

Growth of Municipal Golf Is Phenomena of the '60s

By HARRY C. ECKHOFF
Director, Eastern Region
National Golf Foundation

The U.S. is in the midst of a recreational splurge never before equalled in its history. Americans, as a whole, no longer seem to be content to sit on the sidelines and enjoy their leisure as spectators. A growing number is actively participating in recreational activities and the game of golf, once regarded as only for an exclusive group, has become a favorite pastime enjoyed by individuals at almost all economic levels.

Cities, counties and states throughout the nation are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of golf as a recreational activity. Many municipalities are initiating action for construction of public courses in order to alleviate the current shortage of such facilities.

Approach 1,000 Mark

National Golf Foundation records reveal there were 931 city, county and state operated golf courses in the nation as of Nov. 1, 1962. This includes 872 regulation and 50 Par-3 layouts. While municipal golf operations represent only about 14 per cent of the nation's golf courses, they serve about 40 per cent of the country's golf players.

The number of rounds of golf played each year on municipal courses is staggering. Play ranges anywhere from 40,000 to 115,000 18-hole rounds on each 18-hole course annually. An excellent example of municipal golf growth is the City of Baltimore, Md., which has four 18-hole courses and one 9-hole course in operation. A recent letter from L. Edgar Myerly, superintendent of parks for Baltimore, says in part: "In 1961 we played 286,150 rounds on our courses. In 1962, every indication pointed to our exceeding 300,000 for the first time. However we had no golf after Dec. 20 because of snow. Our final figure was 296,131 rounds. This is, by far, the greatest play in any one year on public courses in Baltimore. Golf seems to continue to become more popular every year."

Why Is Golf So Popular

Why has golf become such a popular sport? There are numerous reasons. Major golf tournaments and television pro-

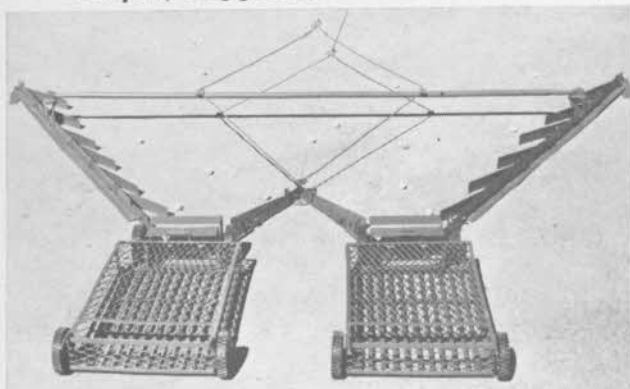
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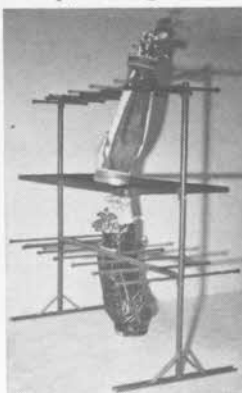
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grams have had an influencing effect. NBC last season presented 115 hours of golf programs — up from 11 hours only two years ago. An executive of another network estimates that total network coverage of golf has increased 50 per cent in the last two years. The results of these TV programs can best be stated by a recent quote of a noted columnist (Bob Considine) who said: "The only knock I can put on TV golf is that it is so good it drives new thousands of players into the game each week."

Women's Play Increases

Newspapers and magazines continue to give greater coverage of golf. Reader interest has never been higher.

The greatest increase in golfers in the past five years has been among women — an increase of over 35 per cent. More women and Junior golfers are factors that keep golf courses busy on weekdays.

Older people are taking up golf. They are finding it a game they can play at a time in life when they have to give up most other sports. The powered golf car has been a factor here; so have the shorter Par 3 and Par 60 courses which have tended to equalize competition for those

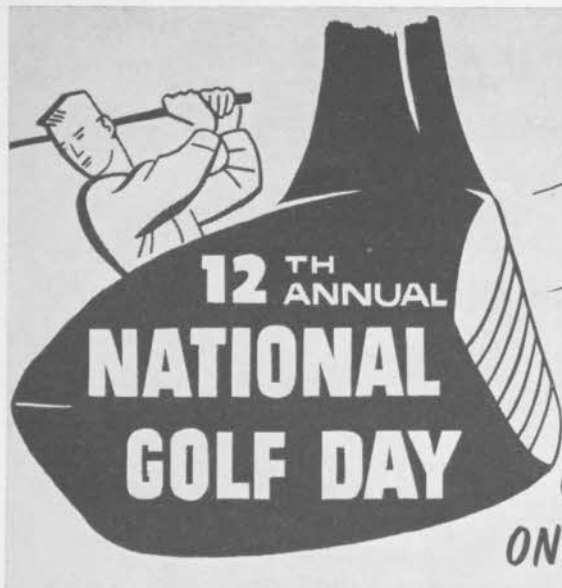
who may find a full length course a bit too strenuous. As pointed out in a recent book, "Recreation in The Senior Years", by Arthur Williams: "Recreation is an extremely important aid in growing old gracefully. People who stay young despite their years do so because of an active interest which provides satisfaction through participation." Perhaps that is why senior citizens are finding golf so interesting and challenging.

Need For More Courses

With about 7000 golf courses of all types (nines, 18s, standard lengths and Par-3's) and a population of around 185,000,000, the nation now has a golf course of some sort for every 26,400 persons. There are probably seven million golfers in the U.S. playing the 7000 courses in existence — about 1000 golfers per course. This definitely indicates a need for more courses.

There is every indication that there will be an even greater need for more golf facilities. Factors and trends which will affect golf in the years immediately ahead are:

The anticipated growth of population in the United States during the 10-year



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period 1960-1970. Reliable studies reveal that 25,000,000 additional people will be added to our population by 1970. While there is expected to be an overall increase of about 19 per cent, the 18 to 21 age group will increase 56 per cent.

Another segment of the nation's society — the over 60 age group — is constantly increasing. In the 1950's this group increased about 33½ per cent. It is believed it will increase another 20 per cent during the 1960's. In the United States and Canada one of every seven persons is past sixty.

Another factor which should increase golf play is more leisure time. At the turn of the century the work week was 60 hours. Shortly after World War II it was reduced to 40 hours. Today it has been reduced to 35 hours in some areas and there is every indication that it will continue to be lowered. Some studies indicate a 30 hour work week may be the general rule in the 1970's. With automation aiding both manufacturing and office workers, today's jobs are no longer as tiring as they formerly were. Likewise the migration to the suburbs is providing

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impetus for more outdoor recreational activity.

Family incomes are expected to increase about 20 per cent by 1970 and almost half the families in the nation will have annual incomes over \$7500 after taxes. With more leisure time and larger pay checks, it can be assumed that Americans will be spending a much higher percentage on recreation.

IRS Proposes Taking Another Meal Away from Employee

A proposed new Internal Revenue Service regulation states that an employee will be entitled to exclude a meal from gross income only if required to be on duty during the time the meal is consumed. The regulations cites an example of a waitress scheduled to go on duty at 7 a.m. who is encouraged by her employer to arrive at 6:30 to eat breakfast. IRS thinks this meal is not at the convenience of the employer because the waitress could eat elsewhere and isn't required to be available for duty.

The Club Managers' Association argues that this is ridiculous. Throughout the food service industry, says CMAA, it has been traditional that an employee is en-

titled to any meal that he or she "works". The IRS heretofore has recognized the tradition. To change it would put a burden on management to determine meal by meal, and employee by employee which meals are income and which are to be excluded. In addition, it would confuse the employee and at best produce minimal income for the government.

Make or Break Job

Guy Bellitt, pro at Whittier Narrows in San Gabriel, Calif., says that few men in public service have a better opportunity to demonstrate their value to a community than a pro at a new public course. His personality brings them in or turns them away, says Guy, and revenue realized by the municipality is reflected accordingly.

NCPGA Advisory Committee

The Northern California PGA section recently named its first advisory committee. It includes Bob Roos and Eugene Selva, Lucky International Open officials; Ernie Ford, the actor; George Gnau, president of the NCGA; Ed Lowrey, San Francisco auto dealer; and Reg Renfree, Sacramento recreation director.