

Big Boom in Course Building on Long Island

By JOHN M. BRENNAN

Golf, through the years, was said to be a game designed for cheap land. But the trend is quite different these days, especially within the shadow of Manhattan's skyscrapers where the price tag on terra firma is the highest in the world.

It is understandable that golf is enjoying its greatest popularity on expensive land not too far removed from Gotham on Long Island. There were far too few courses for an expanding golf population for a decade as real estate subdividers hacked away at more than a dozen fine private layouts within the New York City suburban area.

But an unprecedented golfing boom now is taking place — a complete reversal of the post-World War II trend as the courses began to disappear from the scene.

All Start Together

Long Island's golfing surge began about the time of digging of the first dirt for the World Fair being built, in Flushing Meadow, with the start of the new stadium on Flushing Bay for the National League New York Mets and the building of an 80-mile six-lane Expressway that will link the Big City with Peconic Bay.

When Robert Moses launches his pet project at Flushing Meadow in 1964, Long Island will have at least 25 golf courses that did not exist when the first dirt was spaded to make room for the World Fair.

And, the strip of land that juts east of Manhattan for 120 miles and runs 20 miles from the Long Island Sound to the Atlantic wasn't exactly barren of courses in 1960. There were 49 private clubs two years ago, 18 public and three maintained by New York City as part of its chain of 10 layouts in four boroughs.

Most of the \$50,000,000 being expended for Long Island's new courses has and is going into the purchase and development of former Gold Coast estates. Most



Lake Moree CC in Fairlee again will be the site of the Vermont Open, which will be played June 18-19. The tournament is sponsored by the club and Smirnoff Vodka and offers \$3,000 in cash and prizes. Bill Ezinicki won the 1961 event with a 131.

Photo shows first tee at Fairlee.

of these world-famous landmarks with their 40 to 60-room mansions and manor houses were built between the two major wars. Their owners have passed on and taxes have made impossible their continuance as private residences.

Another \$5,000,000 is being spent on the improvement of older structures and building new clubhouses for such clubs as Seawane Harbor at Hewlett, North Hills GC in Manhasset and Hempstead GC.

A majority of the new courses, such as Cedar Brook, where former National Open champion Tommy Bolt is head pro, Woodcrest, Muttontown, Old Westbury, Indian Hill, Hauppauge, Hillantree, Merrywood, Syosset, Tam O'Shanter, Dix Hills, the two courses designed for the Marshall Field estate and Sunken Meadow, are within easy reach of the new Expressway.

Another newcomer to the scene is Island's End being built by Charles K. Martin of Commack, a protege of the late Walter J. Grego who nurtured the turf at Winged Foot, Yankee Stadium, Shinnecock Hills, Middle Bay, Bayside and other clubs.

Construction Record?

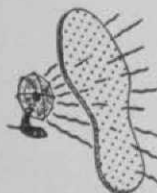
Martin, who seeded Meadow Brook and Deepdale's new courses and redesigned Pelham, set some kind of record for Long Island when he built Tam O'Shanter in Brookville, an 18-hole layout, in three months last Summer. He had 50 pieces of machinery and 64 men on the job during the 90-day period.

Simultaneously, Martin was finishing the job at Island's End, located at the northeast extremity of the island; building

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Long Island Boom

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the new 18-hole facility at Indian Hill, located at Fort Salonge, and carving out nine holes for Commack Hills, which now has 27 located in the Huntington sector. Martin starts work shortly on two new courses, located in Suffolk.

New York State, which operates the five-course layout at Bethpage State Park through the Long Island Parkway Commission, is building 27 holes at Sunk-en Meadow. The City of New York is to add 27 holes at Marine Park, where repossessed land is being pressed into use to augment the city chain. This layout will fringe International Airport at Idle-wild.

Taxed out of Existence

North Hills CC, after 33 years within the city limits, was taxed out of existence but will be the first — and perhaps last — of the New York City organizations to relocate on a course it is building at Manhasset. Fresh Meadow sold its Flushing layout but purchased the old Lakeville tract in neighboring Nassau. North Hills sold its city holdings for more than \$6,000,000; a record. Stockholders collected windfalls of \$20,000 on original investments of \$1,500. Nine holes of the old North Hills course will be acquired by the city and made into an 18-hole short course.

Other new courses include South Fork, Bridgehampton, Laurel Hollow and Pat Lordi's Jericho CC.

Some of the palatial estates developed into golf courses, in addition to Marshall Field's in Huntington, are those of Howard Brokaw, Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney and Mrs. Sloane Vanderbilt Tobin. J. H. (Jock) Whitney, the multi-millionaire publisher, who lives at Manhasset on a 600-acre estate with his sister, Mrs. Charles Payson, one of the backers of the New York Mets, eventually will permit construction of several courses, one to be used by the staff of North Shore Hospital, a pet project of Whitney and his sister.

Saves the Turf

Ray Gettle, supt. at Irem Temple CC, Dallas, Pa., has put legs under all the large containers scattered around the course and thus is saving turf. The containers are elevated to about one foot above the ground and the grass beneath them now is thriving.