

Course at Park Gateway

Bids for Tourist Play

GATLINBURG, Tenn., has opened nine holes of its 18 at the Tennessee gateway to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The second nine will be completed this fall.

Construction of the course was begun in mid-December, 1954, as a project of the Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce. Wm. B. Langford was architect of the course. Gatlinburg City Mgr. W. W. Mynott was in general charge of construction and Alex McKay was in charge of planting and developing the course which has come along into good condition remarkably fast.

McKay, who has to his credit numerous notable jobs of golf course turf development in this part of the country, saved time and money in soil conditioning prior to seeding and by his knowledge of watering practice to fit the local conditions. Watering equipment was put in early.

The whole project represents good co-ordination by city and chamber of commerce officials with the men on the job. The basic idea was to get a course combining resort play qualities with cham-

pionship testing character and with this combination draw thousands to the community.

Site Selection Difficult

In this beautiful but rugged country, choice of a site that wouldn't be too demanding on the legs of the vacationers was not easy. But a site finally was selected that was in a lumpy, heavily wooded plateau. In this area are two jewels of small lakes.

Langford's first problem was to make walking not much of a strain on the 6400 yd. course. The out nine, now in play, has yardage of 3400 and par of 4-4-5-5-3-4-4-3-5—37. The par 5s are 530, 470 and 470 yds., all of them of decidedly different character. The par 3s are 170 and 130 yds.

Another of the architect's problems was to set the tees and greens in spots so they would have memorably beautiful scenic settings. Gatlinburg is selling scenery.

Incidentally, a part of the selling work is the training of caddies by the Gatlinburg CC pro, Harry W. (Cotton) Berrier. As the Great Smoky Mountain park is



There's a gradual uphill climb to the 9th green shown here and the smart golfer will play his first shot off the tee, 460 yds. away, to the right to follow the valley and come around the spur extending out into the fairway.



Stepping up to the first tee of the new Gatlinburg course presents a beautiful view of the Great Smoky mountains in the distance. One also gets a preview of what to expect in the way of the great variation in elevation as the ball from his first shot, if it travels more than 200 yds., drops down to 100 ft. below tee level. The golfer need not be too discouraged, however, for the course has been ingeniously laid out to hold fairway elevations to a minimum incline and thus avoiding any steep climbs.

the most-visited national park, those who stop off on park visits to play golf at Gatlinburg are going to include hundreds who insist on caddy service.

No Steep Changes

Langford solved the architectural problem ingeniously without steep climbs or slides. It was necessary to cut a tunnel between the ninth green and the tenth tee, build one bridge and construct a winding path from the tee to green of a short hole on the second nine.

Greens bunkering had an interesting element of design on a few holes. Traps

were located to keep wild shots from rolling down into locations where recoveries would involve sliding and climbing and extremely difficult shotmaking.

The 12th tee at an elevation of 1210 ft. above sea level is the highest tee or green location on the course. The lowest tee and green level is 1040 ft. which is the approximate elevation of the seventh green and the eighth tee.

Fairways are laid out so there are easy grades. Only on two holes are the greens more than 40 ft. higher than the tees and these are long holes with easy grades.

Trapping has generally been done exactly according to the architect's thoughtful and interesting planning. The construction departures from the plans don't do the holes affected any good but probably will not be noticed except by the more experienced golfers.

Development, operation and play at the course will receive considerable nationwide interest as an example of an alert city's action in building a fine golf course to draw tourist business.

The Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce already has publicity going strong on the course. The course was officially opened with pros and amateurs playing golf balls activated with material from the atomic plant at nearby Oak Ridge, Tenn. Caddies with Geiger counters easily located the stray shots.



Gatlinburg's steep elevations are a treat for eyes but tough to tread. This tunnel between the 9th green and 10th tee makes the going easy.