

MUNY GOLFERS TELL ALL

*Chicago park players interviewed
to determine operating policies*

AMONG the most significant developments of 1937 in golf was the extension of research in municipal golf. There is still a debate as to whether the golf business will thrive most substantially on the basis of featuring the top steps of its social scale or by pushing the game strongest among the "common peepul." To get the true picture of its market and data for future development, public course officials and pros in several territories have been compiling and studying cursory data with increasing seriousness during the last four years.

This year the Chicago Parks golf organization, headed by Harry O'Hare and Tom Walsh, made its first survey of representative players by having a tactful and well-known public parks golfer hand questionnaires to players and interview numerous patrons of the Jackson, Lincoln, Columbus and Marquette park courses.

Although data secured is by no means complete on the tremendous volume of play at Chicago public courses, it represents the first definite material secured and as such will govern the Parks golf operating policy.

Park Golf in Quick Recovery

It is evident from the Chicago figures that public golf is recovering strongly from the depression. During the boom period of 1927-29 many new golfers came into park play, according to the indications of the Chicago survey. Amusement or some factor other than health accounts for the public parks player taking up the game in almost three out of four cases, reveals the Chicago survey. More than half the Chicago parks players play all their golf on the municipal course. Over 70% of parks players have never received a golf lesson. Less than half the players have read any book about golf playing or the rules of golf.

Approximately half the Chicago parks players use the courses only once a week or less. Almost 27% play twice a week. A few more than 1% play daily.

Interesting data on the possible club market among public course players is presented in the figures showing that the majority of Chicago parks players carry 6 clubs. Then in order come groups that

carry 7, 8, 5, 9, 10, 4, 12, 11, 14 and 13 clubs. Several players carried only 3 clubs and an equal number carry 15 or more.

More than half of the parks players have attended no golf championship. Almost three out of four Parks players have never competed in a golf tournament.

Golfers who score 100 to 110 comprise the largest group in Chicago public course scoring. After them in the following order come these groups: in the 90s, in the 80s, 110 to 120, over 120, in the 70s.

Looking around for a selling point perhaps for women's golf, the Chicago Parks asked their players, "Do you find that golf reduces your weight?" The answer was "no" in 74% of the cases, "yes" with the rest of the players.

Largest numbers of parks players at Chicago reported in the 25-29 age classification. Other age classes ran, in order, as follows: 20-24, 30-34, 35-39, 15-19, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 60-64 and 10-14, tied, 65-69 and 55-59.

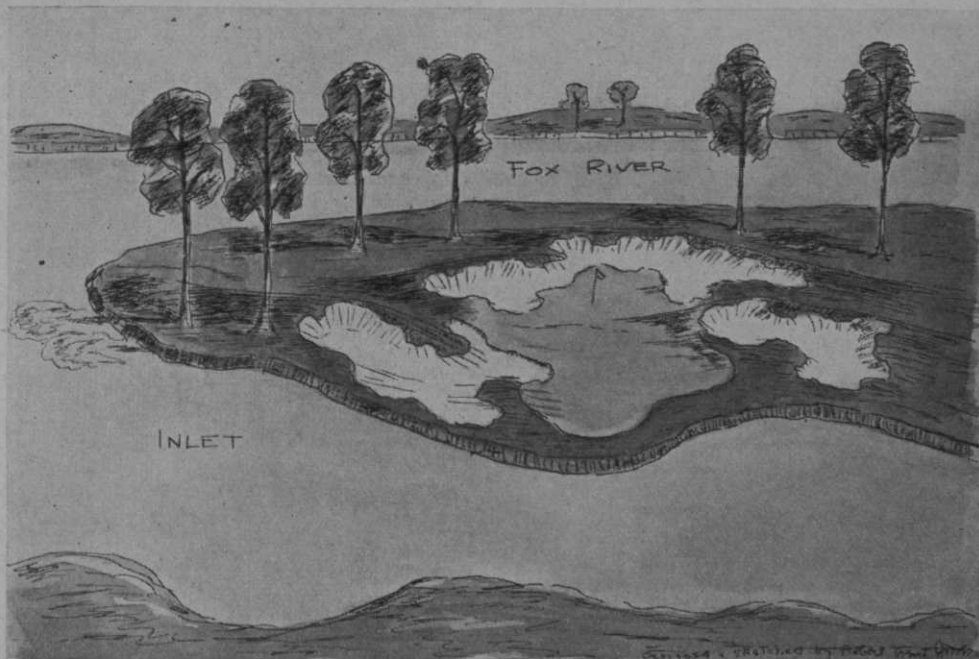
Who Says It's a Social Game

Sixty-five per cent reported they did not start golf for social reasons, which may be the parks players' answer to the golf business interests who believed that the "society" phase of golf is responsible for bringing most of the general public into the game. However, the nature of such a question does not promise a profound accuracy in the answers.

O'Hare and Walsh asked the customers for kicks and suggestions. Suggestion boxes, known to the players as "bird cages" were put in prominent locations at each course.

Here are some of the suggestions indicating that operating municipal courses is a job requiring tireless and experienced men:

Stop boys lurking in bushes and stealing balls. Have rangers speed up play Saturday and Sundays. Keep kids and beginners off the courses Saturday and Sundays; kids have other days to play.



Some interesting golf holes have been put in at public golf courses at smaller towns since WPA money has been given to these enterprises. Here's the approach to the green on the 330-yard dogleg third hole designed by Robert Trent Jones for the new muny course at St. Charles, Ill. The Fox river inlet is about 80 feet wide at the point shown.

Among developments of the year has been reconstruction of numerous holes at smaller clubs to take better advantage of beautiful and interesting natural hazards.

Build 9-hole course for beginners. Issue rain checks for days when course is out of play. Don't have temporary greens. Fix up a practice net. Instruct players to lay bags at side of green, instead of in front, thus speed up play. Get pro-shops for service and convenience like private clubs. Give locker renters towels, even if the locker charge is increased.

Turn off sprinklers earlier so the 5 A. M. players won't get drenched. Stop people driving through without warning. Build screens around exposed tees. Bar negroes. Install new mats at practice tees. "Us caddies want 50 cents for 9 holes." We want better-trained better-disciplined caddies. Build a practice putting green. Put in more sand traps. Number the flags. Put in more drinking fountains. Put soap in ball washers. Make slow or ball-hunting players let others play through. Make players replace divots. Install practice space for those who are awaiting turns to play. Permit players to sign for time by mail, with fee enclosed. Fence in the course. Air-condition the cafe.

Challenge Accepted—The challenge of the six Leonard brothers, pros, to any other six-brother team of golfers has been

picked up by Earl Fry, pro at the Alameda, Calif., muny course. Earl says that he, Mark and their 3 brothers accept the defi, and leave it to the Leonards to work out a satisfactory basis of pitting the 5 Frys against the 6 Leonards. Earl Fry adds that if the Leonards want to make an entry in the cousin class, the Fry boys have 6 cousins ranging from 12 to 14 years of age, who make up the ace kid golf team.

SPORTS and Pastimes committee of the North Shore GC (Chicago district) schedules one Saturday a season in recognition of its pro, the veteran Alex Cunningham. In each foursome there are North Shore club members and one pro guest. Last year's Cunningham day as put on by the club was such a success that the 1937 play had to be limited to the first 150 members applying. A number of leading pros from outside the Chicago district took part in the playing event and in the dinner which concluded the affair.

A club bulletin announcing the 1937 affair, advised: "This year Alex is a candidate for the office of president of the PGA and the day will be a fitting tribute to him."