

All in the Year's Work

Supt. Had Usual Trying Moments Preparing for Open

THE verdict of practically all of the 150 pros and amateurs who came to Winged Foot for the 59th Open was that the layout itself was eminently fair and that the course ranked with any that most of them had played in past USGA events. Turf connoisseurs among the participants went a phrase further and said that as far as the condition of the greens and fairways were concerned, a person would have had to take at least a third look before he could find anything that resembled a serious flaw.

If Sherwood Moore, Winged Foot's genial supt., had been able to do anything about the weather, especially those gusty winds off Long Island Sound, the players would have come away convinced that here was a fellow who came close to serving up the ultimate in fine playing conditions.

Among supts. it has become something of a tradition that at a club that is selected as the site of a big tournament, things, most of them not good, start happening. More often than not, they occur just a few days before the event gets underway. If



Sherwood Moore

they aren't real catastrophes by everyday standards, the importance of the occasion often inflates them beyond all proportion to their seriousness.

Pollock Had Anxious Moments

To show what can happen — last year at Llanerch CC in Philadelphia, where the PGA Championship was staged in mid-July, the weather until a week before the tournament was played was as though it had been imported from Bali. Then, Philadelphia got hit with a week of heavy if not steady rains and the relative humidity shot up and hovered around 70 or 80 per cent. Bob Pollock, Llanerch's supt., with many potential acres of wilt staring him in the face, probably was more aware of the discomfort index in those seven days than any person in the country. But in spite of his pre-tournament woes, Bob pulled through in fine shape.



This halfway house has been put into operation at Cherry Hills CC in Denver, site of the 1960 Open. Built on the same design as the clubhouse, the service center serves a wide variety of foods. It has 220 volt electric grill, charcoal broiler, refrigerated sandwich unit and soda fountain. It's also equipped with an electrolarm burglar system that is wired direct to the clubhouse.

Sherwood Moore's difficulties, fortunately, weren't deferred until the eleventh hour. In his case, they presented themselves in January when Winged Foot's big maintenance building was destroyed by fire. With it went all the club's maintenance equipment (it cost around \$50,000 to replace) and all the paraphernalia, such as ropes, posts, etc., that had been stored for use in the Open. By mid-March, Moore's equipment building, which cost \$30,000 to replace, had been restored. So that gave the Winged Foot greenmaster sufficient time to get straightened out before he had to concentrate on the finishing touches that would get the course rigged up for the Open.

USGA Satisfied

The USGA was quite well satisfied with Winged Foot in its natural state. Most of the alterations required involved the lengthening of tees and enlarging of traps. On No. 4 the tee was moved to put in a dogleg and on No. 12 a new tee was constructed to lengthen the hole and make it a bona fide par 5. Where traps were altered it was for the purpose of narrowing the entries to greens.

When the course was mowed for the big event, fairway landing areas were narrowed to an average of 33 yards, only

slightly less than they normally are, while the rough surrounding the greens was brought in a rather substantial distance on practically all holes.

Most of the maintenance work in 1958 and in the 1959 months preceding the Open was done with the big tournament in mind. Last fall and early this spring, low areas in the West course were sodded and a large number of tree stumps were removed. Greens were aerified last November, overseeded with Penncross and topdressed this spring. Wholesale seeding of fairways also was carried out last fall and in April and May of this year two medium applications of fertilizer were made. There was just enough rain and 90 deg. weather in May to give the West course a good cover of dense turf.

Two Difficult Days

About the only apprehension Moore felt as the Open grew near came on the Tuesday and Wednesday preceding the playing of the first round. Both of these days were extremely hot and the humidity started to build up. On the evening before the first round the fairways were watered and, in the meantime, the greens had been syringed. This undoubtedly would have headed off any tendency toward wilt. The

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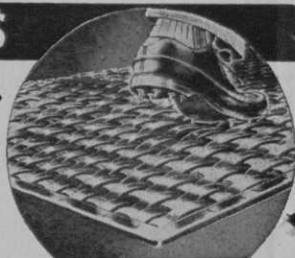
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Preparation for the Open

(Continued from page 24)

whole thing was resolved in Moore's favor early Thursday morning when the wind shifted into the northeast and the mid-afternoon temperature got no higher than 70.

The Winged Foot weather from then on was touch and go so far as playing conditions were concerned, but from a supt's standpoint it was pretty much what was wanted.

The setback caused by the January fire at Winged Foot would have been compounded had the club been located perhaps 100 or 200 miles north in what turned out this winter to be the New England winterkill belt. (This was described in an article that appeared on page 52 in June GOLFDOM). The area around Long Island Sound was hit hard by a cold winter that caused deeper than normal frost and brought higher than average winds and consequent extreme desiccation. Only a cooperative spring, something that didn't

make an early appearance in New England, enable Winged Foot's two courses to snap back.

Sherwood Moore candidly admits that he is happy that the fire that destroyed his maintenance headquarters, the tough winter, the preparation for the Open, and the big week in June are behind him. When the last putt dropped late on the afternoon of June 14 it brought an end to working under at least six months of heavy pressure and the rather frequent sleepless nights that a supt., preparing for an event such as the USGA extravaganza, has to endure. When it's all over, a supt. even gets to thinking about getting in a little golf on his own—something that Moore had to forego since last fall.

Moore, who is a GCSA national director, started preparing for his big assignment back in 1936 when he enrolled for the two year turf course under Prof. Lawrence Dickinson at the University of Massachusetts. His first job was as an assistant at Lake Mohawk (N. Y.) CC. In



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1941 he entered the Air Corps, in which he served four years. Then he went to Crestmont CC in West Orange, N. J., where he worked four years as supt. From here he moved over to Hollywood CC in Deal, N. J. for nine years, coming to Winged Foot late in 1957.

Merchandise Murals

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for prospective customers to swing clubs. The women's lounge and lockerroom also adjoin the shop.

Not shown in the right foreground of the photo is a door that leads to the office and shop storage room. The office is 14 x 10 ft., large enough for two large desks which are used by myself and my assistant, Joe Watrous. Our stock room is 10 x 10 ft. and has racks built in for storage of clubs, balls, shoes and all types of sportswear.

Personalized Products

I personalize as much as possible, using my own special shirt label, shopping bags that bear an imprint similar to the label, and occasionally introducing other reminders that Jack Hoffman is doing business in the Hillcrest CC pro shop.

We opened the shop a year ago this month. We haven't yet cornered all the business from our club members that I'd like to have, but I have noted one very encouraging trend — we're steadily getting more new customers while keeping the old. I feel that we are presenting our merchandise in a way that makes people want to continue to do business with us after they have started. As far as I can see, that's the best formula for a successful future in a pro operation.

1961 Open at Oakland Hills

USGA has awarded the 1961 National Open to Oakland Hills CC, Birmingham, Mich. The 1924 Open was played here and was won by Cyril Walker with 297. Ralph Guldahl won the 1937 Open at Oakland with 281, then a new record score for the championship. At Oakland Hills in 1951, with the course toughened somewhat, Ben Hogan won the Open with 287. The USGA announced at Winged Foot that the double qualifying system this year for Open entrants will be repeated in 1960.

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