

Stanford U. Runs Course Ably

By Franklin D. Guthrie

THE operation and maintenance of a university-run golf course presents its own peculiar problems just the same as difficulties encountered by private courses. The Stanford University GC is no exception. The board of athletic control of the university, whose major task is to make football a paying proposition, has discovered in 10 years of operating and maintaining its golf club that it has taken on another major problem in balancing the income and expenses.

However, it will be necessary to explain here that when William P. Bell of Los Angeles, nationally famous golf architect, was hired to lay out the course in 1929, there never was any other purpose in mind than that of providing a course for Stanford students, alumni, and faculty as well as for general university benefit. It was never designed or intended to become a money-making venture, although the authorities had every reason to believe that it would pay for itself when it was built, not foreseeing the depression. Its first two years of operation it netted over \$12,000 profit, but from 1932 to 1939 it had a net deficit ranging from \$10,169 to \$3,634.

Although the course was intended primarily to benefit students, alumni, and faculty, outsiders have been encouraged to take out non-proprietary membership. However, from the club's inception in 1929, the membership has consisted chiefly of golfing alumni in Palo Alto, Calif., and in the San Francisco Bay region. Each year alumni and occasional course players are solicited by the board of athletic control for playing privilege memberships at \$90 per year.

As far as possible Stanford GC has

attempted to operate on a private basis. With only 175 members last year—a figure which has been increasing steadily since the depression, the board has been unable to make it strictly private and close it to the public. No effort has ever been made to hold public tournaments of any kind except collegiate matches on the course, since it would defeat the Board's purpose of keeping the course semi-private. Alfred M. Masters, graduate manager and the course's general manager, has every intention of turning it into a private course when the club's membership gets back into the 200 figure. At the present the major effort is to regain the membership the course enjoyed in 1931-32.

The club went into operation January 1, 1930, after six months of laying out the course over 240 acres of university property about a mile from the campus.

The second year it derived \$26,633 from its membership, but it dropped off to less than a fourth of that in three fiscal years. This past fiscal year the membership climbed to over a half of the all-time high with a total income of \$14,389. The total deficit meanwhile dropped in 1939 from \$6,702 to \$3,634, an indication that again the club may become an athletic financial asset.

Course Is Excellent Test

Highly regarded on the Pacific Coast and especially in the San Francisco Bay region, the Stanford GC is one of the toughest and yet most picturesque courses in California. Among college operated courses, of which there are comparatively few in the nation, Stanford's ranks with those of Yale, Ohio State, Michigan, Minnesota, and a few others. The course's

Interesting terrain of Stanford course is indicated by this view of the 440-yard twelfth hole from the tee.



Martin Pose and E. Bertolino, Argentine pros who are being sent to the USA by the Argentine GA, arrived in New York April 1, on the SS Argentina. The Argentinians will play in the US National Open and other tournaments. Details of their stay in the USA will be handled by the PGA.

construction put an initial dent into the board of athletic control's athletic fund of \$135,000. After numerous improvements on the course, including the building of an attractive clubhouse and pro-shop, with suitable parking area, it was estimated that nearly \$240,000 had been invested by the Board for the university.

Last year 34,246 persons, excluding members, paid green-fees, a daily average of over 90 golfers per day. Of that number, 2,300 were students, while an additional 406 students took out student playing memberships at the special rate of 20 games for \$10. Students may also play on weekdays after 4 o'clock for 50 cents. The regular green fee is \$1 on weekdays and \$2 on weekends and holidays. It has been estimated that out of nearly 4,000 students, between 900 and 1,000 take advantage of the club's facilities. The pro-shop rents equipment for as low as 50 cents. Rentals and sales netted \$6,885 profit last year.

Clubhouse Has Bare Facilities

The clubhouse consists of a sizeable lobby with a soda fountain, and men's and women's shower and locker-rooms. It has no social accommodations, nor has a dining room or dance floor ever been considered by the authorities.

One of the annual expenses of the board is the cost of sending a six-man golf team to the National Collegiate Athletic Association's golf tournaments. Stanford sent teams four times in the past five years to the Congressional CC in Washington, D. C., the North Shore CC in Chicago, the Louisville CC, and to the Wakonda CC, Des Moines. The Board spent \$1,375 for its team which won the team championship for the second straight year at Wakonda last June. Stanford's No. 1 golfer, Warren Berl, was runner-up for the 1939 individual golf title.

Technically, the Stanford GC has no pro. However, the board of athletic control has a coach in Eddie Twiggs, nationally known because of the success of his teams in past N.C.A.A. tourneys. Coach Twiggs' duties are primarily that of handling the Stanford golf team and

instructing about 200 students who take golf as a physical education requirement. Twiggs makes it a point to give a maximum amount of time to a beginner in his classes, but that amount is curtailed greatly by the small number of classes. So actually Twiggs' job is strictly connected with students and not members of the golf club.

Twiggs Coaches Teams

Twiggs explains that he has no set rules for developing his golfers. A great deal of credit, however, must be given to him for his work in improving the play of Warren Berl. Berl as a freshman in 1938 averaged the course in 81. Seeing the makings of a potentially great golfer, Twiggs set about to ironing out flaws in Berl's golf game (whose golf was improved to the extent that he now averages 72, one over par. His best round is a 68, and he has a four-round total of 288 made last year while preparing for collegiate competition. As a junior Berl has two more cracks at the N.C.A.A.'s individual title.

A great deal of emphasis is placed by Twiggs on his team's medal play. He argues correctly that if his men are not good medalists they will make little headway in tournaments. Twice a week the team members are required to play medal rounds with fellow golfers. At the end of the week, after the rounds are completed, the 'ladder' is posted. His method is particularly sound in that it keeps his men fighting for the top six positions. Naturally there is considerable rivalry and spirit for those six are Stanford's representatives to the N.C.A.A.'s tournament.

Chief items of expense at the Stanford course are the salaries for the pro-shop and the maintenance crew, amounting to about \$27,000 yearly, and the general upkeep of the course, averaging over \$30,000 a year. The work crew ranges from 9 to 14 men in winter and summer months. Water and power costs \$7,100 a year. The yearly rent of the property by the board of athletic control from the university runs to \$1,912. Taxes and insurance hover around \$1,000. Last year \$890 was spent for fertilizer and fungicides as against \$651 for the previous year.

The course has exactly 100 acres under grass, including tees, fairways, and greens. The total yardage is 6,648 yards. The greens average about 7,000 sq. ft.



Stanford's clubhouse, seen here behind the 18th green, purposely has no facilities beyond a soda fountain, a lobby, and locker rooms and showers for men and women.

E. W. Van Gorder, course superintendent, estimates that it takes 15 hours to cut the fairways over once, a job he does two to three times a week depending upon the season. The soil, being rather poor and consisting mostly of heavy clay, requires considerable water from the two lakes above the campus. Watering is, therefore, the chief problem with which Van Gorder has to contend. The past two falls and winters have been exceptionally dry, and as a result the working crew has had to water when rainfall was normally expected to do the job. The same condition exists all over California where rainfall is so unpredictable, making it far and away different from Eastern conditions where early rains usually solve a good deal of the watering problem. In the summer Stanford's course is watered usually every two nights and according to need in fall, winter, and spring. The course has an underground watering system with batteries of six to eight sprinklers on a single control valve. This is a common method for California courses. Greens are watered three times a week.

Greens Are Seaside Bent

The greens are seeded to seaside bent, most commonly used on the Coast. Fairways are a mixture of Kentucky bluegrass and *Poa trivialis*. In better times, the greens were cut six times a week, but now they are cut every other day and Sunday mornings. The greens are topdressed three to four times a year according to their need, with a mixture of loam, sharp sand, and muck peat. Lately sludge has been used in the place of peat with satisfactory results. Once a month the greens are worked over with spring steel rakes. The topdressing is worked in with a steel brush drawn by

a small power mower with pneumatic tires.

The greens are fertilized or fed as needed throughout the year—usually four or five times with a balanced fertilizer which has a 8-7-2 analysis. Ammonium sulfate is used at least once a year on the fairways.

San Francisquito Creek, which runs through the course and which furnishes a natural water hazard on five holes, is dry during the summer when there is no overflow from the lakes above. The creek also furnishes part of the outline for six other holes, making for a very sporty and difficult course. The course is well trapped, having 52 sand traps, all of which are quite large. Outlining the fairways and also in the roughs are hundreds of oaks. About 200 of them are called key trees, as they are strategically located in forming doglegs. It is far from an easy course, although the fairways are exceptionally wide. That largely accounts for the 100 acres under grass. In addition to the oaks a few poplars and buckeyes have been planted.

Site of '42 Intercollegiate

The course is of championship length and will be the scene of the 1942 N.C.A.A. championships. In 1941 Ohio State's course at Columbus will be the first college course to be host to the association's tournament. It will be the first national college tourney to be held in the West when it comes to Stanford. The Stanford course rates favorably with the Pebble Beach CC at Del Monte, Calif., and the Bel-Air, Riviera, and Los Angeles CCs.

Par on the course is 71—36 out and 35 in. The longest holes are the 7th and 16th holes of 515 and 500 yards respectively. Nine holes have dogleg outlines. The course consists of three par 5 holes, eleven par 4s, and four par 3s.