



Coconino G & CC in Flagstaff is built around home sites and also is surrounded by home sites. (Right) Architect Bob Baldock (r) and his construction supt., Tom Caranci, had to haul in tons of topsoil to pad out fairways and greens.

Golf in Rarified Air

7,450
Feet Up

*Lack of Water, Topsoil, Didn't Stop
This Course From Being Built*

By OMER CRANE

Sports Dept., Fresno (Calif.) Bee

THE pinon nut people wouldn't recognize their old tribal grounds where braves once stomped before raiding a neighbor or where their squaws pounded the nuts from the pinon pine trees into flour.

Eighteen fingers of dark green, tipped by fingernails of lighter green and surrounded by patches of sand covers the rock strewn acres which Havasupai tribe once called "the gathering place of tribes."

Coconino — "the pinon nut people" — is what the Havasupai were called. They never quite cut the swath in Arizona's sometimes bloody frontier history the Navajo or the Apache did. Today the Havasupai live on a reservation in the Cataract Canyon down the Colorado River from the Grand Canyon.

Last summer, four miles southeast of Flagstaff, Ariz., the highest private country club and course in the country — and one of the "heavenliest" 18 holes in the world — was built. Flagstaff's golfers blessed by fine weather, got to test it early this year.

The Coconino G & CC is what the white man calls the layout. What else? Coconino (ko-ko-nee-no) is as familiar a name in Flagstaff as Manhattan in New York. Theaters, markets and the county, of which Flagstaff is the county seat and which is the second largest in area in the United States, are named Coconino.

Robert E. (Bob) Baldock, the Fresno, Calif., golf course architect who has built, or is building, 37 nine and 18-hole courses in the western states in recent years, has Coconino's No. 5 tee on a patch of earth 7,447 ft. above sea level.

This is nearly 300 ft. higher than the 9-hole Laramie (Wyo.) CC, which, at 7,165 ft., was the highest course playable in the U. S. The public Hillcrest course in Durango, Colo., is up in the clouds at 6,505 ft., and a new course near Evanston, Wyo., is at 6,700 ft. World famed Broadmoor at Colorado Springs is at 5,900 ft. There are numerous courses approaching the 7,000 level, including 9-hole layouts at Brockway, Tahoe City and Glenbrook on the rim of Lake Tahoe.

Perhaps the highest of them all is at Gulmarg, India — 8,500 ft.

Golf in the rarified air of 7,500 feet may cause Coconino's lowlander guests to

puff a bit. "But we'll have electric carts," promises Coconino Pres. C. C. Chesire, a car dealer-rancher who is the dynamo behind the club.

Building Coconino posed some special problems for Baldock and his construction crew, headed by Tom Caranci.

Water, or lack of it, was one. The annual average precipitation at Flagstaff is 25.65 ins. Yuma gets only 2.84. This is the highest for any measuring station in Arizona. But the nature of Flagstaff's soil permits little to percolate into the soil and thus be recovered for future use. There is precious little to waste.

The present Flagstaff CC of 9 holes has cottonseed greens; the fairways are of volunteer grass — rather dusty at times.

"It was a case of using sewer water — or no golf course," explains Baldock. "This is not as bad as it sounds. The disposal water is 85 per cent pure by the time it is pumped to the fairways and greens from a 5-acre reservoir we bulldozed in one corner of the course."

This same pool also serves as a water hazard around the second, sixth and eighth holes.

There were two other problems, common to mountain courses: One, the short growing season (about three months) when



Ivan Gantz (center) and Joe Curtin (r) each get checks of \$250 from Frank Sproggell, pro-mgr. of PGA National GC, for winning the Senior-Junior tournament held in conjunction with the PGA Senior Championship. The Senior-Junior event, played for the third time, is sponsored by Fawick Flexi-Grip Co., maker of Golf Pride Grips.

Astoria bent on the fairways and the delicate Seaside bent for the greens will thrive.

Another was the lack of topsoil. Tons of it had to be hauled in to cover the Coconino fairways to 4 or 5 ins. in depth.

The course alone cost about \$160,000. Clubhouse and other facilities will boost the total to nearly a half million. What justifies such confidence in a community whose population was listed as only 7,663 in 1950? Flagstaff, like big brother Phoenix, is a boom town. The chamber of commerce claims 22,000 in the metropolitan area today. The city is the railhead for the huge Glen Canyon Dam, now being constructed on the Colorado River by an army which soon will total 3,000.

Agriculture, lumber, cattle and sheep ranching are a part of the city's economy. Perhaps more important, however, is the mild climate — offering pleasant escape for vacationers.

Jack Morrison, pro at the Phoenix CC in the winter months, is taking over the new Coconino. Morrison is the son of Alex Morrison, one of the greats among pros of the Hagen-Sarazen era.

Kansas City GA Opens Office

Kansas City (Mo.) Golf Association recently opened an office at 4528 Main st., in Kansas City. It has been established as a clearing center for all golf activity in the metropolitan area and to avoid conflicts in tournament dates.

Loren Lamberth is the Association's executive secy. Officers are: John Thorpe, pres.; Bill Hare and Irl Oliver, vps; George Sinderson, secy., and Bob Mallin, treas.

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