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## Fee and Public Course Growth Brings Calls for Information

**A**CTIVITY IN public and fee course construction has been the feature of the last two seasons' growth in golf courses. During July this year, GOLFDOM learned of 119 public or commercial courses that were opened, and the list undoubtedly did not include some of the smaller towns. Although August figures are incomplete at this writing, advices of the opening of 72 public and fee courses have been received by this publication. The August figure is astounding because that month usually is regarded as too late for the inaugural of new courses.

It is apparent that the 1932 development of the field will see a number of new public and fee courses opened to operate along lines that will mark an advance in types and methods. During the past two months GOLFDOM has been kept busy digging up information for people interested in starting new courses. It has been rather interesting to note the letters received from real estate operators and from the owners of farm property convenient to towns and cities. Some of these farm owners are due for a pleasant financial surprise during hard times in agriculture if they use their heads and have reasonable luck. One case of a couple of boys who owned a farm about three miles from the city limits of a fair-sized mid-Western city may be cited as an example. For two years these boys were barely able to pay taxes on their property. They dug up some dough, hired an architect who laid out nine holes and did a good part of their construction work with farm labor under the architect's supervision. This year they have been taking in from \$600 to \$700 a week at 50-cent, 75-cent and \$1 rates. Much of the play is new to golf. A young pro who is a business getter is a good part of this answer to the farm relief problem.

### Need Golf Plant Managers

One of the obvious needs of many of the proposed plants is experienced operators. There is a future in this part of the game for men who are competent professionals, good supervising greenkeepers and cheerful supervisors of house opera-

tion. These men must be primarily sales managers of golf. There are some excellent men available for such work in pro ranks today, but the owners of the new plants seem to have a phobia on the subject of paying a pro-manager-superintendent-sales manager any money, or making it possible for him to get an inviting income as his share of the profits. It probably will cost the fee courses and municipalities plenty before the fallacy of this reluctance is realized.

**Ask Leading Questions**

Michigan is coming to the fore as a grand state for public courses. It has several notable municipal courses in operation by men who are constantly striving to make their operations models. These men are on the hunt for information. Two letters of inquiry GOLFDOM recently has received pass in review here, and we trust that among our readers there will be a number who will come to the aid of the inquirers.

A. E. Genter, director of Recreation, Pontiac, Mich., asks the answers to some of the problems at Pontiac and will appreciate hearing from those who have successfully contended with such problems in their operation of municipal courses.

Mr. Genter inquires:

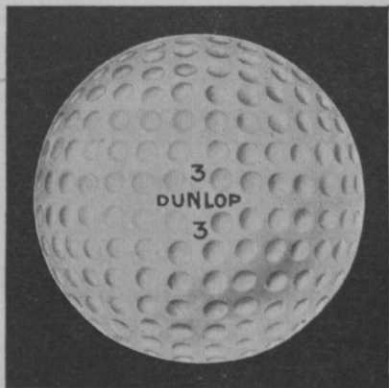
1. *Where you are handling 400 rounds a day is it good policy to try to keep the course as good as a private course?*
2. *Should improvements be made in the spring, summer or fall?*
3. *What type of clubhouse is most desirable for a municipal course? Are showers and locker facilities desirable?*
4. *What is the best method of handling the fees taken in?*
5. *Should golf clubs be sold by the city?*
6. *Should a professional be employed?*
7. *What fees are charged?*
8. *What are maintenance costs per nine holes; per 18 holes?*
9. *What is the best method of handling capacity play?*

Although questions pertaining to costs are almost impossible to handle with any degree of practical help, GOLFDOM took a stab at answering the other questions with fair directness. Probably some of the answers will provoke arguments but, anyway, here they are:

1. Yes, I would certainly try to keep the course up to private course condition, with the exception of the greens, which should be longer. About the only place

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**50¢**

you will have serious trouble will be at the tees. It is almost impossible to preserve good grass tees at municipal courses. This Paratex Tee is about as near to the answer of municipal course tee maintenance as I have seen. It takes a little supervision and education to get the players to replace divots and keep from throwing the flag and the bags on the greens, but this doesn't mean such a serious problem.

2. By all means improvements should be made in the fall as play is letting up then and you can put the remainder of the play on temporary tees or greens without very much inconvenience. You can also take advantage of the fall and early spring growing conditions so that the improvements will be all ready for play when the new season opens.

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3. Showers and locker facilities are desirable at municipal courses. Of course, in a town like Pontiac where most of the people can reach the course quickly from their homes, you don't have to go very extensively into the shower and locker facilities. Half-size lockers sufficient for storing coats and trousers folded and street shoes are sufficient. Arrangements should be made for the eventual installation of some locker and shower facilities for the women, as it seems almost certain that inside of the next eight years as many women as men will be playing golf.

Frequently the municipal club house can make excellent use of facilities for parties or general community meetings. However, not much money should be tied up in feeding equipment and service. Usually neat soda fountain lunch counters and a few tables are sufficient.

4. The safest method of handling fees is to have cash register receipts issued for the fees and these receipts to be shown to the starter and carried by the players. Burroughs and N. C. R. make cash registers especially adapted for this purpose.

Due to the generally isolated location of the municipal courses, it is advisable to have a small floor or wall safe like many service stations have. The cashier does not have a key to this safe, but should put in all amounts over \$20. The safest practice seems to be to have one of the motorcycle policemen of the city pick up the fees at about 4:30 every day, together with whatever cash the course wants to bank.

5 and 6. Golf clubs should not be sold by the city. A professional should be employed and the sale of clubs, balls and other accessories and lessons will go in a considerable way toward paying his salary. By giving the pro the concession on merchandise sales you can get a good pro who will be an active factor in the proper management and operation of the course and a real developer of playing interest and service. A number of cases could be cited of municipal courses where interest



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has lagged due to the absence of a good pro. A good pro who is on the job will arrange group class lessons free as a civic proposition, attract a lot of people to the course and naturally develop considerable green fee income, as well as private lessons and sales for himself by this work. In this way the municipal course can get a good fellow who is practically a sales manager for the course and a very valuable ally for the director of recreation. The fellow can and will run tournaments and in general keep on the job, stirring up interest and play. It is necessary to pick a man who really knows his stuff instead of some of the youngsters without pro experience, but who are eager for pro jobs as they think the position gives them a certain standing and plenty of opportunity for play.

7. The fees charged at municipal courses range all the way from 15c a 9-hole round to \$1.50 an 18-hole round. The specific data on this may be obtained from the statistical information on municipal golf courses issued by the Public Links Section of the U. S. Golf Association, 110 E. 42nd St., New York. Special rates for monthly tickets and twilight rounds and Saturdays and Sundays are charged at a number of the courses.

8. No specific figures are available on maintenance costs. The annual maintenance charges of the course alone run all the way from \$4,000 for 9-hole courses to \$21,000 for 18-hole courses. Figures on the entire operating expenses are available from the municipal golf course booklet of the U. S. Golf Association referred to in Paragraph 7.

Generally the municipal golf courses are self-supporting and frequently their income, even at the low rates, is sufficient to take care of increase of the course from 9 to 18 holes and construction of new club  
(Continued on page 63)

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It is possible with this implement to perforate putting greens to a depth of two and one-half inches without disturbing to any appreciable extent the smooth surface required of these areas, say its makers, who add that the feat is impossible with the ordinary spiked roller of the fixed spike type. This is made possible by the oscillative members in which the knives are set. These units, by their oscillative motion, allow the spikes or knives to enter the turf in a practically perpendicular position and as the central unit passes over this knife-bearing unit the knives are forced their full depth into the ground and then withdrawn in this same perpendicular position thereby preventing the usual lever action which picks up the turf and roughens the surface.

### Fee Courses Ask for Some Answers *(Continued from page 49)*

buildings, as well as the purchase of considerable first-class course maintenance equipment.

9. The best method of handling capacity play is to have the starter arrange foursomes at four-minute teeing-off intervals. Occasionally when people are holding up foursomes it is advisable to have course rangers ask the dilatory ones to permit others to play through. Reservations are made either at the starting tee or at some convenient point downtown for Saturday, Sunday and holiday starting times.

About the only tough part of this municipal golf course operation is that some of the starters indulge in petty graft in allotting starting time preference. However, I would say as a general thing, the

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sincerity, honesty and ability evidenced in the operation of municipal golf courses is probably the most conspicuous exhibition of these virtues to be seen in any department of municipal affairs.

### Want Help Here

Charles M. Leeson, of the William and Matilda Sparks Foundation, Inc., Jackson, Mich., writes GOLFDOM as follows:  
*Gentlemen:*

*"We are constructing, on a 475-acre tract of land a park which will be donated to the people of Jackson when completed.*

*"One feature of the development is an 18-hole golf course of championship caliber. The course has been completed and will be opened to the public about May 1st of next year. At present we are planning the clubhouse, and I am writing you for any information you can give me that might help us in planning an ideal clubhouse.*

*"Our present plans include a first-class cafe—and, in view of the fact that the land includes rather extensive orchards and gardening and poultry raising facilities—we are planning to raise most of the food served.*

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"I am including a short questionnaire which I would like to send to any clubs or public courses who might give us some information, and if it is not too much trouble, I wish you would send us a list of golf course superintendents or green-chairmen who might be willing to help us in this way.

"Any information you can give us in this respect will be greatly appreciated."

Names of officials of several courses were given to Mr. Leeson, and if any others will advise him, the help will be welcomed. The questions from Jackson are:

**CLUBHOUSE**

Do you serve food in your clubhouse?  
What facilities do you have for serving food?

Do you consider meal service a paying proposition in your club?

What are the duties of your clubhouse manager?

What features do you have in your clubhouse which you would recommend for incorporation in a new building?

What features do you have in your clubhouse which you would not recommend?

Are there any features which you do not have and which you feel should be built in a new club?

**GOLF COURSE**

What fees do you charge for 18 holes?  
How many men do you use to operate the course?

What are the duties of your greenkeeper, professional, starter and caddy-master?

What are the size of your greens?  
How much water do you use in sprinkling your course?

Do you sprinkle fairways?  
What is your seasonal maintenance cost?

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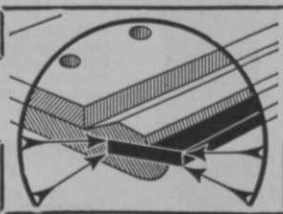
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