

## Eastern Figures Point to Big Increase in Municipal Golf

By HARRY C. ECKHOFF

That 1959 will see the heaviest golf play in history on Eastern Area municipal courses is indicated by preliminary reports which show increases ranging from 10 to almost 50 per cent over 1958.

Washington, D.C.'s five 18-hole courses had a total of over 120,000 18-hole rounds played in 1959 by June 30. The figure for the same period in 1958 was about 100,000. Says S. G. Leoffler, Jr., of Leoffler Inc., lessee of Washington's courses: "During July we had 19,033 customers at our East Potomac course (36 holes); in 1958 during the same month there were 17,938. Overall, our golf play is up about 16 per cent this year over last."

Comparative statistics for golf play on Philadelphia's five 18-hole municipal courses for the first quarter of 1958 and 1959 show a gain of more than 18,000 18-hole rounds of play (over \$20,000 in receipts) in 1959 over 1958. According to Garry Renn, city dir. of golf, rounds played in the first quarter of 1959 were 55,535; in 1958 — 37,138. Golf play has been increasing consistently each year in Philadelphia, according to William Capman, secy. of Fairmount Park Commission. Total play in 1958 was 210,649 rounds; in 1957 — 200,740 rounds; in 1956 — 181,616; in 1955 — 161,300. Total receipts for 1958 were \$239,273 and for 1957, \$226,247.

### Range for Waiting Players

In commenting on this year's golf play at Westchester County's (N. Y.) five 18-hole golf courses, Charles E. Pound, general supt., says, "New 4th of July weekend golf play records were established with 5,738 rounds being played during the 3-day holiday. At mid point of the current season, 182,191 rounds had been played on the five courses; last year's total at the same time was 169,233 rounds. This is justification for including in the future park development program additional golf facilities. This year at the Mohansic golf course, we have opened a golf driving range limited to golfers awaiting their turn at the first tee. It has proved very



Don Lachez (r), Borger, Tex., who won driving contest at Jaycee Junior tournament, Elizabeth Manor CC, Portsmouth, Va., gets Spalding trophy from Bob Hughes, company sales rep. Young Lachez's prize winning blow measured 268 yards.

successful and satisfying to golfers." Westchester County's golf courses had 261,960 rounds of play in 1958. Total for 1957 was 238,595 rounds.

Ernie Smith, mgr. of Binghamton, New York's Ely Park 18-hole course, reports that golf play this year is up 25 per cent over last. In Rochester, N.Y., municipal courses (total 54 holes) had grossed \$67,166 by Aug. 15 of this year. Total receipts for 1958 were \$90,690. Rochester probably has the lowest green fees in the entire Eastern Area: \$1.00 any day of the week and a \$10 season ticket good on weekdays only; also a \$10 season ticket good on weekends only and a \$20.00 season ticket with no limit on play.

Increasing golf play has been consistent on Portland, Me. 18-hole Riverside course for several years, says Karl Switzer, city parks and recreation dir. As of June 30, receipts exceeded those of a year ago by \$3,742. Season memberships have also reached an all time high of 350. There were 315 in 1958. Average daily play during the past four seasons has increased as follows: 1955—124; 1956—142; 1957—200; 1958—205.

According to National Golf Foundation's ten year (1948-58) golf growth statistics, there has been an increase of 16 per cent in the number of the nation's municipal golf courses. There are now 855 in play. While these courses comprise only about 15 per cent of the total course (5745) in the U.S. they handle about 40 per cent of the nation's play. U.S. population has increased 19 per cent in the last decade. Golfers have increased 44.8 per cent during the same period.