



Asheville muni is one of the mid-south's most beautiful courses.

Asheville Surmounts Muni Hump — Earns Nice Profit for City

By EARL MCGUIRE

Asheville (N.C.) Municipal Golf Course is a picturesque 18-hole championship layout nestled back in the mountains of Western North Carolina where a combination of efficient and progressive management paid off in 1959 in one of the course's top years.

While many another city-operated golf course has limped along trying to barely squeeze into the black, break even or hold its deficit at a level that wouldn't get the City Fathers aroused, Asheville Municipal is operating in the clear. At the close of its fiscal year the course announced it had met all salaries, paid all costs of maintenance and settled all bills. Then the management presented the city a tidy net profit that ran well into four figures.

The net profit of almost \$6,000 represented the course's first significant profitable year. This was the result of a steady increase in the number of persons using the course's facilities. A total of 19,165 individuals played at Asheville Municipal during its last fiscal year. That, by no means, ranks the course among the country's largest municipal layouts — but participation was up over 2,000 in comparison with 1958 and some 5,000 better than any of the five years previous to that. By the close of the present fiscal year, officials hope Asheville Municipal will be well on its way to a total play of 25,000. The course's progressive approach to management is beginning to pay off.

Asheville Municipal in some respects kimps along like many of its municipal

brethren. During the past fiscal year the course expended only \$20,000 in operating costs. Construction costs for a new, attractive stone clubhouse, however, were paid off during 1959. Despite the lack of a large operating budget, the course has made the most out of a simple, three-pronged, approach to its operation:

(1) The course has not been content with greens, fairways and tees that are not in the best of condition;

(2) The pro shop caters to the special needs of its clientele in an effort to spur interest in the course and game;

(3) The course has stayed "in the news" and before the eyes of the thousands of tourists who flock to the Carolinas.

The course, designed by Donald Ross, the famed architect, offers two sides of entirely different character.

One's Easy, One's Tough

The front side is a level, wide-open 3,246 yards to be negotiated in 36 strokes. It is made to order for the weekend golfer. He can swing away with little worry about getting in trouble and play a fast nine holes without the strain of looking for lost balls or climbing hills. Though Asheville Municipal competes, at least to some extent, with three other courses in the city and a batch of others in the mountain resort areas that surround Asheville, many a golfer prefers the municipal course.

The back side is the challenging side. Narrow, tree-lined fairways slant or roll off, some quite sharply. Tees and pins are built and placed with challenging effects. Difficult greens give even the polished golfer an interesting afternoon. The back nine stretches 3,166 yards and is par 36.

"So most of the possibilities are there," says Harry McMinn of the course staff, "and it's up to the municipal management to make it attractive to the golfer."

The pro shop is McMinn's pride. The assortment of equipment on hand is large and kept at prices McMinn feels municipal course customers can afford. If it takes a set of head covers or a hat to make a deal, McMinn often tosses in one or the other.

Though the majority of Asheville Municipal's golfers are local citizens signed up during the course's annual membership campaign, the tourist has not gone unnoticed in an area that is significantly tourist-conscious.

Large and prominent signs at key points in and around the city spell out the course's virtues and direct the prospective golfer to the layout which is on the outskirts of the city. In addition, the course advertises regularly in local newspapers.