



Patio, flowers, beautiful surroundings of clubhouse and No. 1 tee keep golfers coming back to Earl Yesberger's North Olmsted course.

North Olmsted GC— Model of 9-hole Course Operation

By **EARL F. YESBERGER**

Owner-Operator, North Olmsted (O.) GC

IVE been in golf for more than 30 years, first as a caddie, then as a supt. and for about the last 10 years as course owner-operator. At one time I was supt. of two courses, simultaneously, which gave



Yesberger

me only one ambition — I wanted to be in charge at a nice private club where I wouldn't have to knock myself out trying to take care of 36-golf holes. But the opportunity didn't come along and so I ended up building a course.

This was back in 1940. I worked 10 hours a day then on a municipal bus night run and spent the daylight hours constructing a course on a parcel of wooded land which I purchased that year. "Two-job Yesberger" is what they called me back in those crowded days.

I built the course alone. I was architect, contractor, head tractor driver, green builder and everything else. It took me eight long years, partly because I was working on the project during World War II and there were numerous interruptions. You remember Winston Churchill's famous "blood, sweat and tears," statement back in the war days. I got a first hand idea of what he was driving at, but finally on Memorial Day, 1948, I opened the gates and first golfer played North Olmsted.

I designed the course not with a championship layout in mind but with the idea of providing a short, interesting public golf operation. North Olmsted is 2700 yards long with two par 3 holes and 7 par 4s adding up to a 34.

Here are some of its maintenance and operation features in which I think other owners and would-be builders of 9-hole courses may be interested:

Irrigation: The drainage system empties into a creek that cuts through the center of the course. This is extremely convenient because it does away with large mains running the length of our 60 acres. I used the creek for an irrigation source through

1957 but I got too much sewage in my water. So, I built a small lake with 12-in. reinforced concrete walls last year and I am now using this. It is supplied by well water that is pumped in.

I have what I consider an unusual irrigation system. It consists of galvanized pipe with snap valves and sod cups in the center of the greens. Greens are underlaid with 1-in. copper pipe. Greens, tees and approaches are watered but not the fairways. My pump is a 20 hp, 200 gpm centrifugal, 125 to 135 lb. pressure and supplies a spiderweb sprinkling system. Besides irrigation, I use it for treatment with fungicide and water soluble nitrogen. These are introduced into the centrifugal pump with a sprayer and pumped out through the sprinkling heads. Fungicide is colored with a dye solution which enables me to determine exactly when to snap the sprinkler heads so as not to apply an overdose. Normally three times as much fungicide is applied as goes into the average treatment but I certainly have no argument with the results, not only from a cost but an artistic standpoint.

When I installed the irrigation system, I took photos of all connections and junctions, marked pipe sizes and filed them away for future reference.

Aerification: My program on this may not be considered orthodox, but we aerify greens in the winter. My theory: the right time for aerifying is when the ground is relatively dry and not frozen. Each green is aerified from two to four times, plugs are left out to weather and in the spring only small tufts of turf are left on the green surface. The greens are then verticut. After two mowings the greens are in excellent shape.

Topdressing: I mix enough topdressing for several seasons and re-work it every year. I feel that keeping it out in the weather gives it proper ageing. I favor topdressing because I am convinced that greens need regular replenishments of new soil and bacteria. This winter I plan to experiment by applying a layer of dressing over some aerified greens.

Fertilization: I depend on observation to determine when it is time to fertilize. Time of the year, moisture, temperature and traffic wear are my guides. My greens are of C-19, cut from 1/4 to 5/16. I used to cut to 3/16 but this slowed up play. I think the appearance of clover, etc. is the signal for fertilizing. I get a soil test once a year and in fertilizing, vary the applications through the band method so as to determine which one of three measured

applications is best for the greens.

Tees, Fairways, Roughs: Tees are top-dressed, fertilized and seeded with Astoria bent twice a year. Markers are moved ahead of tees for about two days a week to encourage recovery. On fairways (10 per cent Colonial bent, 40 per cent Kentucky blue and 50 per cent creeping red) I fertilize in the fall and spot fertilize in the spring. A light 2-4-D treatment is made in the spring shortly before dandelion time. Then follows a 2-4-D and 2-4-5-T mixture treatment in about 10 days. Fairway turf gives me little trouble probably because drainage is good. I keep roughs slightly higher than fairway height for reasons of beauty. The contrast makes the fairways stand out.

Appearance: I'm extremely fussy about the appearance of North Olmsted. I think more public course owners should feel that way because it gives our particular operation a better reputation among golfers. I shudder when I see broken flag poles, ill-kept flags, broken benches, dirty markers, filthy water fountains, traps overgrown with weeds, etc., etc., etc. Regardless of how you feel about it, appearance makes or breaks a course. I paint all course equipment or furniture once a year and keep trees, bushes and hedges trimmed. In recent years I have gone in for planting flowers and the golfers, especially women, have been very generous in commenting on how this improves things.

Operation: I have an Intercom with a master station located in my home, which is on the course, and three sub-stations in clubhouse, office and maintenance building. A P.A. system also is installed in the clubhouse. The two save millions of steps a year and enable us to give superior service to players. One person can run the first tee from the clubhouse with the P.A. system. A mike on the patio at the first tee is also a big help in getting players started. No person is allowed on the course without a ticket and children under 12 and spectators are barred because a line has to be drawn somewhere to protect the owner and the players.

We have gone all out to promote golf associations in our neighborhood. Leagues are encouraged. So successful have we been in these activities that, for example, 200 women play on week-day mornings.

Our clubhouse, small and compact, is located near the No. 1 tee. Being in this location, it enables us to operate the course with minimum help. We have three full time and two part time (including a pro) employees in addition to my wife and me.