

# Masterson Is Master of Seattle's Muny Colf

By  
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"GIVE US," demanded the ever-increasing throngs of golf enthusiasts in the up-and-coming golfing center that is Seattle, Wash., "a municipal course that will be beautiful but tough—and fit to entertain the National Public Links championship."

That was the cry in the spring of 1936, and before.

Seattle, population 400,000, had at that time two fine municipal courses; one in the north end and the other on Beacon Hill in the south. But a glance at a map of the sprawling Queen City showed that the far-flung residential section of West Seattle was out in the cold, from a golfing standpoint. So the city park department set the ball rolling by purchasing a tract of land; W.P.A. labor was recruited; and a slight, soft-spoken little man of Irish descent was commissioned to design the course from a good golfer's viewpoint.

He was the late Chandler Egan, two time winner of the National Amateur championship, and a beloved figure in Northwest golfing annals. The new course may well serve as a memorial to its designer, because the little man to whom golfing was a way of life didn't see its completion this summer, when, after five years, what had been 130 acres of stump-land and public dumping ground emerged as a 6,353-yd., par 72 course; beautiful but tough.

## Fine Architecture to Layout

It provides a real test for the real golfer. The general playing standard of the 18 holes is high; some are outstanding. The 12th hole in particular, a 430-yd. two-shotter, is as fine an example of golf architecture as you'll find in a week's journey. The 9th, 549 yards long, is one of the few legitimate par-5s in the countryside. The one-shotters set a standard seldom surpassed in this district.

From a revenue standpoint, these qualifications must be made: the course is a bit long for the ladies; play is slowed as golfers hunt for balls in some of the almost impossible roughs; and the course is sincerely difficult. All these factors ad-

mittedly limit the number of enthusiasts who play the course and so cut down the revenue.

And while we're on the subject of finances, make yourself acquainted with Pierre Masterson, superintendent of the golf division, Seattle Park Department, whose responsibility it is to manage the three muny courses. Masterson, a solid, stocky,



Seattle's popular "czar" of golf is Pierre Masterson, more generally known as Pete.

business-like young man, learned his job the hard way. He was once a caddie at the Seattle CC. Then he went to work for the city park department, and in 7 years climbed from an apprenticeship to the superintendency, a position which he has held for the past 10 years.

Though golf is his very full-time job, it's still his recreation. Because he doesn't believe in mixing business and pleasure, he tours any of the three courses outside of working hours, habitually in something like 78. But when he's on the job he's all business, and it's axiomatic with his greenkeepers that he knows when the 14th green so much as gives birth to a new blade of grass!

That Masterson knows his business is demonstrated by the fact that the course revenues are sufficient to cover the maintenance cost—and then some—although year 'round expenses must be figured into the budget. This year, he says, looks like



The twelfth at Seattle's new munny course is a 430-yard two-shotter, with an imposing gully directly before the tee, and beyond that, Longfellow creek. There is no level ground between tee and cup.

the best since 1932. The three municipal courses are figured to take in something over \$70,000 for the 12-month period.

Golf is definitely on the upswing in Seattle, according to Masterson, who should know. "Prospects look very good. I can't remember a year when there were so many new players, and especially, so many young faces. This trend is due, in part at least, to the fact that there is a publicity man constantly promoting golf in the high schools."

These rising golfers can take their choice of three as fine municipal courses as any city in the United States can boast.

### Jefferson Has 27 Holes

Of the trio, Jefferson Park, 188 acres, is oldest. In fact, it was the cradle of municipal golf in the Northwest. The records have it that this 5,958-yd., par 70 course was completed on May 12, 1915—at a period in the first World War comparable to the present stage of the second. It is unique in this section of the country in having, besides the regular 18-hole playing course, a 9-hole course used principally by beginners and women golfers. Addition of the 9-hole course had the immediate and highly satisfactory effect of increasing revenues and easing up the congestion of players at this popular city course.

Last year, 102,000 players used the Jefferson Park facilities.

Beautiful Jackson Park, covering 146 acres in Seattle's north end, has the appearance of a private club course. It's Masterson's particular pride, and is also the site of a \$40,000 clubhouse, built by the city. Playing figures for the 5,948-yd., par 71 course in 1939 totalled 72,000. It

consistently maintains a reputation as the greenest links in the Northwest.

Greens of the three courses are predominantly colonial bent and fescue, and are in exceptionally good shape. They are well raised and are surrounded by deep grass bunkers. There are no true sand traps on any of the three courses, although depressions have been prepared for this purpose. Sand has been left out, of course, for the purpose of cutting maintenance costs.

Originally, golfers took to the courses after getting the go-ahead from a clerk in the starters' sheds, but a loudspeaker system is now being used at all three Seattle courses, the players being called onto the course in rotation. Without the loudspeakers, the park board would necessarily be paying salaries to four starters—two at Jefferson Park and one at each of the others—so a considerable saving has been effected.

### 33 on Operating Staff

Even so, Masterson superintends a force of 33 men, including a publicity director, intermediate clerks, pros, greenkeepers, utility men, maintenance men, and common laborers. Staffing the new course are 2 utility men, 6 regulars, 2 full-time intermediate clerks and 1 relief man; all very busy. The office of an adjoining athletic stadium is serving as temporary quarters, while the city fathers consider the district's strong demand for a rather elaborate clubhouse.

The athletic stadium and a Boy Scout camp separated from the links by a woods, together with the course itself, constitute a recreational area which was constructed at a cost of \$1,137,629. Hence, the new



Golfers leaving the \$40,000 city-built Jackson Park clubhouse for a try at the 5,948-yard, par-71 course.

links was popularly dubbed "the million dollar golf course." That topheavy title is a misnomer, but the park board is rather close-mouthed about the actual cost.

Fairways of the new course do not present much of a maintenance problem so far as watering is concerned, since an improved "snap-on head" water system is a feature there. Nine hundred and eighty automatic sprinklers keep the course in excellent condition at a minimum of human effort.

That's one reason why it will be in good shape whenever the top golfers of the nation get set to take a crack at it. In this connection, Masterson points out that preparations for entertaining the national championships would include moving tees back from 20 to 50 yards on most of the holes, to provide the greater length that a contest of this caliber requires. The course was constructed with this in mind.

Longfellow creek, whose waters once boiled with salmon and trout; on whose shores Indians once camped, flows mischievously through the course. Advantage has been taken of its whims to make it the golfer's Public Enemy No. 1.

Golfers find it pictorial but tricky; as imposing as an elephant's yawn. The creek's aimless meandering, together with the several ravines leading into it, are largely responsible for the predominantly narrow fairways and numerous doglegs on the course. It's banks have been lined with stone, and in one place a rock dam forms a small, picturesque lake. "Lake Lost Ball," some call it.

A large crowd of Seattlites who thronged the velvety new links for the inauguration last May 16 saw big, ruddy-faced Harry Givan, once a Walker cupper, top a championship foursome with a blistering 34-33-67. In so doing, he knocked five strokes off the established par of 72!

The par-makers were not embarrassed. "Harry's unforgivable mistake can probably be attributed to over-enthusiasm," one of them smilingly explained. "He made it look easy with his 67, but the big fella was at his booming best—and when Givan is at his best he makes any course look easy." Well . . . Givan did have a 325-yard tee shot on No. 16, and he did can a 30-foot putt on No. 8. His 67 will stand for a long time.

Said the giant Givan after sinking his final three-foot putt and wiping his brow: "The course is a peach. It's in marvelous shape for a new links. Fairways and greens are like a carpet, and there's enough rough to make the going tough." He had further praise for the 140-yd. long practice putting green.

So now you know about Seattle's newest municipal course, which was built with an eye to entertaining the brilliants of golf-dom. Sometime in the not-too-distant future the champs will come to the West Coast city for a national tournament. And here's a bet—that they'll never forget the view they have of Seattle's photogenic skyline from almost any green on the course, nor the 9th hole, 549 yards long; no, nor the miniature Grand Canyon that hides Longfellow creek.

**Are You Looking for Christmas Gift Ideas?**

**Turn to page 47 — you'll find some ideal gifts there for your fellow club workers.**