

Cascades set for Curtis Cup



Golfers on the Cascades 17th fairway catch a glimpse of the clubhouse across valley floor.

Few changes necessary to prepare The Homestead's venerable course for this month's tournament.

International attention will be focused this month on the Cascades Golf Course at The Homestead, renowned resort which nestles in the Blue Ridge Mountains at Hot Springs, Va.

From July 29-30 of this year, the course will be host to the first international golf competition ever held in Virginia—the Curtis Cup matches, which will bring together the better amateur women golfers of Britain and the U. S.

In addition, Cascades will be host to the 1967 Women's National Open June 29-July 2. This came about when Joseph C. Dey, Jr., Executive Director of the United States Golf Association, visited the course last October for a look at the layout.

Dey and Thomas J. Lennon, Virginia Hot Springs President, were touring the

course, and the Homestead President was floored when Dey asked if the resort would like to be host to the 1967 Women's National Open. Lennon hurriedly replied in the affirmative, and the Cascades was able to claim two golf plums for the price of Dey's single trip.

Very few changes will be made in the par 35-36-71 Cascades Course, which is 6,732 yards. The opening hole is all set. However, Dey suggested that the rough some 150 yards from the green on the second hole be brought in towards the fairway in order to narrow the opening to the green.

An artificial lake may be put in front of the third green, which completes the changes on the front nine. The 15th tee is to be shortened some 15 feet, and new tees are scheduled for the 17th and 18th.

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Other than a change or two in placing two flagpoles to hold American and British colors which will face the 17th green, the Cascades will be ready for the Curtis Cup matches.

Responsibility for getting the course in shape rests with Arnold Keyser, who has been tending the Cascades for most of the last 39 years and its superintendent since 1949. Plans for the upcoming matches don't bother Keyser. "You play it strictly by ear and learn what to do as you go," he says.

Keyser recalls having read an article several years ago in which a pro was asked to name three U. S. golf courses that are maintained in a tournament-readiness state from the time of their yearly opening to the day the pins are pulled at the end of the season. He isn't sure of the other two, but remembers that the Cascades was one course which the pro named.

Keyser must solve the pressing problem of cutting the turf low enough around the car paths to permit the ball to roll

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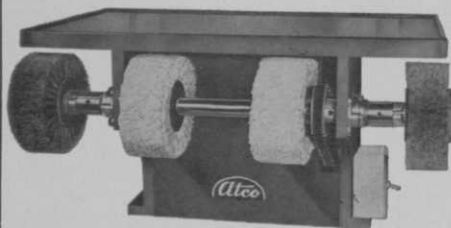
Arnold Keyser, superintendent at Cascades since 1949, has been caring for the course for nearly 40 years. His job will be to have layout in top shape for 1966 Curtis Cup matches to be held here July 29 and 30.

This view of the 16th fairway at Cascades shows players approaching carefully placed traps in area near green. Dense woods and rolling terrain add to interest for golfers.



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off the pavement onto the grass. This instant readiness for championship play really has a payoff when the big ones bite, Keyser believes.

The Cascades superintendent's black book of good management contains certain constants that are repeated almost daily. For instance, the greens are cut to 3/16ths of an inch daily except Sunday. In tournament play the greens are cut to that exacting standard all seven days.

Placement of cups is usually left to Keyser and his cup setter, although there are times when tournament directors meet with them on placement.

Fairways are cut to 1/4 an inch between two and two-and-a-half times each week, depending on the grass growing status of the course. The rough most times is from two to three inches for normal play though this figure may change if tournament directors want to further penalize those who stray from the straight and narrow paths.

The rich Cascades turf is the product of a mixture of Kentucky Blue Grass and Highland Bent while a combination of several fescues is blended for the rough. Pesticides used in the keeping of the Cascades in championship calibre include Chipman Chemical, Caloclor, Terrasa 75 while Virginia-Carolina Nitroform, Agrico Crab Grass Control and Dr. Allen's True Organic are the fertilizers. From time to time all course personnel meet with USGA agronomists to solve specific grass problems.

Sand traps are fielded with five to six inches of sand purchased from the Pennsylvania Glass Sand Co. Traps are raked daily Monday through Saturday, and sometimes Sunday if the occasion demands it.

The Homestead is blessed with several superintendents of the calibre of Keyser. Until he died in 1965, Keyser's younger brother Norval, was superintendent of the Homestead Course. Both went to work within one month of each other in 1927.

Burl Johnson, superintendent of the Lower Cascades, has 20 years' experience in greens work. Genis May, Paul Keyser and Melvin Martin—all associated with Keyser—have a combined course longevity of 71 years. ●