

The 421-yard 14th at the new Louviers course winds through a woods to a plateau green.

Company, Employees Collaborate in Big du Pont Golf Operation



By FRED BYROD

IT'S almost impossible for a person to work in the home office or one of the many plants of the giant duPont company in the Wilmington, Del. area without golf rubbing off on him.

Of 26,000 office and production employees, approximately one of five is a member of duPont C.C. Associate memberships (for wives, husbands and children of employees) account for another 3,000, bringing the total to about 8,300. When it is considered that in 1946 only 3,200 persons belonged to the club, estimates that the membership will reach five figures by 1957 are not idle speculation.

This rapid increase in membership over a period of a few years made it necessary for du Pont officials to plan expansion of employee golfing facilities as long as three years ago, even though a second 18 holes

had been added to the Wilmington layout in 1950. The result was that a 9-hole course, Black Gates, and an 18-hole course, Louviers, were opened for play in 1955. Black Gates adjoins the main clubhouse at Wilmington while Louviers is located 10 miles away at Newark.

Deer on the Fairways

All in all, 63 regulation holes and 3 practice holes are available to duPont employees. This adds up to the largest golf plant operation in the Middle Atlantic district and one of the biggest in the country.

The Louviers course, a rolling par 70 layout of 6573 yards was hacked out of virtual wilderness and the sight of deer gamboling across the fairways is not uncommon. It was designed by Bill and Dave Gordon, Doylestown, Pa., architects who also laid out the Black Gates nine which is 3193 yards long and requires 36 strokes for par shooting. Louviers, the special favorite of Granville Read, du Pont's chief engineer and a particularly avid golfer, doesn't have a clubhouse but it has excellent locker-room facilities and a fine pro shop, both housed under the same roof.

Oldest Course Built in '38

The company's oldest course is the 6207 yard, par 72 Nemours. It was built in 1938. The du Pont, built in 1950, is 6653 yards long and it takes a 71 to break even for the tour. Both of these courses, along with Black Gates, are located near the main



Terl Johnson (right), head pro, and Joe Mazur (2nd from left), ass't pro, talk over the Du Pont golf situation with two members.



Pro shop (left) and locker room at new Louviers course.

clubhouse in Wilmington which represents a \$3,000,000 investment in original construction costs and improvements. It was built in 1950.

This huge Georgian style structure has locker facilities for 1,800 men and 400 women. Dining room, offices and grills are air conditioned. Its ballroom can accommodate crowds of as high as 1200 and every Saturday night a dance is held for clubmembers. Many of the duPont company's social functions for employees are held in the main clubhouse which is also available to members for wedding receptions, bridge parties and other gatherings.

Partnership Arrangement

The du Pont golfing picture is not a one-sided arrangement in which the company picks up all the checks and pays all the bills. Initial cost of land acquisition and clubhouse construction are borne by the company, it is true, but from here the employees take over the expense of maintaining and operating the properties. To give an idea of how unrelenting they are in avoiding deficit financing, the employees voted early last year to double club dues in order to meet the increased costs of operating the additional 27 holes.

In spite of the 1955 increase in dues, golfing is brought to duPont employees at extremely low cost. Male dues, after a \$12 initiation fee, are \$36 a year for social membership and \$72 for unlimited membership. Dues for female employees are half these figures, while a special concession has been made to pensioners who are still assessed at the 1954 rates.

Wives pay \$14.40 (social, and \$28.80 (unlimited) for associate memberships; husbands of employees pay the same dues as males who work for the company. Employees' children get unlimited membership privileges for \$1.20 a month.

Thus, a fellow with a wife and two kids can keep the family swinging golf clubs the

year around for only \$129.60 or less than \$11 a month. Where else could he find cheaper entertainment?

Employee management of the four courses is vested in a 15-member board of governors. Advisors to the board are Emile F. duPont, director of the company's employee relations department, and his assistant, Gordon Andrews. Walter R. Kelk, duPont engineering department recreation head, is pres. of the board. He worked up to the top post after serving several years on various committees.

Head man at the main pro shop is Terl Johnson, who with his assistant, Joe Mazur, look after Nemours, du Pont and Black Gates. Johnson, who has been with duPont since 1949, has done much to stimulate golf among the juniors and it has become almost routine for him to conduct five or six group lessons daily among both the younger players and adults during the season. Pro at Louviers is Johnny Long, another du Pont veteran, who was promoted to the post after serving several years as Johnson's assistant.

Although Nemours, which is 18 years old, is listed as duPont's oldest course, the company provided golfing facilities for employees as early as 1923. A nine hole course was built that year on the present site of the duPont course and expanded to 18 in 1924. In the latter year more than \$100,000 was spent in constructing a new clubhouse, which along with a large tract of the original golfing property, was turned over to the company's Research Dept. in 1946. After Nemours was built in 1938, employees had two 18-hole courses on which to play for the next eight years until the property transfer mentioned above took place. Shortly after, adjoining farmland was acquired for expansion of the Wilmington golfing development which was brought to 45 holes last year with the building of the 9-hole Black Gates course.