, and others provide an all day fee which allows the holder to unlimited play, and no attempt is made to keep a record of the rounds. If the fee throughout the United States was a standard one of twenty-five cents, even at that low rate the annual income would more than offset the amount given as cost of operation. As indicative of the increase this form of sport is annually showing, it might be of interest to state that in 1926 the Public Links Section in reviewing the statistics for the preceding year, stated that the total number of rounds played on 120 city courses was 5,744,104. Four years later, with the addition of 71 courses, this total is more than doubled. Few courses are not self-supporting.

Some courses with sand greens show maintenance and operation costs as low as \$1,000, while one course of twenty-seven holes, with grass greens, states its annual cost of operation is \$65,000.

Playing fees range from five cents a round of nine holes on a course with sand greens, to 50 cents a round for the same number of holes on courses with grass greens. Eighteen-hole charges are as low as 25 cents and on a few courses as high as \$1.50. A number of courses have an all-day rate and this varied from 50 cents to \$1.00. Annual or season tickets are as low as \$3.00 for an adult to \$60.00, which will provide for a family permit. Some courses maintain a twilight play rate, which allows about two and one-half hours,

and this charge is usually one-third of the regular rate. On a number of courses, fees for playing on Saturday afternoon, Sunday and holidays are double the charges for week days. In order to encourage playing by school children, some of the cities provide free playing while others offer a special fee. The city of Dallas, Texas, maintains a free course for juniors.

## Courses Self-Supporting

The city of Portland, Oregon, operates three golf courses, two of eighteen holes and one nine-hole course. The 1929 returns show that the total number of rounds played on the three courses was 303,790. The city receives 30 cents per round of nine holes, and it is evident that these courses are in no sense a burden to the taxpayer of that city. The Milwaukee County Park board operates four eighteen-hole courses that call for an annual expenditure of more than \$70,000, and are self-supporting. Atlanta, Ga., is now completing its fifth city course to be known as the "Bobby Jones Golf Course"; Grand Rapids, Mich., maintains four golf courses. The first venture was a nine-hole course of 868 yards, constructed mainly to see if the city was ready for this form of sport and also demonstrate whether a course could be operated without being a burden to the taxpayer. During the first year of its operation, it netted a profit of \$3,000, and this on a course that didn't have a hole long enough to warrant the use of a wooden club.

Detroit, Mich., in 1929 opened its fifth city course, and the grand total of rounds played on the five courses during 1929 was 405,151. Rockford, Ill., maintains three eighteen-hole courses with a season rate for adults of \$3.00, and juniors \$2.00. The city of Indianapolis is operating six courses. In 1929 the city of Concord, N. H., took over a private course known as the Seaver Meadow Golf club, and will operate it as a city activity. Denver, Colo., continues to hold the honor of operating the longest golf course, the City Park lay-out being 6,767 yards.