



Ninth green at Tilden Park. Background shows portions of first nine. Tenth tee at right.

Looking Ahead Pays Oakland Municipal Golf

By RAY HAYWOOD



DICK WALPOLE,
Regional Park Mgr.

TILDEN PARK golf course, brightest jewel in the 22-miles long Regional Park system set in the hills behind the Metropolitan Oakland (Cal.) area, offers proof today that long range planning of a recreational project pays off in profits.

Because of this planning not only has the course become self-sustaining, it is paying for a \$150,000 water supply dam constructed two years after the course was opened in 1936.

Located in Wildcat Canyon, a wooded hollow protected from wind and San Francisco Bay fogs by the barrier of the Berkeley hills, the course is only a ten-minute drive from downtown Berkeley and parts of Oakland.

This site was selected by Architects Billie Bell and Dick Walpole because it offered a location near the greatest density of population and at the same time provided outstanding climatic conditions. Many times during the Summer a golfer will cross the summit with his windshield wipers clearing fog to find that down in the canyon the weather is clear and warm.

Walpole remained with the Regional Park system after construction was completed and has been promoted from course manager to superintendent of the entire organization.

Due to his vision and experience, the million acre-foot capacity dam now is a revenue producer in its own right. Black bass planted in the cold water flourished to the delight of fishermen most of whom rent boats for their angling. A concessionaire operates row boats and canoes, while a specially prepared section with floats, diving boards and a safety-roped area has become one of the most popular swimming holes in the district.

This dam, known as Lake Anza, is adjacent to picnic grounds, softball fields and even a cricket field. The Brazilian building at the Treasure Island Exposition was moved to a nearby ridge following the Fair and now provides a headquarters for many social organizations.

This "whole family" plan has worked advantageously for the golf course. Family men, who ordinarily would be unable to combine a round with a family outing can have both at Tilden.

Tilden's watering system is admittedly the finest in Northern California—and equal to any in the world, Walpole believes. Through Lake Anza, which holds approximately a two-year supply, the park eliminates the purchase of water, a former annual bill of \$10,000. The lake is

fed by Wildcat creek, a small stream which also serves as a water hazard on five holes.

A 6400 gallon-a-minute pump lifts the water from Lake Anza to a 350,000 gallon reservoir 900 feet above on the famous Grizzly Peak. This height insures adequate pressure by gravitation to all the 800 automatic bronze pop-up sprinkler heads set in the fairways. One man can water the course by the turn of a valve. The high initial cost of this installation has more than been met by the saving in labor-hours, Walpole says.

The course, built in 18 months for \$500,000, was financed by city taxes in Berkeley, Oakland, Piedmont, Alameda, Albany, San Leandro and Emeryville. Due to the central location, residents of all these cities use the course and other recreational units.

As a foundation for security, Walpole organized a 200-member club as soon as the course was opened. This organization has been closed for the past two years and has a long waiting list. The group has a full calendar of social and competitive events.

In connection with its regular activities, Tilden offers recreational facilities for several military establishments, including an Army rehabilitation center located in the Park. Service men play free, with clubs and balls obtained through a concerted drive by members and the Oakland Tribune.

The course has an average monthly play of 4000 fees. Single highest day—a Sunday—was 450. The greens fee is 75 cents week days and \$1 week ends and holidays. Monthly cards (30-day play) cost \$5 while monthly cards for week days only are \$3. Earl Nagel, veteran of Bay area golf, is Tilden's professional.

Par for the 6364-yard layout is 71-36-35. Dual tees are provided to care for tournament as well as regular play.

Five dogleg holes were designed by taking advantage of the canyon and creek contours. On most holes a premium is placed upon accuracy as the creek and heavy grooves of eucalyptus trees penalize the golfer whose shots stray.

Although there are only 12 traps on the course, they are located so as to worry the better golfer who gambles rather than the ordinary player who is content to play them safe. Practically every type of hole is represented in the 18. The varieties include water carries, elevated tees, elevated greens, sidehill, uphill, downhill lies and straight flat holes.

The all-inclusive design was made possible by the fact that the course occupies the sides and floor of a small valley through which the stream wanders. Much of the course was cut through a solid grove of eucalyptus trees which had been planted in the hollow many years ago by a corporation for the sale of lumber. When this venture—a stock sale deal—proved unfeasible, the property was used by a utilities company as a water shed until made part of the park system.

Tilden's greens are planted in Cocos' bent, a type which proved especially adaptable to the San Francisco Bay climate. Fairways are in a mixture of blue grass, red top and seaside bent.

The golf course portion of the park is named for Major Charles Lee Tilden. He pioneered the establishment of the entire regional park idea and did much of the education work which convinced the public that such a park was worthy of support through taxation.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO GOLFDOM READERS

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One of many picnic areas—Brizilian building in background.

