

*We're still trying to catch up to 1930!  
There's a great need for course expansion . . .*

# Golf Today and Tomorrow

By REX McMORRIS

*Executive VP, National Golf Foundation*

Golf Today is a great many things to a great many people. Golf Tomorrow may mean those same things to those same people but I see Golf Tomorrow as meaning a great deal more to a great many more people. I say this of Golf Tomorrow because it is a great challenge and those of us associated with the National Golf Foundation have accepted the challenge. Although we have only recently taken up the cudgels already there is encouraging evidence of marked progress, a measured progress which conceivably has no limit.

Golf Today is the "Game of a Lifetime;" it's the greatest outdoor participant sport because it can be enjoyed at any age regardless of physical dexterity or handicap.

Golf Today is an investment of better than 1¼ billions of dollars in courses and playing facilities.

Golf Today is an annual expenditure of nearly a hundred million dollars for maintenance of courses and grounds. Of this amount better than 30 millions is spent on turf materials, chemicals, tools, equipment, supplies, repairs and replacements.

Golf Today is a market for far more than another 100 million dollars in annual sales of playing equipment and accessories.

## 66 Million Rounds

Golf Today is more than four million men, women and children playing better than sixty six million rounds on 5,218 of the finest courses in the world.

But, Golf Today is more than people and courses and money. Golf today to a great many people — who are important to the game — is fun — it's frustration — it's patience — it's perseverance, and above all and much more to the point as far as you gentlemen are concerned — it's a H — of a lot of hard work.

It's fun for those who play, and to some of those who play, I suppose it's frustrating. But primarily it's fun because of the

many exhibits which attest to the patience, perseverance and hard work on your part over the years which has given golfers progressively finer courses on which to play. Somehow, you manage to overcome those seemingly insurmountable hurdles, frustrating as they are — the elements, insects, disease and a million other perplexing problems you are expected to solve from time to time. I know it takes patience, lots of it, and perseverance too, to win most of those battles. By adding a heavy mixture of good old gray matter in the right proportions, persistent problems generally get licked.

Fortunately, you've had help. Years of patient study and research have gone into the development of finer strains of grasses, improved fertilizers and better soil conditioning. The chemical industry has developed new fungicides, herbicides and insecticides. You have more efficient maintenance equipment at your disposal. All of these and more represent perseverance on the part of an untold number of individuals who have contributed to the lasting progress of the game. It's as though an unseen hand had harnessed all of these individuals into one great team to make golf what it is today.

Perhaps that's the real secret of golf today, for — Golf Today, more than ever before is teamwork. In fact there are a great number of teams, ie; organizations, associations, clubs and groups, and more are being formed every day, whose purpose and function ultimately result in measured progress for the game.

## How Organization Benefits Golf

Take, for example your own association GCSA. Who will question for one minute the progress you've made. Although its purpose and function are tied directly to the welfare of its members, who can deny that its every action does in a very real way, contribute to the beneficial progress of golf in general. Every action of many organizations is made with only im-

*(Continued on page 110)*

This article has been condensed from a speech by Rex Morris to GCSA members at their 27th annual convention in Long Beach, Calif.

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## GOLF TODAY and TOMORROW

(Continued from page 91)

provement and progress in mind. This is true of the USGA and its regional turf service. The same goes for all turf groups and golf associations, and state and federal institutions. The teamwork of all make golf great today, for the truly great benefits are realized when they all work together.

In discussing Golf Today I've touched on only a few of the highlights and in outlining these points you will note that I have been unable to do so without emphasizing or inferring that considerable progress has been made.

In speaking of Golf Tomorrow I see this same continuing growth in the popularity of the game. However, before looking into the crystal ball, let's bring ourselves up to date on a few important statistics, with which some of you may not be too familiar.

Today more people are playing more golf than ever before. Here's why.

- What private club doesn't have a waiting list?
- How many private clubs today have inaugurated reserved starting times when only a short time ago such procedure was uncommon and in some instances, unheard of,
- More than a 100,000 college students are learning to play golf. More than 100 colleges and universities have golf courses and others are building — Wisconsin, Maryland, Indiana, Missouri, Michigan State are a few that come to mind at the moment who

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are either building or soon will be building new courses.

- More than 2,000 high schools have golf teams and the number is growing every year — Texas High School golf has grown to the point where there are now regional qualifying rounds for entrance in their state tournament.

## Industry Gets in Step

More than 80 industries operate and maintain golf course for their employees. Dupont has 63 or 72 holes operating out of one clubhouse, another 18 at another location. Other industries have 36-hole layouts — the newest being the National Cash Register Company in Dayton. Many others have 18 and 9-hole facilities. Allis-Chalmers acquired an 18-hole course last year and I understand Minnesota Mining has just purchased an 18-hole course. Look at the number of Seniors' Associations today compared to ten years ago or even five years ago — and — the growing number of Senior Tournaments.

And — if you think Senior golf is growing, take a look at Junior Golf today. Ten years ago the USJGC launched its National Junior Amateur Tournament with 26 boys from seven states. Today more than 30,000 participate in all 48 States and Hawaii. Though there is some overlapping, add to this the USGA Jr., the Western GA Junior and all the state and regional junior tournaments. All of this coupled with an increasing number of junior programs at local clubs funnel in an ever increasing number of converts annually.

Now let's take a look at what the common, everyday variety of golfer is doing. Increases in play around the country range from 3% to 8% with some noteworthy

records being piled up in several different areas. Right here at Recreation Park in Long Beach play on the 18-hole course was over 113,000 rounds last year. Next door in Los Angeles 123,000 rounds were played at Rancho for a daily average of 340. Play on all Los Angeles courses was up 3% to 690,000 rounds, 21,000 more than the previous high. In Minneapolis, where the season is much shorter, total rounds is considerably less but top weeks play on one course totaled 2,900 rounds with others at 2,185 and 2,149. Detroit reports over 100,000 rounds of play on one of its courses.

## Turnaway Business

As impressive as these figures may appear they fall short of the true picture. I'm told more than 20,000 golfers have registered to play on the city courses of Los Angeles and yet on any given weekend (Saturday and Sunday) only approximately 5,000 can play. What happens to the other 15,000? What happens to the uncounted thousands all over the United States who are in the same boat with these 15,000?

How many more people would be playing if there were more places to play? More to the point—

How many people give up playing because they can't find a place to play when they want to or when they can because of their hours of employment?

At the end of World War II total number of courses in the U.S. had dropped below 4,800. Today, for the first time since 1941, there are over 5,200 — 5,218 to be exact.

You may say that's fine, but let's not forget that in 1930 there were over 5,800 courses. Actually, the growth in the last

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10 years has been anything but spectacular. It's been a slow uphill climb, but certainly steady and stable.

The impact of a rapidly expanding population, the demand for living space, coupled with the 5-year drouth of building caused by the war, has made of many a golf course a juicy morsel that has been swallowed up by real estate developers for housing, shopping centers, schools, freeways, and airport expansion. In spite of this, progress has been made and is being made.

What then of Golf Tomorrow?

On the basis of the progress that has been made in the past twenty-five years I'll say the possibilities for the future are unlimited. That's a broad statement I realize, but let's take a look at that crystal ball and see what the future can be.

### Unlimited Potential

With better dissemination of information—getting the right information to the right people at the right time—whole-hearted teamwork and ample dosages of patience and perseverance golf tomorrow can become not only "The Game of A Lifetime", it can become America's greatest game.

The first step toward this goal is to provide more places to play—enough golf courses to take care of the demand of the ever increasing number who want to play—and at the same time provide the owners and operators, public and private, who furnish these facilities a fair return on their investment.

I'm happy to report encouraging progress is being made. In 1950 the National Golf Foundation started compiling statistics on new course development. In 1952 we set up a field service staff to assist individuals, groups and communities in planning, building and operating golf courses. In 1952 the people of the U.S. elected a president whose favorite recreation was playing golf. These and other contributing factors since that time have given impetus to the growth and development of golf courses and golf in general.

In 1953, for example, 61 of these new and urgently needed courses were opened for play.

In 1954, for example, 105 of these new and urgently needed courses were opened for play.

In 1955, for example, 127 of these new and urgently needed courses were opened for play.

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More encouraging, however, are these figures:

1953 — 109 new courses were under construction

1954 — 198 new courses were under construction

1955 — 285 new courses were under construction

In addition to these there were: 225 new courses being planned or considered in 1953

359 new courses being planned or considered in 1954

516 new courses being planned or considered in 1955

**Surface Hardly Scratched**

Will this activity keep up? Why not? Actually, we've hardly scratched the surface in developing the potential that is in store for golf in this country. Did you know there are over 730 cities and towns of 5,000 population that do not have a golf course? But why draw the line with towns of 5,000 population? There isn't any good reason why we should although there are those who will argue a town of 5,000

can't support a golf course. The truth of the matter is, and this will surprise you, in the State of Iowa, an almost wholly agricultural state, out of 87 towns under 5,000 population 84 have 9-hole golf courses the average age of which is 27 years. Don't you think there is a wide-open opportunity for golf tomorrow?

I suspect most of you thought I "stuck my neck out" when I said the possibilities for golf tomorrow are unlimited. I contend the evidence is weighted in my favor. If we can get the right information to the right people at the right time you are going to see more and more places to play and more and more people playing.

There are over 30,000 industries in this country — more and more of these will build courses and more and more employees will play golf.

There are 1800 colleges and universities and over 18,000 sizeable high schools. More school courses will be built and more students will be playing.

I don't have the count on the number of our military bases here and abroad but

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I do know more and more courses are being built at these bases both here and abroad. That means more and more of another segment of our population will be playing golf.

These facts alone coupled with the current increasing demands and pressure for more places to play far exceed the pace, encouraging as it is, at which we are moving today. If we are to catch up with the demand the pace must be accelerated for staggering as it may seem, it is nevertheless true.

We have 11 million more people of all ages in this country today than we had five year ago. By 1975 we will have 35 million more adults (20 years and over) than we have today. Golf Tomorrow? Opportunity? It's unlimited. We'll have the golfers. Where will they play?

## Planning and Selling Fairway Renovation

*(Continued from page 92)*

which, says "this road under construction. We apologize for the present condition of the road, and beg your indulgence while we make this improvement for you" . . . or words to that effect and as a result the sting of anger is somewhat subdued. You don't feel quite like the monster that you were prior to reading the sign. You begin to think that the people responsible for the present state of things may not be so bad after all. And so with the golfer, you must plant the thought before you plant the seed. If golfers are informed of what to expect, they will be better prepared, and thus will bear the inconvenience better.

(2) Will the membership stand behind the program of management necessary to keep the improved turfgrasses? This is of course a must, as renovation cannot be

entirely successful unless a program of management to suit the requirements of the particular grass is followed.

### Weigh the Pro and Con

Like everything that we do we must weigh the good and bad features before proceeding. Let's review some of the bad features first:

(1) **Player aggravation.** We have already discussed this factor and have suggested a possible remedy — or at least a way to reduce complaints.

(2) **Player inconvenience.** The golfer normally wants no part of any practice that will interfere with his golfing pleasure. The intangible costs far outweigh the material costs of a renovation project. This could be a strong factor in the decision as to whether or not any renovation project takes place.

Ed Casey, Superintendent of Baltusrol GC, says, "To give too much weight to the intangible costs anchors one to a negative approach." In fairway renovation the intangible costs such as member reaction, success or failure, maintaining a weak situation, and interference with play can be a strong deterrent, and although it varies between clubs — a strong positive approach on the superintendent's part is necessary."

(3) **Time consumed in completing renovation project.** This factor could be either listed under good or bad features depending on the amount of time consumed to complete the project. If the rough work could be completed in reasonable time, weather conditions permitting, then much less weight can be attached to the interference factor. The many factors that enter into the timing of the project will be discussed separately under timing of renovation.

(4) **Heavy play on courses today.** Player