

BARGAIN: \$4-a-Year Golf

By Jack Fulton

Rockford's muny course system keeps players happy while earning profit for parks

ROCKFORD, Illinois, with 90,000 population, lies 85 miles west and a little north of Chicago. Long known as a principal furniture, machine tool and knitting center, Rockford is also becoming known as one of our leading "golf minded" cities. It has facilities to meet any purse and an interest in golf unusual for a town of its size.

Eight golf courses are available. There are three 18-hole private courses—the aristocratic and reserved Rockford Country Club (established 1899); the up-and-coming, well-entrenched and extremely active Forest Hills CC (established 1922 during the height of the golf boom) and Mau-Nah-Tee-See CC, which started in 1928 and is coming along very well in spite of the tough sledding it was hardly ready to face during the Depression years.

Rockford has little daily-fee play, due mainly to the excellence and adequacy of the city's municipal golf facilities. Although there is a 18-hole fee layout, the Macktown GCse, a few miles away, Rockford golfers do not patronize Macktown very extensively, preferring their own three municipal layouts—Sinissippi (9 holes, built in 1914), Ingersoll (18 holes, built in 1920, and Sandy Hollow (18 holes, built in 1930).

Bargain Golf Brings Volume

Credit for Rockford's golf-mindedness must go to these muny layouts, which compare in sportiness, maintenance quality and interest with many private links, and to a park board, of which Earl F. Elliot is superintendent, which has established as its golf policy the giving of as much golf as possible for the least money. That this policy works is evidenced by the fact that in 1939 (and in a town of 90,000 population, mind you) there were 121,400 rounds of golf played over the park courses. Play is up at least 20 per cent this year and with average weather from now on, there is good reason to believe 150,000 rounds will be chalked up as 1940's play-volume.

Golf is available over Rockford's park courses under two plans. A resident may buy a season permit for \$4.00 entitling him to unlimited golf over any or all of

the courses without further payment of any sort. Juniors under 15 may buy a permit for \$1.00, but course privileges are granted them only in the mornings, Monday through Saturday. Junior permits are not good Sundays or holidays. The two permits, for adults and juniors, are differently colored for quick identification and must be signed by the ticket holder. If a permit is lost, the holder must pay the park board \$1.00 for another, but if it merely suffers an "accident," like being left in a shirt pocket and going through the wash, a new card is issued without charge. Up to July 23, Rockford golfers had purchased 3,044 senior and 460 junior permits.

Application blanks for season permits read as follows:

Date	Reg. No.
Male	Adult
Female	Junior
I hereby certify that I am a resident of the Rockford Park District and that the following is correct:	
Name	
Present	Resident Address
Res.	.....
Phone .....	.....
How long have you resided at above address?	
.....	
Employed by.....	.....
Bus.	.....
Phone.....	.....

Play is granted non-permit holders on payment of 50c for 18 holes and 25c for nine holes. Supt. Elliot says that just about half the income from the muny courses comes from these fees. In 1939 the total round-fees collected amounted to \$10,421 as against \$10,665 received from sale of permits.

Allow Advance Registration

One other source of income for the park courses is from fees of 40c a foursome collected for advance registrations on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Starters at the courses are supplied with registration sheets with space to write in the names of 12 foursomes; since Rockford starts

players off at 5-minute intervals, each registration sheet covers one hour's time. Advance registration is permitted for every other foursome, between which are the times open for players who come to the course without starting times. From advance registrations, Rockford added \$699.60 to its munny golf income last year.

Coupons Give Control

Rockford has worked out a system of control, both over registration fees and permit abuses, that is pretty nearly fool-proof. Heart of the system is the scorecard which contains a numbered detachable coupon to be signed by the player, retained by the starter and turned in at the end of the day. Each day, the starter must check in, to the park board offices, a coupon for every card issued by him. Cards for permit holders are white, and for round-fee patrons are colored, a different color for each course. The starter must turn in receipts equal to 50c (or 25c in the case of 9-hole rounds) for every colored score card he issues. All cards cross check against the player registration sheets, on which scorecard serial numbers and players' names must appear.

Use of white cards for permit play and colors for fee play gives control over the starters and eliminates the temptation for them to hold back fees and allow pay players ostensibly to be playing on a per-

ROCKFORD PARK DISTRICT, ROCKFORD, ILL.									
SANDY HOLLOW PARK									
Starting No. _____					Reg. No. _____				
Date _____									
HOLE	YARDS	PAR	SELF	Partner	Opponent	Partner	Win - Loss	H/CP	Strokes
1	420	4							7
2	390	4							9
3	440	4							2
4	385	4							3
									16
18	440	4							4
In	3240	36							
Out	3345	35							
Total	6585	71							
Hdc.									
Net Score									
Scorer _____									
No. _____					Reg. No. _____				
Name _____									
Address _____									
Date _____									
SANDY HOLLOW PARK									

Sample of scorecard, with detachable coupon. Starters are held responsible for all cards assigned to them and must account for missing ones as well as for those they issue to players. Actual scorecard carries serial number after words "Reg. No." on both card and coupon.

mit. The golfers are the ones who keep things above board—they all know that a white card means permit play and that if they have paid a round-fee, they should be given a colored card. So they refuse to accept anything but a colored card if they have paid to play.

The coupons also give control over permit abuses. First of all, each coupon carries the player's signature, which the park board compares the next day with the player's signature obtained when he applied for his permit. Should any irregularity appear, the holder is forced to give up his permit and cannot regain it without applying to the park board offices with an adequate explanation. For flagrant violations, permits are revoked; for less serious offenses, the park board may withhold a permit for 30 days.

Statistics on municipal play-volume for the past ten years, as supplied by park board records, indicate that Rockford, like all other municipalities, felt the effects of the depression years. But it is interesting to note that play volume is climbing

Rockford Park District				
PLAYER'S REGISTRATION SHEET				
19 _____			Course _____	
A player may sign for only one ticket. Unless the foursome is already made up, the starter may fill in a player to make the foursome.				
All players of a foursome must register in rotation if they want to start together.				
All Players Must Verify Their Signatures When Number is Called.				
Time or Number	NAME	Permit No.	Advance Registration	Round Fee Amount
TOTAL				
STARTER				

Registration sheets are 6" wide and long enough to accommodate the names of 48 players, divided into 12 foursomes by heavier rules. Thus each sheet handles play for one hour, since foursomes start at five minute intervals.

toward the banner record of 1931, when 153,400 rounds were played. This year should see that figure equalled or passed. Annual figures on municipal rounds of golf over Rockford's 3 courses:

1930	.....134,000	rounds	1935	..... 91,700	rounds
1931	.....153,400	rounds	1936	..... 95,000	rounds
1932	.....147,700	rounds	1937	.....107,900	rounds
1933	.....105,100	rounds	1938	.....119,200	rounds
1934	.....100,500	rounds	1939	.....121,400	rounds

The three courses are maintained in excellent condition and the terrain over which the courses are built make for sporty, interesting golf. Sandy Hollow's greens, in particular, are said to be the finest in the Rockford district.

Maintenance costs for 1939, according to Supt. Elliot's records, ran:

Ingersoll	.....	\$7,033
Shady Hollow	.....	7,833
Sinnissippi	.....	4,816
Total	.....	\$19,682

Since income for this period was \$21,785, Rockford's many courses returned a profit for '39 of \$2,103. Elliot cautions, however, that only course maintenance is charged against course income and that new equipment purchases and replacements of present equipment are paid for out of the general park funds. The \$2,103 is of course turned into the general fund and doubtless covered or came close to covering the year's equipment purchases, so that Rockford's municipal golf can plainly be rated as self-sustaining.

How Southern Greensmen Meet Their Special Course Problems

By John Budd, Pro-Supt.

Tallahassee (Fla.) CC

AS a general rule in the South, the Bermuda grass on the greens is playable from about June 1 to November 1. From November 1 to June 1, Italian rye grass usually makes up the putting surface. Naturally in some of our Southern localities these dates would vary.

Let us consider Bermuda grass first, because it is our most important problem. Bermuda, being a running grass, has a tendency to become rank and thick, giving a grainy green. That is to say, the blades all bend in one direction. This makes it necessary to topdress and mow your greens with extreme care so that a true surface will be maintained. By rotating the angle of cut on the green with the putting green mower, you can reduce the grain of your greens. If the grain becomes too rank in your Bermuda grass, try the method used by Fred Haskin at the Columbus (Ga.) CC. He takes a heavy stable broom, or stiff brush, and brushes the nap of the green so the mower will trim it off smooth. He says this can also be done with a scratch rake, but more care is needed.

Howard Beckett, Capital City CC, Atlanta, Ga., is very exacting in his top-dressing methods. He keeps on hand a

supply of soil, mixed, screened, and ready to use, so it may be placed on his greens at a moment's notice. In this he uses a good percentage of sand. In topdressing a green his men smooth the soil out very carefully before it is dragged into the grass, finishing with an absolutely true surface. I have found that plenty of sand, yes, even 60% sand, in the topsoil is very useful. I like to have sand that will almost cut your hands if you scrub it between your fingers, and that will keep the surface loose and free from packing.

Good Topdressing Pays

George Picard, pro-greenkeeper at the Charleston (S.C.) CC, has always maintained that golf greens are no finer than the topdressing which is being used. He says, "Spend plenty of money for good topdressing and be careful in putting it on, and you will have good greens."

Fred Haskin, by the way, has been one of the few men in the South to use peanut shell, well rotted, as a topdressing material. This substance gives him a spongy surface with plenty of humus-like material around the roots of his grass. However, peanut shells have to be rotted for more than a year if they are to satisfactorily