

# Long Island Leads N. Y. Area In Golf Course Development

By JOHN BRENNAN

A tremendous golf boom is picking up momentum in the New York Metropolitan area, with Long Island's suburban area leading the drive in providing additional facilities for the harassed divot diggers of the largest city in the world.

Course architects, greenkeepers and others interested in course development and maintenance will be a busy lot in the Metropolitan area during the next two years in spite of the high appraisal placed on real estate in this area. When one considers that the Pomonok CC in Flushing, less than seven miles from the towering Empire State Building, rejected a bid of nearly two million dollars for its 130 acres of gorgeous golfing tract and that Fresh Meadow CC, less than a mile from Pomonok, was purchased by the New York Life Insurance Co. for \$1,500,000, one shudders at the thought of developing this costly property for divot digging.

Even in Nassau County, which lies beyond the New York City boundary line, the more than 100 acres necessary for construction of an 18-hole golf course costs in excess of \$350,000. That was the price paid by the Sound View syndicate for the former Women's National G&TC at Glen Head which was abandoned during the war and most of its members transferred to Cedar Creek Club in Glen Cove.

But, in spite of these abnormal values placed on Long Island real estate, golfers will be playing over additional courses when the 1948 season rolls around.

The Cord Meyer Corporation, developer of fashionable Forest Hills, which has operated the highly successful Bayside Links, has announced an additional 18-hole course will be constructed on farmland between the Bayside Links and Clearview, one of the 10 municipal courses operated by the New York City Department of Parks. The present Bayside Links, managed by Walter Grego, is jam-packed, even on week days, due primarily to its accessibility and gorgeous condition.

Bayside lies in the New York City area, approximately seven miles from the Queensboro Bridge leading to Columbia Circle.

## More Public Courses Coming

With the 10 municipal courses due to

play more than 600,000 rounds during 1947, Parks Commissioner Robert Moses has promised some relief to the patrons of these congested city courses. Two more 18 hole courses will be constructed at Marine Park, near the Belt Parkway, in the Brooklyn area. Dyker Beach, lone course in Brooklyn, will have played some 90,000 rounds before the current season expires.

To be expected, the major job of providing facilities for the urban golfers is to be done next year in Nassau County, which already boasts of perhaps more courses than any similar area in the world.

Lido, the famed seaside course at Long Beach, which was rubbed out by the Navy to provide a drilling ground for the seamen during the war, will be restored to its former beauty. The Seidens, who are operating the Lido Hotel and adjoining property, have announced work will start soon on the restoration of the course that many consider on a par, if not the peer, of Pebble Beach.

The Seidens operated the Lido CC several years before the outbreak of the war. Soon after the declaration of war, the Navy took over Lido, lock, stock and barrel. The golf course, one of the finest seaside layouts in the world, was ploughed under and leveled to provide a drilling grounds for embryonic sailors.

Fortunately, photographs of every hole were made and blueprints are available to enable the Seidens' course architects to reproduce the picture-book Long Beach layout.

An additional 36 holes will be ready next season for the patrons of Nassau County Park, giving them a 72-hole layout comparable to Bethpage State Park, less than 15 miles away at Farmingdale. Construction on the additional two courses at Nassau County Park, formerly known as Salisbury CC, has started. The two courses, the old No. 2 and 3 of Salisbury, have been in operation during the war. The courses are operated by Nassau County, which restricts their use to residents of the bailiwick.

Salisbury was founded by the late J. J. Lannin, former owner of the Boston Red Sox when Babe Ruth was a crack pitcher for the Beantown aggregation. Nassau County took over the vast golfing empire for taxes, following the depression years.

When completed, the Nassau County Park development will be one of the outstanding 72-hole tracts in this country. In addition to golf, there will be facilities for other sports and outings.

### Bethpage Sets Records

Bethpage, where two of the four courses were virtually closed during the war years, is once again booming with the Black course, rated by some oracles as one of the toughest in the world, back in operation. Joe Berbeck, who operates Bethpage for the Long Island State Parkway Commissioner, was responsible for "softening" the Black course when it was revived at the start of the 1947 season. Some of the yawning traps and bunkers were removed, especially those in the fairways. Bethpage, with the Red, Green, Blue and Black courses again operating, has been setting attendance records, thanks to a cooperating Weather Man.

Timber Point, another seaside course, located at Great River, shut down nine of its 18 exquisite holes during the war, but these are being reconditioned and will be ready for play in 1948. With 12 water holes, Timber Point is one of the real treacherous courses of the East, especially if the fickle winds start emanating from nearby Great South Bay.

Another Suffolk course recently revived is Island Hills in Sayville, where Charlie Mayes is responsible for the near-miracle of reproducing a fine course.

Fred Grieve, who used to work for Willis Anderson and later became pro and greenkeeper at Leewood in Westchester, prevailed upon a syndicate of Sound View Golf Club members at Great Neck to purchase the abandoned Women's National layout. Grieve, upon acquisition of the property, immediately hired some 30 greensmen to recondition the course, which was sadly neglected. The first balls since the war were hit off the tees on reasonably good fairways last month, a magnificent tribute to Grieve's wizardry as a greenkeeper.

Both Fresh Meadow CC at what formerly was the Lakeville GC plant in Great Neck and the nearby Glen Oaks Golf Club in Little Neck are completing their post-war programs costing nearly a half million dollars.

Fresh Meadow, after moving from Flushing to Great Neck, spent lavishly to streamline the former Lakeville layout, which originally cost \$2,500,000, into one of the finest of the East. Glen Oaks, following a three-year tenure at Lakeville, during which time its clubhouse was used by the Army and Navy, was compelled to transform its clubhouse from a war factory to a sumptuous layout of prewar days.

Glen Oaks' clubhouse is the largest of Long Island.

There is talk of constructing several new courses in the Garden City region, which already is thickly populated with gorgeous courses, including Garden City Golf, Cherry Valley, Garden City County, Wheatley Hills and Hempstead.

Golf is definitely on the upswing in the New York suburbs where real estate values are at a lofty peak. With club memberships at the saturation points, the majority have lengthy waiting lists. Long Island, in the opinion of conservative officials, can use at least another dozen 18-hole courses to accommodate the players now congesting private and public courses from Queensboro Bridge to Montauk Point.

### Pre-Season Letter Brings Business for Sprogell

Frank Sprogell, pro at Blytheville CC (Detroit dist.), like most other live pros, sends out a pre-season letter to his members. This one Frank sent out before the season opened brought more of a buying response than any Frank used in previous seasons.

This letter reads:

Dear Member:

#### BEAUTIFUL BLYTHEFIELD BECKONS YOU!

*At last the days are warm and sunny—the long cold winter has departed. I know of no better tonic for the tired businessman than a combination of sunshine, fresh air, and relaxation—and a pleasant game of golf.*

*With your best interests at heart, I have attended several golf clinics where the foremost professionals discussed teaching and present day methods of swinging and shot making. I will be only too glad to pass these latest tips on to you. Whatever your score is, now is your chance to cut strokes from your game; if you are a beginner, there is no better time to learn to play.*

*For the convenience of all who would like to practice, I have purchased hundreds of live rubber golf balls—an ample supply of which will be on the practice tee at all times. Just hit them out and leave them, as arrangements have been made to collect them each evening. There will be a small charge for the use of the balls.*

*Of interest to all is the fact that we now have the best assortment of post war golf equipment available. We not only have the finest golf equipment, we also have smart sport shirts and every other related accessory.*

*A wonderful golfing season is at hand—don't miss any of it. Come out soon—I'll be looking for you.*

Golfdom