

# Los Angeles Manages Its Golf As Big Business

By CHARLES CURTIS

The Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners of Los Angeles are promoting golf on a large and expanding scale.

At present the city's Recreation and Parks Department, which governs operation of golf and all recreational facilities in the city, has two full 18-hole courses (Wilson and Harding), a full yardage 9-hole course (Roosevelt) and a special pitch and putt course (Coolidge) in operation at the huge Griffith Park area in the northern sector of the city. It also is reconstructing the old Rancho course in the western part of the city and building an 18-hole golf course and a pitch and putt links on that site as well as developing 50 acres of playground facilities. These will be back in operation next year. The city also operates a small pitch and putt course (Holmby Park) in the Beverly Hills section.

Commissioner Maurie Luxford is chairman of all golf activities assisted by the General Manager George Hjelte and Park Superintendent Gilbert Skutt.

Since 1931, William H. (Bill) Johnson has been manager of L.A.'s golf operations and now in addition to directing activities at Griffith Park, he is supervising construction work at Rancho.

There is at present about \$320,000 in the city's golf fund, and two years ago \$250,000 of golf-earned funds were used to purchase the tax-deeded Rancho course.

## Golf Operations in the Black

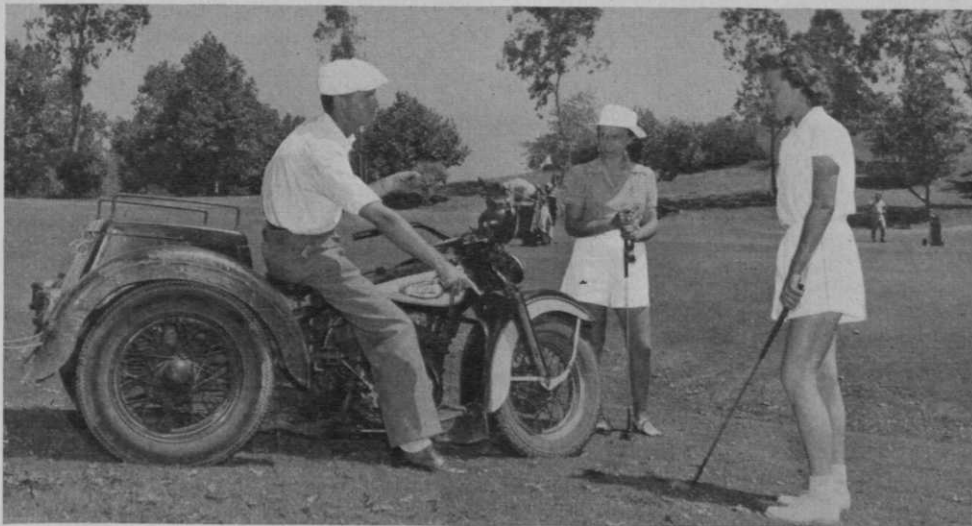
Golf operations are handled on a budget basis within the city's treasury. A monthly report showing golf expenditures including labor, materials and other costs as contrasted to income is prepared and the fiscal year which ended in July showed an excess of income over expenses for that 12-month period of about \$80,000.

Johnson directs operation of the clubhouse activities, including the starting window, and has an assistant manager who personally supervises course maintenance.

At the clubhouse are two senior golf



Players lined up at starter window seeking starting time for weekend play.



Jack Keohane, "golf traffic cop" at L. A.'s Griffith Park course, cautions Virginia Fager, right, and Jean Cravitz about replacing divots and to speed up play.

starters (salary under civil service \$222-259 monthly on a scale up to the five-year maximum), one of these men handling all cash and bank deposits and such bookkeeping as is necessary; nine starters (\$211-246) including the driving range overseers, caddie-cart checkers and two course patrolmen; one clerk-typist; two locker-room attendants, one janitor and one janitress.

Under the assistant course manager (salary \$273-333) come the 11 senior gardeners (salary \$173-221), 24 gardener caretakers (\$165-200), one mechanic (\$211-246), one mechanic's helper, one pipe fitter's helper, one truck driver, and three light equipment operators (mowers), all of the latter four classifications coming under the \$173-221 salary schedule.

Johnson feels the salary scale has been adequate to attract competent help in all but the lowest classification of gardener caretaker where the top salary is \$200.

Los Angeles civil service employees receive 10 days vacation, five days paid sick time, and 11 holidays during the year. Where golf course workers must work on holidays they receive time off at straight time.

#### Griffith Park Equipment

In the operation of the courses at Griffith Park, the following equipment is used:

Six large power green mowers (22 and 24-inch); seven pony green mowers (17-inch), one 3-unit Over-green mower (including the power unit used to pull the topdresser), two Park Special mowers for banks and tees (30-inch), two 7-unit fair-

way mowers, one 3 or 5-unit mower for rough, etc.

Two 1½ ton dump trucks, five pickup trucks, three motorcycles, one 500-gallon power sprayer, one compost grinder, one topdresser, various machine shop equipment including air compressor, electric arc welder, lathe, drill press, etc., and two tractors.

Purchasing of equipment is done through the city of L.A. with the bid system, but the golf course manager sets the specifications for needed purchases.

The watering system at Griffith Park consists of 2300 pop-up sprinklers covering every hole. They are arranged in batteries of 11 or 12 sprinklers.

One man waters both of the 18-hole courses, working a 5-day week and watering each course on alternate nights. Thus one course is watered twice in one week, three times the next. The course to be watered is closed for play at 4 p.m., and the workman covers the course in 7½ hours, controlling the sprinklers from valves alongside the fairways. The above man waters the nine-hole Roosevelt course 4 hours every other night, watering fairways one night and greens and tees the next.

#### Watering Economies

This man-power setup contrasts with the 16 men who were required for night irrigation before installation of the present sprinkler system.

Griffith Park golf courses get their

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## L.A. Golf Big Business

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water from two wells in the park, at one of which the water level varies from 30 to 60 feet and the other from 50 to 80 feet. Two storage tanks on the steep mountainsides near the courses supply sufficient pressure by gravity.

The golf courses must supply three men to assist in maintenance of the pumping stations so that the cost of the water includes a varying degree of \$12,000 or \$15,000 yearly for electric power and about \$9000 for labor, or a figure of \$25,000 maximum yearly for water, which is used for all purposes on the course and clubhouse. There are 523 acres under cultivation in the golf course area.

Fairways are mowed twice weekly during the peak growing season of April-May-June and cut once a week the rest of the year. The cutting level is one inch.

Greens are mowed Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays the year around, with the cutting level one-quarter inch. Greens are watered the same nights as fairways on the 18-hole courses, with no watering on week-ends.

A compost pile of grass cuttings, leaves and manure from the L.A. zoo at Griffith Park is maintained and used to topdress greens twice a year. Commercial fertilizer

and ammonium sulphate are used on the greens.

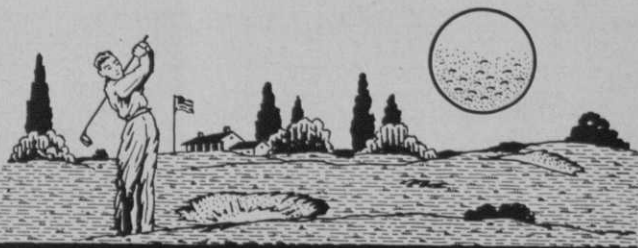
The greens are all of Cocos bent. Fairways are meadow fescue, red top and bluegrass. Bermuda now comprises 15 percent of all fairways but is not regarded as harmful so long as it is kept out of greens. It provides a hardy fairway surface, but is dormant in the winter.

Bermuda is kept out of the putting greens, where the edges of the green are peeled back and the Bermuda runners pulled out of the sod and their roots dug out with large earth plug removers. Fifteen hundred feet of nursery sod are maintained for replacement on greens where Bermuda or other reasons require removal of whole sections of sod.

### Division of Work

Greenkeeping duties are divided among the senior gardeners, seven of whom are assigned to upkeep of the greens with each man held responsible for certain greens. Two other senior gardeners have the status of gang straw bosses, one supervises work around the clubhouse and one maintains the pitch and putt course.

One of the gardener caretakers has the responsibility of placing pins and tees for all play, including tournaments. The Los Angeles city men's championship, played on the Wilson course, annually has from



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300 to 400 participants. The women's city championship is also played at Wilson with about 100 players.

Green fees at the Griffith Park courses, are as follows: 18-hole courses, \$1, replay 50 cents; 9-hole course, 50 cents; pitch and putt course, 40 cents, replay 30 cents; monthly ticket \$5 not good Saturdays, Sundays or holidays.

Foursomes are started every six minutes, being called to the tee by number from the starter's window over a public address system and with the number of the foursome which is on the tee being posted near the gate where green fee tickets are checked. This checker also collects for caddie carts.

### Reservation System

Saturday, Sunday and holiday reservations are made five days in advance (Monday morning for Saturday). The starter's window normally opens at 6 a.m. and at that hour on Mondays and Tuesdays a line-up of 60 or more players is usually ready to seek starting times for the week-end.

Reservations for week-end times are made on an alternating basis between a telephone call and personal request, so that the starter takes down a name from one of those lined up in front of his window, then answers the telephone and registers one foursome. One player may register for one foursome only. By 7:30 on Mondays and Tuesdays the complete Saturday and Sunday starting sheet is filled.

No permanent Saturday-Sunday reservations are made.

Tournaments of business houses, clubs, etc., are scheduled for week-days only, when they are allotted a necessary bracket of starting times.

The courses are open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on week-days and at 5:30 on Saturdays and Sundays, or earlier in season with a starter on hand as soon as it is daylight.

There are two concessionaires at the Griffith Park clubhouse.

Prior to this year the professional had the driving range and caddie cart concession but in his new contract both of these reverted to the city's management. He has exclusive teaching rights.

The dining room-grill concession (beer and wine may be sold but no hard liquors) is handled on a basis of \$500 monthly rental and 10 percent of the amount of net sales over \$5000 monthly.

### Golf "Traffic Cops"

One of the most unusual and effective stunts used at the Griffith Park courses is the employment of two starters as patrolmen on the course. Riding three-wheeled motorcycles, these "golf traffic cops" are literally that. One of them is a former motorcycle police officer.

They patrol the courses, seek to keep play moving, remind players to replace divots and do it themselves on occasion, keep unregistered players off the course, and take emergency calls to physicians and other professional men on the course. They call in to the starter every hour from a telephone on the course (both Wilson and Harding 18-hole courses run out from the clubhouse with the 9th holes at different points on the courses) to receive emergency calls for players.

### LIVELY PRO DEMAND FOR FOUNDATION'S NEW LESSON BOOK

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