



Rock Island Argus photos by Sam Bjorkman.

Credit Island's 12th tee is down there somewhere, but Butch Miller, who is inspecting the damage, won't be driving off it even though he is getting lined up to go through the motions.

When Courses Are Flooded What's A Little Thing Like Pythium?

Davenport's Credit Island and Rock Island's Arsenal GC will be either knocked out or slow in coming back as a result of the damage caused by the rampaging Mississippi

By M. E. DEYO

Not all the victims of the "Great Flood of '65" were people and their property. Two golf courses suffered extensive damage, as well. They are Credit Island GC and Rock Island Arsenal GC, both laid out on islands in the Mississippi River between Davenport, Ia. and Rock Island, Ill.

Can you revive a golf course completely engulfed by Mississippi flood waters for nearly five weeks? How can it be done? How long will it take?

These questions have confronted the Davenport park board, the director of

parks and recreation, Emil Plambeck, and the public links head pro, Bob Fry, and his assistants, Bob Peeples, who is in charge at Emeis, and Dean Johnson of Duck Creek, ever since the causeway to Credit Island GC and Park flooded out at the 12-foot stage on April 11.

Plenty of Warning

There was plenty of warning that the flood would be a bad one, of course. River towns the length of the upper Mississippi were watching the stages at St. Paul and Minneapolis, and the Army Corps of Engineers' predictions anxiously.

But that it would be the worst flood in 100 years in the Quint-City area could hardly have been foreseen as the river hit the 15-foot flood stage on April 16. (The Quint-Cities are Davenport and Bettendorf, Ia. and Rock Island, Moline and East Moline, Ill.)

Who would have thought then that the flood would top the '51 crest of 18.3 and the '52 crest of 18.6 by four feet and hit a staggering 22.44 feet on C-Day, April 28? Or that

The flood stage would last 28 days from April 15 to May 12. . . .

The Quint-Cities would sustain over \$9,000,000 in property damage and flood protection costs. . . .

That more than 11,000 persons would be forced from their homes in the two counties (Rock Island and Scott) in which the Quint-Cities are located?

Flood Timetable

Credit Island had its own flood timetable and record. Park director, Emil Plambeck, logged it this way:

April 11—causeway to the island under water;

April 19—water on course;

April 20—course completely covered;

May 10—workmen back on island to begin cleanup and road rebuilding operations;

May 20—some water still left in low-lying spots—course muddy yet;

May 24—probable date course com-



Ol' Man River keeps rolling here. Sandbags on the "low" 9 at Rock Island Arsenal delayed onset of the flood, but eventually they weren't enough, and the course was severely damaged.

pletely water-free.

And what has nearly five weeks under water done? The flood of 1952 showed that 17 days of flooding was almost sure death to the grass. Now it seems to be



This lonesome little patch of turf is Credit Island's 10th green — the last spot on the 5,800 yard course that isn't under water. Photo was taken from a helicopter.

smothered by the combined water, silt and sand. No blades were showing when a preliminary inspection was made in early May. It didn't look as though the greens would come back at all. (Tennis courts, picnic grounds and ball fields in the park areas on the Island are similarly affected.)

There are bad washes in the causeway and roadways. Approximately 200 yards were completely washed out — reduced from 30 to 15 feet in width.

Mud and silt have been deposited across the roads and on the course in a sandbar effect where the water eddied.

Clubhouse, Pro Shop Hard Hit

The main floor of the clubhouse has been severely damaged. (It was sand-bagged, but this emergency protection did not hold very well.) There is about five feet of water in the pro shop, concession and restroom areas.

From their experience with the '52 flood, golf and maintenance personnel knew what to do beforehand. And, with ample warning from the Rock Island Engineers and weather forecasts, they knew they had about a week to do the work. Says Bob Fry: "We took all the equipment out of the clubhouse we could, and put the rest upstairs." Thus, all movable equipment and merchandise was saved.

Three trucks and a tractor used in the final stages of preparing for the flood were blocked up in front of Credit Island Inn (the clubhouse which houses the pro shop) to "ride out" the flood.

"We thought we had the equipment out of the water, but it got a little higher than expected," says Emil Plambeck. A little higher, indeed! On May 12, 15 days after the crest, the vehicles were still half submerged.

Not to be Abandoned

Will the Credit Island course and park (Davenport's largest playland) be abandoned for another site less susceptible to flooding? No, say members of the Davenport park board. They not only plan to rehabilitate the course but remodel to place both first and tenth tees near the clubhouse.

No, says Mayor Ray O'Brien. "Credit Island makes enough money to pay for an occasional flood," he commented during an inspection tour of the island with



Fairways at Credit Island are distinctly outlined by combination of high water and trees. That's the clubhouse roof sticking out at top left of the photo.

other city officials on May 14. (The course grossed approximately \$50,000 for almost 42,000 rounds of golf in 1964.)

Rehabilitation Plan

Plans for rehabilitation have been made. Plambeck has outlined the general sequence in this way:

1. Get roadways under repair. (About 1000 cubic yards of rock have already been used to fill in the washouts and bring the road surface up to the correct height.)
2. Remove debris—trees, logs, planks, etc.
3. Remove mud and silt "sandbars" with end-loaders. (Plambeck commented dryly, "We may end up with elevated sand traps.")
4. Get the water off the island. (It has been draining through four outlets as the river lowers.)
5. Let the land dry out.
6. Do a complete re-seeding and partial remodeling simultaneously (The board

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Flood Hits Courses

(Continued from page 24)

was to make its final decisions at a meeting on the island June 2.)

Re-Seeding Estimate

How much seed will be needed for the 5800-yard, par 70 course? Plambeck estimated (and emphasized that this is only a preliminary figure based on incomplete inspection) that the greens may need about 350 pounds of Pencross seed and perhaps \$3,000 worth of seed for the fairways. He estimated an overall cost of \$10,000 for seed and materials only—not counting labor—but re-emphasized that this, too, cannot be considered final or accurate.

The regular crew of six men was used for the work along with extra employees who were brought in for the initial cleanup.

After the remodeling and re-seeding is finished, time will be needed for the seed to germinate — plus more time for the stands of turf to thicken and fill out. How long before Credit Island course will be

back in play again?

Says the head pro, Bob Fry: "I don't think it will be opened at all this year."

Says Emil Plambeck, a man who has witnessed the ravaging aspects of flood and the healing effects of nature many times in his 17 years with the park board, "I have found that steady work and steady plodding get things done."

How does the loss of Credit Island for the current season affect Davenport's public links setup?

Credit Island (in operation since 1921) is a flat course, usually open from April 15 to Jan. 1. It is a good teaching course and is well patronized by "Golden Agers" — 2,526 rounds were played there in 1964 by golfers 65 and older. (Plus 36,485 regular and 2,810 junior rounds for a '64 total of 41,821.) Eighteen-hole fees are 60 cents for juniors and elders and \$1.50 for regulars.

According to Bob Peebles, assistant pro, whose usual assignment is Credit Island, many older people who play there three and four times a week find both Duck Creek and Emeis too hilly and

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tiring and the \$6 golf cart rental too expensive.

Though Fry, Peebles and Johnson will teach as much as possible, there will be a definite loss in total lesson revenue with only two courses going in 1965.

Reservations Shifted

Season reservations made at Credit Island have had to be shifted to the other two courses. Dean Johnson says that last year at Duck Creek, reservations ran until 2 p.m. on Saturdays, while this season they run until 4 p.m. (with players starting six minutes apart).

Golfers begin coming to Duck Creek at 5:30 a.m. on weekdays and play until dark, so working hours for course personnel literally stretch from daylight to late evening.

Now, with only two courses playable, Bob Peebles cites a recent Saturday at Emeis with a record crowd of 370 — 40 or 50 more than any previous high. Dean Johnson says a weekday record was set at Duck Creek on a Monday in mid-May. A total of 333 Juniors were out that day.

The Arsenal GC's flood experience was somewhat different than that of Credit Island's—just as the club itself is a different type of organization. Built in 1893, it is one of the oldest private clubs west of Chicago and is located on government property. The island is headquarters for the Army Weapons Command, the Rock Island Arsenal and the district Corps of Engineers. One of the club's unique possessions is its lease, issued by President Taft.

Arsenal pro, Ike Cheyes, had a rather rueful smile on his face when he said the subtitle for this section should be, "They just put in watered fairways." Yes, they did—all new this year.

"Low" 9 Hard Hit

The course began getting natural — but unwanted — watering about April 15, when seepage from backed-up storm drains and the flood water curving around the "low 9" began showing up on holes Nos. 1 and 8. (Actually, the "low 9" on the river side of the course had to be closed five days earlier.) There was still

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some water left May 13, though it was expected to be completely gone within ten days.

The "high 9" was closed also for about 10 days at the height of the flood crisis while the dikes were being sandbagged at the lower end of the course. (They had been piled for a crest of 19 to 21 feet.) Fortunately, everything held and the course was not subjected to washing and swift, eroding currents as was Credit Island.

Tees Destroyed

The aftermath is bad enough, however. Cheves says there is rot-out on 50 per cent of the fairways and two of the greens on the "low 9." Most of the tees have been completely destroyed.

The roadways were damaged by water, though not washed out. There was water in the basement of the clubhouse where Cheves has his office and storage space, but he reports no loss of merchandise.

Though the course was still too wet (May 21) for a close inspection tour, Cheves thinks rehabilitation will have to include re-seeding of all tees and greens that were lost, as well as re-seeding of the fairways. He makes a rough, minimum estimate of \$25,000 for materials and labor to do the job.

Course personnel hope to have the "low 9" open for play, though not under ideal conditions, by July 1. In the meantime, all special events are canceled until further notice. Ladies' Days have been canceled, except for nine holes only. No club handicaps are being used at the present time. Club championships and special events, originally scheduled for July, may not be much affected.

There will be probably 50 per cent less revenue from the pro shop because the buying half of the season — March, April, May and part of June — has been lost. Golf car rental has been practically nil.

In the meantime, until conditions get back to normal, Rock Island Arsenal Golf Club has two unique distinctions. Pro Ike Cheves says it is probably the only 9-hole course he knows with 40 brand new golf cars. And there's station wagon shuttle service from the clubhouse to the 9th hole — where Arsenal golfers start out these days!