

Golf Resort of the Future

Planning a new course? Here's how golf is becoming the center-point of community planning. Facts from Boca Raton, West . . .

The National Golf Foundation recently reported that 40 per cent of the new country clubs under construction in this country are part of large real estate developments from which the club sells parcels of land for housing developments, either by individuals or other developers.

Another aspect of building homes adjacent to business facilities is the trend of developers toward building many moderately-priced homes near golf courses. In both these arrangements, home buyers may be given membership priority or membership may even be included in the price of the parcel.

A further refinement of this trend is developing in the clear, sunny climate communities of California, Florida and Arizona, where apartments, town houses and shopping centers have been built near recreational facilities. In at least two of this type of communities, one in Florida and one in Arizona, the development has taken the form of a mobile home city.

What is the significance of this development of leisurely and pleasurable surroundings adjacent to the (what would hardly be called traditional any more) domicile?

The key to an explanation of this phenomenon can be found in the American population's steady move from the city to the outer reaches of the city and now, from the outer reaches to the *other* reaches.

The American Mobile society wants its playgrounds within easy reach of its residents, in planned communities that are characterized by developers as "trans-urban"—that is to say, beyond suburban, and even beyond ex-urban communities.

As they are visualized by the planners, these "trans-urban" communities are being projected as lush, rolling, clean, green recreational areas, surrounded by homes and apartment buildings. Included within these precincts are golf clubs, tennis courts and swimming pools. In effect, the country club and the city dwelling have joined hands in a "planned community." Some of the new communities are within commuting distance of cities, some are paired with industrial

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Continued on page 22

Golf resort of the future

Continued from page 17

parks, some are strictly for vacation and retirement living and still others are a blend of all these elements. The one common denominator of trans-urban life is that the genesis and focal point of planning is golf. In fact, one real estate expert estimates that close to 20 per cent of such housing starts in the past year have been tied in with a golf course.

To the golf industry, as an industry, this presages a pronounced change in the physical layouts upon which golf will be placed a generation from today. Perhaps even more important are the changes that will take place in the attitudes of golfers and golf business people because of this new concept. These changes, of course, are still shrouded in the mystery of the murky future.

The recreational planning that goes into the making of a successful golf course still requires a careful study of all factors involved in the question "is the course economically feasible?" For the developer, this question must certainly be answered, because it will become much more complex and, of course, will involve greater amounts of money.

The factors that must be considered in golf course planning are: the economic condition of the community; type and amount of employment population; condition of existing facilities; commercial activities in the area, and the area's appeal to families and investors who are golf-oriented.

How have some of the developments of this type fared? One of the biggest trans-urban developments is Boca Raton, West on the east coast of Florida, just five miles from the famed Boca Raton resort hotel.

Boca Raton, West, when completed in 10 years or possibly less, will have four championship golf courses adjacent to clusters of condominium apartment buildings, a hotel, clubhouse, swimming pools, tennis courts, bridle paths, lakes, gardens, waterways, roads and over 1,400 acres of land.

Prospects thus far, and for the future, are limitless if Boca Raton

expectations are indicative of how the public will accept these leisure complexes. Arvida Corp., parent company of the Boca Raton project, reported a net income of \$2,435,000 for 1968, an amount more than double the corporation's income for 1967. Arvida's real estate sales for the year totaled \$15,244,000, an increase of \$3,458,000 over 1967's

\$11,786,000.

These happy figures have spurred Arvida to rapidly move ahead with development and construction programs in its rather leisure-oriented communities. President Brown L. Whatley caps this by saying: "The momentum we have achieved in our operations during 1968 may be expected

Continued on page 49

SELECTING A SUITABLE SITE

Proper soil is of primary importance in selecting a suitable site. Natural features, which make the game more interesting and reduce development and maintenance costs, also are advantageous. Among these features are:

1. *Soil.* Preferably sandy loam.
2. *Drainage.* Adequate to prevent standing water and disease. Installing tiles is often necessary. Swampy, low land near rivers should be avoided because of the added costs for moving earth and drainage.
3. *Terrain.* Gently rolling, but not so rugged or hilly that players would tire easily or be forced to use a power-driven cart, that many blind shots would be required, or that the cost of turfing would be unreasonable. Flat land may need bulldozing to build up knolls.

4. *Trees, rivers, creeks and ponds.* To add interest to the game and increase aesthetic beauty of the course. (Trees also screen parallel fairways.) Heavily wooded sites are undesirable, however, because of high costs for removing trees, stumps and stones. Rivers, creeks and ponds also serve as a natural water supply.

5. *Weather and climate.* Sufficient rainfall to maintain water supply. Mild enough climate for reasonably long-playing season and minimal damage to greens and fairways during the off-season.

Site selection is based on these factors as well:

1. *Shape.* Preferably rectangular, not an irregular, strung-out site. Less land is needed for a well-designed course, maintenance crews can work more ef-

ficiently and distances do not seem so great to golfers.

2. *Utilities.* Availability of public service water, sewer and electricity.

3. *Accessibility.* Especially important for public courses dependent on transient green fees. One or two holes parallel to the highway create interest in the course and improve appearance along the highway.

4. *Past use of the lands.* On a rundown farm, most of the soil's natural plant food may be depleted and excessive amounts of fertilizer will be needed for proper cultivation of the turf. Well-maintained pasture land usually makes a good golf course site.

Because few available sites have all these qualifications, costs to correct deficiencies generally must be incurred. The total development cost is an important consideration in site selection, particularly when comparing one site with another. In certain geographic areas some features may be entirely lacking and must be artificially created. In other locations, those deficiencies which cannot be corrected (for example, a short playing season) must be allowed for in the operational economics of the golf course project.

The suggested minimum size for a nine-hole course is 50 acres for level terrain and 70 to 90 acres for a hilly site. An 18-hole course requires at least 110 acres, but if the terrain is rough, 140 to 180 acres may be necessary.

Some acreages for average courses are as follows:

9 holes	83 to 88 acres
18 holes	87 to 180 acres
27 holes	163 to 181 acres.

Golf resort of the future

Continued from page 22

to increase."

A predecessor and pacesetter for Boca Raton is another Arvida community, the Royal Palm Yacht & CC, begun about 10 years ago in the town of Boca Raton. This community is situated on the Intracoastal Waterway so that its luxury homes (average price—\$85,000) can face either canals or fairways.

The management expects that the occupancy pattern of Royal Palm will be duplicated at Boca Raton, West, with about half the residents retired (60 years and up), about one-quarter semi-retired (50 to 60 years) and the rest employed full-time (30 and up).

More significant as an indication of the attractiveness of Boca Raton, West to prospective buyers, is the appreciation of property at Royal Palm—some home values have increased as much as 25 per cent in the last five years.

The open space concept is indicative of the thinking and planning of the Boca Raton development. Although the entire development may ultimately contain over 4,000 apartments, they will occupy only about 32 per cent of the land, and the four golf courses within the acreage of Boca Raton, West will assure the open spaces of the development for home and condominium buyers.

The courses, which were designed by Desmond Muirhead and Gene Sarazen, will each provide three levels of play: professional, men's and ladies'. Difficulty of play at Boca Raton courses will be regulated by using many tees with unusual shapes and placements, rather than moving the tee closer to or farther away from the green. It is anticipated that this will change the challenge of the course as well as distance. For instance, on the first course the yardage is 7,065, 6,400 and 5,635 for professional, men's and ladies' play; par is 72. The tees curve in S, Y, U and H shapes to make the water hazards, traps and widths as equal as possible.

In Palm Beach, a 1,000 acre tract is being developed by United

Continued on page 82



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Golf resort of the future

Continued from page 49

Utilities Corp. as a modular-mobile home city.

United Utilities is investing approximately \$1 million in the construction of a golf and recreation complex for this community, which has been planned as the eventual home for about 10,000 people. Some 4,000 residential sites will surround the recreational complex.

The community, known as Sandalfoot Cove, has been planned

to take advantage of the booming mobile home market and is being constructed by its developers as a "new direction" in community concepts. Mr. R.K. Beitler, assistant managing director of the Mobil Homes Manufacturers Assn., one of the planners of Sandalfoot Cove, pinpointed the thinking behind the mobile home community plan by saying, "Since mobile homes accounted for 83 per cent of all single-family dwelling units, with prices at or below \$12,000 last year, it is certainly evident that there is a vigorous demand for this type of housing. With increasingly advanced designs and a growing trend toward the modular or expandable home, antiquated 'trailer park' concepts are virtually obsolete. There is a compelling need for the development of mobile homes 'cities' where residents will have the same full-service community facilities offered by conventional subdivisions.

"Basic to the concept is the emphasis on people and their enjoyment of leisure living. The physical architecture of the community is described as a system of nine 'neighborhoods' connected by a perimeter boulevard. We're eliminating unnecessary traffic through these residential areas by utilizing neighborhood loop roads, cul-de-sacs and a clustering of residences around canals and recreational spaces."

Other communities of this type are taking shape either on the drawing board or are in the process of being constructed from coast to coast. Basically, these developments have found popularity in the temperate climate zones and in geographical areas identified with retirement or quasi-retirement communities. This is not to say, however, that the idea is limited by these factors. As the accent on leisure and leisure time grows, the real estate development's grouping configurations of golf courses with apartment dwellings, houses and waterways will certainly attract more public attention and in time it will certainly lap over into other sports and become attractive to those located in geographical areas with social and climatic differences. □

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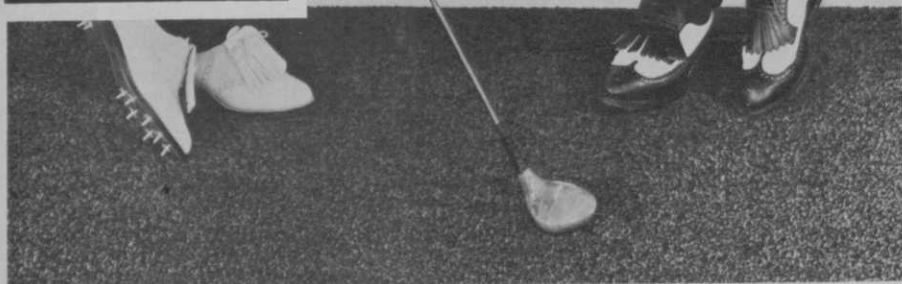


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