

# Big City Ground Shortage Now Boosts 6 and 12 Hole Idea

By VERNE WICKHAM

"How about a fast six holes after lunch?" I beat him on the first 12 but he took me to pieces on the second 12." Sound screwy?

Well, those remarks may well be a part of golf course parlance in the not too distant future. And, if you thumb through musty record books over in the corner room at the Royal and Ancient Golf Club at St. Andrews, you will find that they were used in golf chatter long before nine and 18-hole remarks got into the language of golf.

Golf is fast outgrowing its available acreage, particularly in the fast-growing close-in sections in any metropolitan area. More are fighting a losing fight against the tractors and steam shovels of the mass real estate subdivider and home developer.

It is becoming increasingly difficult in metropolitan districts to find suitable acreage in plots of 120 acres and up for private golf club development.

One hundred acres of suitable land represents at least 4000 building lots. These lots are worth all the way from \$1000.00 and up. Probably a mean average in most metropolitan areas would be around \$2000.00 — so any given 100-acre plot represents a potential selling value of around \$800,000.00. An investment in land alone of that amount makes golf land for a private course almost an unknown quantity, at least, in any close-in location.

There is one possible answer to the problem that is now being explored by public golf officials on the West Coast. That is shorter courses. Six-hole and 12-hole courses.

## No Old Standard

There is nothing wrong with golf courses shorter than the now accepted standard of nine and 18 holes, except their smaller capacity to handle traffic. History will prove that.

On a recent trip to England, Scotland and on the continent the writer found many people playing golf on anything from the three hole affair on the Isle of May to some installations of as high as 24 holes. This is today. Back in the musty records way back when this game of golf first started, you will find many more.

Nine or eighteen holes is not traditional. Golf didn't start that way. Bruntsfield Links, near Edinburgh, said to be the

oldest course in the world, where golf is still played, had only six holes; North Berwick had seven; Musselburgh had five and later eight. At Blackheath, three rounds over the seven-hole layout made up an official match. Lanark started play in 1851 with six holes, then added four more, making it ten, and still later stretched itself out to 13.

The first British Open was played at Prestwick in 1861 on a 12-hole golf course. The championship test was three rounds, totaling 36 holes.

Poking around at St. Andrews and chatting with men whose golf memory and family golf connections go back more than 100 years, we were able to substantiate the belief that the nine-hole unit and the 18-hole round got its historical backing at St. Andrews. They used to play out nine holes and back nine holes, using the same greens. Three or four of the double-greens are still in use. With St. Andrews and the Royal and Ancient, formed in 1754, gradually taking a top-spot in golf history and tradition, the nine-hole and 18-hole round and match just "grew like Topsy" and became the official recognized unit for golf.

So there is nothing basically wrong with a six-hole layout, or a 12-hole course.

Golf in crowded areas has become a five-hour game, plus added time wasted getting to and from the course and waiting for a starting time. It takes an 8-hour day to enjoy metropolitan golf nowadays. No more working until noon, running out to the golf course for lunch and 18 holes before dark. No more playing 18 holes and getting back to the office for the afternoon business. Oh, you can do it once in a while if you are lucky. But usually you find the course so crowded at these choice times that it cannot be done.

Maybe, then, shorter courses may provide the answer.

Physically, 12 holes are about right for many people in the older age brackets. Much study is being made in recreation circles on ways of keeping the man on retirement busy. Golf is a favorite sport for the retired man. But, some 18-hole rounds over our more rugged championship golf courses is too much for the older golfer.

The six-hole course has some other good sound reasoning back of it. You can build

six good golf holes on about the same acreage used by a pitch-and-putt golf course. It seems to many that six regulation length holes will provide better golf than 9-holes pitch and putt.

As a standard division of holes for a six-hole golf course, three four-pars, one five-par and two threes would give a good balance. If there is less room, two threes and the rest all four-pars would be O.K. You can get any variety you want from an equal number of threes and fours up to two fives, two fours and two threes. Yardage would run from 1700 to 2100 yards, par 21 to 24. Three times around a six-hole par 21 course is 63 and around a par 24 course 72. Double this and you maintain the same balance for a 12-hole layout.

### Considering Shorter Courses in LA

Paul Gruendyke, director of the County Department of Parks and Recreation, in a recent conference on golf, came up with the interesting discovery that there are in the county several locations where six and nine and 12 holes could be built.

These are in locations where all our future golf courses must come — that is, acreage that is not available for home development. It is becoming more and more evident that it is foolish to try and compete with the subdivider for land in large 100-acre or up parcels. It is questionable to sink a lot of money in a golf course which in a few short years will be surrounded by homes bringing up a safety angle, or which will eventually be taken over by residences.

Where then is metropolitan golf course land coming from? Los Angeles County is making a study of land in flood control basins, around oil leases, along new free-ways, around county institutions, approaches to newly developed airports and other spots where golf courses can be built with the knowledge that they can remain forever and not, as previously, use land which is badly needed for the development of homes for our rapidly growing population.

There are now certain Federal Controls on recreation building, but when these controls are lifted, work will start on several new courses, and all of these, as far as Los Angeles County is concerned, will be built on land where they can remain forever, and some of them may well be short courses!

### Los Angeles County Six-Holer

The site of the Los Angeles County proposed 6-hole course is a part of a large regional park, set aside around a County Flood Control dam. The acreage is in two parcels, one a forty-acre upper bench, and the other a 100-acre site in the low lands below the dam. The two sites are connected by a 100-yard wide vineyard

bisected by several flood control ditches, a spreading basin, and a power right-of-way.

The original plans called for an 18-hole championship course of rather rugged proportions. New flood control ditches and the rather unsatisfactory method of routing due to flood ditches and power right-of-ways started the County Department of Parks and Recreation officials seeking for some new plan of development.

There is additional acreage which may some day become available which might allow for better routing to connect the two parcels of land.

At the present time, the thinking is to build a six-hole layout in the upper acreage, a twelve-hole in the lower area. If additional acreage becomes available, new holes could be added to the lower twelve-holes, making it a good solid eighteen-hole affair.

The six-hole layout will probably remain separate from the lower eighteen-holes to give the County an eighteen-hole and a six-hole layout in the same area, operated as separate units.

Rough grading on the six-holer is slated to start this summer.

The course as planned calls for two four-pars and the rest three-pars. All holes are good solid golf holes and on terrain which has a gradual up-grade of more than 100 feet from the low end to the upper area. The feasibility of starting with two three-pars is probably debatable, but is done here in order to preserve a natural location for a No. 2 — a feature one-shotter.

A number of years ago a road contractor, seeking for soil to build a fill on a nearby highway, sent a team of tractors and steam shovels into a side hill and dug out a natural saucer-like setting for a golf hole which is too good to lose.

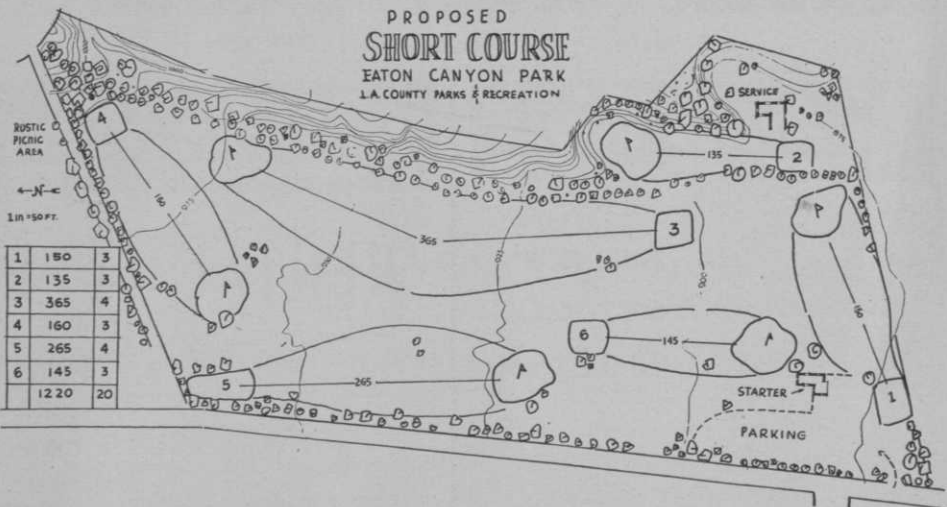
There is nothing in the book that says you can't start golf players on a three-par. In fact, it has been done many times. It will slow the cash register a little in getting players off the first tee but it may also save "ganging up" on subsequent three-pars.

The first hole is 150 yards to a large green tucked in the corner of the property. Trees line the right and form a background for the tee shot.

No. 2, is the feature hole to an elevated saucer-like green, well surrounded by timber and a shrub-filled bank. The green will be approximately twenty-five feet above the tee calling for a semi-blind approach. Two large traps are planned on the approach which will call for all carry from the tee.

No. 3, is only 365 yards — but all up hill. An old ranch road with two miles of

PROPOSED  
**SHORT COURSE**  
 EATON CANYON PARK  
 L.A. COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION



Six-hole golf course planned by Los Angeles County as part of regional park around flood control dam.

large Eucalyptus served as a boundary along the right with some large traps planned to hold the tee shot into a narrow passage.

No. 4, is 160 yards from an elevated tee to a green tucked in under two large sycamore trees.

No. 5, is a short four-par of 265 yards which will be heavily trapped off the tee, calling for a well placed tee shot.

No. 6, the finishing hole, is a straight away one-shotter of 135 yards. Both final holes are down-hill affairs which will serve as inducements to circle the layout again.

All trees on the map are now on the property, and are large oak, sycamore, and eucalyptus. Landscaping studies are now being made to provide some center planting.

### Lakewood GC Leased by County to Prevent Subdividing

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors have approved the leasing of the Lakewood Golf Club, near Long Beach, at an annual rental of \$125,000.

Owners of the 180-acre property were on the point of subdividing the property when Supervisor Herbert C. Legg and Board Chairman Roger W. Jessup offered a joint resolution proposing the lease.

The county will operate the club as a public recreation center. Owners of the property agreed under the lease agreement to construct a \$150,000 swimming pool and a needed underpass between the fourteenth green and the fifteenth tee to allow golfers passage under an entry road.

The county will maintain the facility and remit all taxes due during the term of the lease.

Both Legg and Jessup proposed the action on the grounds that "we can not afford to lose any more golf courses or recreation areas in this county."

### Poa Annua Experiment Looks Promising to Lon Mills

Lon Mills, supt. Whittles Springs, Knoxville, Tenn., munny course, has been experimenting with success, so far, with TAT in controlling poa annua on greens. Mills has been using the material at the rate of 10 to 12 oz. per 1000 sq. ft. throughout the winter, applying it every two or three weeks.

He believes that it could be applied to snow-covered grass effectively. Poa annua has been bad in winter and spring at Whittles Springs but now Mills has it eliminated where he has been conducting the experiment of continuing the treatment in winter. There has been no damage to desirable grass.