

Los Angeles Looks Ahead to Ease Golf Shortage

By DARSIE L. DARSIE

Golfers of Southern California, and it has been estimated that they number close to 300,000, have been deservedly alarmed at the number of public links and private courses which have been closed and are being closed so that they can be subdivided for homesites.

During the recent \$17,500 Los Angeles Open Tournament at Riviera, the rumor got around that the famous and beautiful course was to be closed and subdivided. This was immediately denied by the club president, but it was revealed by Columnist Braven Dyer in the Los Angeles Times that the famous Riviera polo fields, on which more than 5,000 cars were parked the final Sunday of the tournament, had already been sold, and would no longer be available for parking. This, perhaps, started the Riviera rumor.

But the story caused wide speculation among the golfers. They had seen the magnificent El Caballero CC course in the lush San Fernando Valley closed. It was here, back in 1927, that wee Bobby Cruickshank had scored such a spectacular victory in the second Los Angeles \$10,000 Open Tournament.

They had seen exclusive Midwick, the playground of Pasadena's millionaires, sold at auction to a banana merchant, and then had seen it cut up by subdividers. It was here, at the famous 16th or Lake Hole that Walter Hagen, playing the course for the first time, turned to his caddy and asked if it were possible to drive across the lake.

The lad, tall, raw-boned, and unsmiling answered: "Yes, Mr. Hagen, it can be driven."

Walter whipped out his driver and lashed into a screamer—which dropped into the water with a splash ten feet short of the fairway.

"Who," said Hagen in wrath, "can drive it?"

"I can," the boy answered, and Hagen handed him his driver.

A preliminary swing and the caddie, Elmer Vice, crashed out a booming tee shot which carried the lake with some to spare.

But today Midwick is a veritable city of modest homes—just as its famed polo fields where Eric Pedley, Carleton Burke, Tommy Hitchcock, Elmer Boeseke, and

Hugh Drury once met in international competition—have now become backyards, patios, garages and flower gardens. Midwick is but a memory.

Nor are these the only ones. Flintridge, where Fred J. Wright made his western debut and where the Hollywood comedian Vince Barnett "ribbed" Bobby Jones almost to exasperation, has become part homesites and part is maintained as bridle paths on the estate of Keith Spalding—but as far as golf goes—it is a thing of the past.

Add to these the famous Hollywood CC, the beautiful 36 hole public links layout—Sunset Fields—the California CC, famous through three decades for its hospitality and great invitation tournaments, Mountain Meadows, Indian Hill, St. Andrews, Sunset Canyon—they are all gone.

Golfers Squeezed Out

Southern California golf is feeling the pinch. The public courses, and they are excellent ones, are crowded from daylight to dark every day of the week; and the country clubs, without exception, have full membership and hundreds of applicants on their waiting lists.

Hundreds of golfers, yes thousands, have simply put their clubs away until golf gets less popular or until California golf courses catch up with the demand.

What is being done and what can be done to give Los Angeles, with its metropolitan population of more than 4,000,000, adequate golf facilities to meet the demand of those who would like to play?

In answering that question let's see first what Los Angeles has.

In the first place Los Angeles has four excellent public courses, Pasadena has two, Montebello has one and Long Beach one. In addition, Los Angeles County maintains a beautiful 18-hole public course at Santa Anita, a 9-hole course at Altadena, and an 18-hole course at Alondra Park. Add to these perhaps a dozen first class pay-as-you-play privately owned courses and you can comprehend the present public golf picture.

But the country club picture is rather dark. Even such a magnificent country club as Wilshire, in the very heart of Los Angeles, cannot too long stand up against the staggering taxes which are levied

against it—and it is but a question of time until it must go.

Los Angeles CC with its two magnificent courses and its multimillion dollar frontage on Wilshire Boulevard gives no indication of moving—but you can't tell what the future will bring. Even now a \$5,000,000 department store has been constructed on what was once one of the South Course fairways. It is possible that eventually the land will simply be too valuable to keep it as a golf course. And there are others—many others—which may find the growing metropolis and encroaching business too much for them to stand up against.

What, then, is the future?

It would seem that Los Angeles will have to develop golf centers 15, 20 and 25 miles out from the city center—golf centers which can be reached in half an hour's time by fast transportation.

Los Angeles Looking Ahead

Constructive thought toward such an end is being taken both by the city and county in the matter of utilizing flood control land which lies behind the huge dams which have been built to check the flooding Los Angeles, Tujunga, San Gabriel rivers and Ballona Creek. These flood control lands may, in part, be under water 10 days or two weeks of the year. But if golf courses are so constructed that the greens and tees will not be under water, the fairways will not be harmed, and the golf courses—on public owned land—could be constructed at reasonable cost.

Plans have now been drawn for two public courses at the Hansen Dam near Burbank, two more at the Sepulveda Dam, and it is possible that two or three public courses can be built in the Whittier Narrows. A County Golf Commission has also reported the possibility of developing other courses on public owned land along the Rio Hondo, Ballona Creek and Los Angeles River Bed near Long Beach.

In the meantime Los Angeles golfers will have to be content with playing under rather trying conditions if they can get a starting time at all.

The city has far outgrown its golf facilities and it is fast running out of land which could be used for golf course construction.

Tee Idea Brought Home from Supts. Meeting

By HOWARD FARRANT
Supt., Pine Brook CC, Weston, Mass.

I always attend our local golf course superintendents' meetings whenever I can, and I never have been to one but that I have seen and picked up new ideas that have been of interest to my club.

At one club I noticed three-foot tiles being used as tee markers and waste containers. We had been using some metal baskets; also some self-closing receptacles for trash. But since that time I have used the tile, setting the bell end into the ground a few inches. The tile is painted club colors with numbers of hole and yardage; some also have "replace turf" on them as a reminder to our members.

Anyone attending local meetings is doing an excellent turn for his club, and getting a chance to see the other fellow's course seems to give one an added punch to improve his own condition.

Fit Water, Fertilizer to Short Cut Fairways

By ROBERT HENDERSON
Supt., Country Club of Buffalo
(GCSA Paper)

During the many years that I have been at the Country Club of Buffalo, we have consistently cut our fairways on the short side. When the Country Club moved to the present location about 25 years ago, the fairways were seeded to bluegrass. We, at that time, cut about one inch and had what was considered very good fairways.

As time passed and player demands for better turf could not go unheeded, we seeded Colonial bent in our fairways. But, before doing so, a very considerable amount of native bents started to show, which, of course, made it necessary to change our methods of operation. We set our fairways units at 7/16 in. and for about 25 years we have been cutting at that height on a twice-a-week basis, often, when it becomes necessary, we cut three times a week.

The fairway water management program at my club is carried on with the specific thought that the system is supplementary to rain and not a facility to use indiscriminately. I mention this only to emphasize that our fairways are not over-watered, lush and soggy, but afford good lies on close-cut, heavy turf.

Our fertilizer program is what I consider the most important. It possibly may require greater amounts on close cut turf but I sincerely believe that where the budget will afford it the results are well worth it.

I do not maintain that those favoring long cut are all wrong in their contentions; much may be said in their favor—but, my members pay the bills and if by long and careful study, I can manage and maintain the type of turf on our fairways that they desire, that is, turf that will set the ball up on good, thick, short cut turf, and not bury it in long cut grass, that is the job I have to do.