



The ninth green at Saltville is elevated and well trapped and makes a fine finishing hole

Small Town Club Prides Self on Good Golf at Low Cost

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PERHAPS one of the most economically operated 9-hole golf courses in the United States is that maintained by the Saltville (Va.) Golf club. From a start that was truly "cow pasture pool" this small organization has developed a course that compares favorably in hazards, fairways and greens with clubs having several hundred members and a maintenance budget of many times that of the Saltville club.

Saltville is in Smyth county, in the bluegrass section of southwestern Virginia. Luscious bluegrass covers the hills and valleys almost the year around and enables cattle raisers to produce for export some of the finest cattle raised in the United States.

Located in the heart of Saltville is a 25-acre tract—1,600 feet above sea level—flat as a billiard table and surrounded by hills rising several hundred feet. This choice pasture, well drained, holds moisture a

long time and produces natural bluegrass in abundant quantity.

Golf Comes to Saltville.

In 1925, someone dug out an old golf club and a few balls, took himself to the pasture, and played with himself some variation of the game of golf. A friend joined him, then another, and another—until eight or ten were knocking the few balls around. They played real cow pasture pool. Someone donated a lawn mower and they mowed three smooth places which they termed "greens"—the cups being tomato cans sunk in the ground. Then they took up a collection among themselves and employed someone to cut out some narrow strips by hand—these they called "fairways." To protect the "greens" from gazing cattle a barbed wire fence was erected around each green. Tailor bills began to mount as the golfers

to re their clothes going through the wire to "get on the green."

Saltville is the home of the Mathieson Alkali Works' southern plant and practically all the would-be golfers belonged to the staff of that organization. Fortunately the cow pasture chosen for the golf course was the property of this company and the local management agreed to let the golfers use this land without charge. The cattle were withdrawn to other fields and real plans for golf formulated.

Change to Bent Greens.

During 1926 one hole was added, making four; then two more were added in 1927. A hand greens mower was purchased and natural greens were made merely by cutting the bluegrass short. They were level and smooth, and possessed some qualities that even good bent greens do not have—no water was necessary, there was no brown-patch or other disease to contend with, they did not need continual topdressing and fertilization—and they held a good shot. But all clubs must go modern and will finally have their bent greens—and in 1929 three holes were added, greens rebuilt, and planted with bent grass.

A second-hand tractor that had been purchased was pressed into further service in cutting out new fairways, a rough mower was attached to the tractor, and new fairways and rough developed by cutting and rolling. The course was virtually rebuilt, 9 greens and a nursery planted, and power greens mower and other equipment purchased—all for an expenditure under \$2,000. Everything done was with the view of saving time and labor; and how well plans have worked out is attested by a present total maintenance and labor cost of \$1,200 per year.

Modest Design Holds Costs Down.

Greens were built and planted at a cost of \$100 each. They were purposely made small—averaging 50x60 feet—to reduce maintenance cost. They are kept weeded with little expense and inexpensive rotary sprinklers water the greens amply without continual moving from one spot to another. A sprinkler set in the center of any green will throw water to all parts. Cutting time with a power mower is but 5 to 10 minutes to the green—3 hours for the nine greens and nursery—and the small greens bring savings in the use of fertilizers, brown-patch preventive, worm eradicator, and other materials.

To make fairways all we had to do was

to mow the grass. The ground was smooth and wonderful fairways have been developed merely by cutting and rolling. It is not necessary to add fertilizer of any kind for the bluegrass grows so quickly that fairways must be mowed twice each week. The narrow fairways, 100 to 125 feet wide, can be mowed by a tractor and 3-unit gang mower in 7 hours. Six holes run parallel to each other—a strip of rough 25 feet wide separating the fairways; so the rough between fairways presents but a small problem in cutting and this rough is cut each week. We have considerable rough in front of the tees on some holes, and this is cut about once every two weeks.

The greens are topdressed but 3 times a year, spring, summer and fall. We are bothered with brown-patch only during two weeks of July and the usual prompt treatment once or twice has always resulted in elimination of this within a very short time. We spread our summer topdressing shortly after the brown-patch first appears in order to bring the greens back to normal more quickly. All attacks of brown-patch have been light and play has not been interrupted.

Has Few Artificial Hazards.

The course has few sand traps, in fact, only the first, second and ninth greens are trapped. All others are open—their small size being a hazard in themselves.

There is one water hole, and one hole has 75 yards of rough at a point 250 yards from the tee. Here is the layout:

Hole 1. 279 yards, par 4. All fairway, except ditch 200 yds. from tee. Green trapped on back and sides.

Hole 2. 312 yards, par 4. Rough and high bunker between trees for 75 yds. from tee. Ditch 150 yds. Green trapped same as No. 1.

Hole 3. 230 yards, par 3. Rough 75 yds., then uphill to elevated green. Slight slice goes out of bounds.

Hole 4. 567 yards, par 5. Rough 150 yds. from tee. Ditch 400 yds. from tee catches many second shots.

Hole 5. 558 yards, par 5. Ditch 250 yds. from tee. Water to left of tee will catch misdirected shot. Fairway narrow near green.

Hole 6. 425 yards, par 4. 100 yds. of rough, then 150 yds. of fairway; then 75 yds. of rough before striking last 100 yds. fairway.

Hole 7. 153 yards, par 3. Across water 100 yds. Fairway 120 ft. wide. Any ball not in fairway considered out of bounds.

Hole 8. 200 yards, par 3. 125 yds. of rough, 75 yds. fairway.

Hole 9. 293 yards, par 4. 50 yds. of rough in front of tee; then fairway to well-trapped elevated green.

Total yardage 3,017, par 35.

The large amount of rough in front of almost every tee practically kills any topped shot. Where on many courses a topped ball will roll from 100 to 200 yds., on the Saltville course most topped balls come to rest 25 yds. from the tee in very deep and thick rough. The flat damp course gives little roll and the rough is really rough—thick bluegrass. These natural hazards make the course far from easy, as attested by a 78 (for 18 holes) turned in by the only professional who has played the course, and a record of 80 for club members.

One-Man Crew is Sufficient.

One man maintains the course except when weeding or topdressing is being done. This is possible only because of power operated machinery—rough, fairway and greens mowers being operated by gasoline engines. When we first put the 9-hole course into play it took a man a full day to cut the greens by hand—with a power mower he does this in 3 hours.

His time is occupied about as follows:

	Hrs. per week
<i>Fairways—Cut twice a week</i>	14
<i>Greens—Cut 3 times</i>	9
<i>Rough—Cut once a week</i>	9½
<i>Tees, Approaches</i>	5
<i>Topdressing, weeding, nursery, repairs</i>	15
	52½

During the winter the groundkeeper repairs all machinery, and also finds time to plant and work a nursery in which we now have more than 1,000 seedling evergreens and shrubs which will be used in beautifying the course. Likewise, topdressing is prepared during the winter for the following year, drainage repaired and enlarged.

We have but 20 members. No dues are charged but each player contributes \$5.00 per month for maintenance.

We do not have a championship course, but we do have one of which we are proud and one which we take pride in showing to any visitor. The course is open to everyone, but as we are off the main highway of travel our green-fee collections will not amount to \$100 a year. But a 3,000 yard golf course for the use of but 20 members! Try and beat that!

Massachusetts Short Course Runs January 4 to March 14

MASSACHUSETTS State College's sixth winter school for greenkeepers is scheduled to open January 4, and close March 14, 1932. Registrations have been received from the mid-west, south to Virginia, New York, and the New England states.

Courses to be given are the same as last year, namely: Grasses, Soils, Cost Keeping and Analysis, Equipment, Botany, Drainage, Water Systems, Managerial Problems, and Landscape Appreciation. The duration of the course is ten weeks. Better equipment and laboratory space is to be provided and an exceptionally well balanced program of outside speakers is being arranged.

The winter course for greenkeepers at the Massachusetts State College now has over ninety graduates. A number of these graduates have applied for a course giving advanced work and an opportunity for directed problem study. As the State College was first to offer a school for greenkeepers, so it is going to be the first to offer an advanced school for greenkeepers.

The advanced school will be conducted at the same time as the regular school, and will be open only to those who have graduated from the regular school. Enough applications have already been received to make the course a very promising one. The two schools will bring together for the 10 weeks, 35 men whose ages will vary from 22 years to 50 years, and experience in golf course maintenance from two years to 20 years.

These schools are conducted by the Short Course department, R. H. Verbeck, director, and are under the immediate supervision of Professor Lawrence S. Dickinson.

Public Play Over Private Links for Richmond Charity Fund

THREE OUTSTANDING private clubs of the Richmond (Va.) district, Hermitage, Lakeside and C. C. of Virginia, pulled off a novel stunt during November as their contribution to the local community chest fund. The links of these exclusive organizations were thrown open on announced days for play by the general public. A uniform green fee of \$1.00 was charged.

According to news accounts, the public responded heartily.