

Pro's Hard Work Brings Course Back to Life

EVERYTHING from mortar shellfire to cattle hoofs have dug their way into the rich soil of Rocky Point golf course at Tampa, Fla., from the time it closed in 1940 to its reopening this past August.

Once recognized as one of the finest golf courses in the south, Rocky Point closed when the dark clouds of World War II appeared.

The entire area was taken over by the Army Air Force. No longer did the fledgling civilian golfer dig up the fairways with his irons, but army personnel from top generals down to the lowest private got in his golfing licks at The Point.

After the war the Air Force moved out and the Tampa National Guard unit decided to use the long rolling fairways and sharp bunkers to dig their fox holes. The course was turned into a guard training area.

Mortar shells, the ringing of rifle bullets, and the roar of tanks were familiar sounds at the once beautiful course.

Tampa was a city of 224,000 persons with only two 18 hole golf courses open to the average golfer. A third course was badly needed, and many golfers would ride by closed Rocky Point and express the wish that it would be reopened.

The city had bought the course back from the government, along with several hundred more acres. Finding no better use for the course it was used to graze cattle to cut down on the heavy growth.

Curly Works on Vacation

Then the big break came. J. S. (Curly) Hartman, professional at Mason City, Iowa, made his annual trek to Clearwater to spend a few weeks on the beaches and get in a little fishing while his home course was covered by snow.

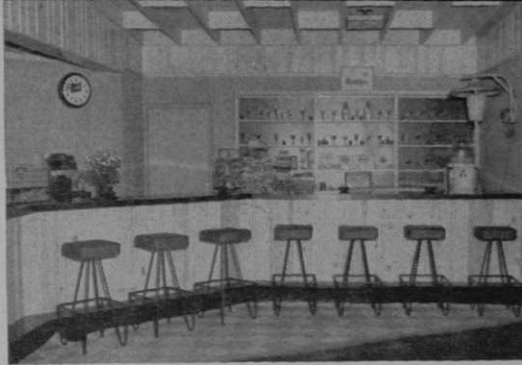
Curly, who had built three golf courses in his day, had been on the look-out for several years for a new course to buy or lease. He had heard talk around Florida golfing circles that Tampa was in dire need of another golf course. He had also heard about Rocky Point.

Being a man with plenty of the will to work and having no fear of risking his savings in the future of Florida, the likeable Iowa pro decided that Rocky Point could be just what he wanted.

With his lovely wife, Merle, a trip was made from nearby Clearwater to Rocky Point. The place was so grown-up that the Hartmans could hardly find the course. The once beautiful clubhouse built during



This is a view of number one fairway which is lined with tall pines, slumbering oaks with grey Spanish moss and graceful palm trees. The first hole is a 400 yard par four hole.



(L.) The big plate glass windows allow a resting golfer to watch both TV and the action on number one and 10 tees and 11 green. Tables in the lounge will accommodate those who want to enjoy their meal while watching the golfing action. (R.) The lavish bar completely furnished with all of the essentials of a top notch club bar is perfectly situated in the rear of the lounge. The kitchen is directly behind the bar.

Florida's famous boom had burned and was only blackened shambles.

After making almost a jungle trip the Hartmans located the course. Using a lot of imagination they envisioned what the place would look like with plenty of work.

Within 30 minutes after the Hartmans left Rocky Point they were in conference with the city of Tampa's Land Agent, Otis Bowman. They were told that the course might be leased, but only after much consideration by the city.

This deliberation also meant that the city must make a very close check on the ability of Curly. Tampa, with a mayor-commissioner form of government, is a

tightly operated city with an eye toward the protection of the taxpayers.

Bowman carried the Hartman's message to the city's mayor, Curtis Hixon. The mayor felt there was a need for another golf course, but he wanted to make sure that it was brought about in a sound and proper manner. In the field of politics you can not afford to make a mistake such as the failure of a golf course.

A thorough check of Hartman's ability and past experience was made by the city. After having his desk piled high with letters of commendation for Hartman, Mayor Hixon, who always has been a man with an eye toward the sports-loving citi-



Hartman's pro shop is placed so he can look out of the huge windows and see both number one and 10 tee. His public address microphone is right at the registration counter where he can direct the traffic without leaving the counter.

zen, decided that the Hartmans were just the right ones for Rocky Point.

A long term lease was worked out, and the city agreed to stipulations asked by the Hartmans.

Rehabilitation Started

Then the big job started. The once boom-time lavish greens had been scraped into sand greens during the army's occupation to reduce the upkeep. Curly knew that sand greens are obsolete in Florida. This meant that every green must be replanted.

There were many other changes that had to be made during the next 12 months. The course had one hole more than 600 yds. long. Curly cut down the length to less than 500 by moving the green and adding a water hole.

A pride and joy of the club now is the beautiful clubhouse. It has all of the essentials; an attractive bar, beautiful lounge, two exposed porches, a red tile patio, nice pro shop, locker rooms and excellent showers. One entire side of the clubhouse is glass, giving those in the lounge a full view of the first and 10th tees.

The clubhouse is well furnished. A beautiful copper fire place lined with old brick is the center attraction of the lounge, which has plenty of chairs and stools for TV fans.

Curly has arranged his loud speaker system so he can stand at the registration book and cash register in the clubhouse and direct the first and 10th tee.

The course itself has been returned to its once beautiful condition. It took less than 12 months, but those who saw the course before the reconditioning started can attest those were months of extremely hard work.

Graceful palm trees, tall straight pines, and waving oaks dot the course from one end to the other. The oaks are set off by long strands of grey Spanish moss that wave in the constant breezes of The Point. The course is within a mile of Tampa Bay so cooling breezes are almost always prevalent.

The turf of the course is among the best on the Florida West Coast. It is unusually low even for Florida land, and there is little need for water on the fairways. During the dry months, the soil retains moisture.

Curly has been able to get splendid turf Ormond Bermuda on the trees.

The greens have been changed from small sand circles to contoured greens

which rate well in design and condition. They are planted in 127, a hybrid Bermuda.

The course is a 6,201 yd. par 72 layout. Out of bounds shots are possible on six holes. Two of the six are par three holes. The second nine is all inside with no possible out of bounds shots.

Toledo Mayor Proclaims "Harry Moffitt Day"

Mayor Ollie Czelusta, mayor of Toledo, O., proclaimed Jan. 12 Harry L. Moffitt Day, calling on all the city's golfers to observe the celebration honoring the Heather Downs CC pro recently elected PGA president.

Moffitt's home club held a testimonial dinner that evening for the home town boy who has been the club's pro since 1946. Presentations were made to Moffitt by the club. Harold Sargent, PGA treas.; Tom Crane, PGA executive sec.; James C. Kroon, gen. chmn. of the dinner committee, other club officials and Herb Graffis spoke their appreciation of Moffitt as a professional of highest credit to his club, the game and his profession.

A large photograph of Moffitt for the clubhouse was unveiled by Heather Downs director Wayne Peppers. Judge Harvey G. Straub of Toledo's Court of Common Pleas was a most entertaining toastmaster at the dinner.

Numerous professionals and manufacturers' representatives were among the 200 attending.

Greensboro, N. C., Gets Golf Play Statistics

Jim Foster, Greensboro (N. C.) Record sports writer, has compiled records of play for the seventh consecutive year and found that the city's five white courses set a new high of 92,123 rounds for 1954.

With Nocho Park, the city's 9-hole Negro course, included, and the unrecorded rounds at the three private courses (Segefield, Greensboro CC and Starmount Forest) added, the Greensboro total, Foster says, would be well over 100,000 for 1954.

Unusually hot August and a cold and rainy November kept the 1954 record from going still higher, Foster noted.

Green Valley, a semi-private course, playing its first full year since enlarging from 9 to 18, lead all the city's courses with 23,122 rounds, a new year's record for play on a Greensboro course.