

# Golf, Major Sports Interest at North Texas College

By **BILL COFFEY**

North Texas State College in Denton, Tex., has put itself above most schools of collegiate golfdom with the recent opening of the swank \$85,000 recreation building and club house along with the new nine-hole grass green links at the edge of the NTSC campus.

As part of the long-range recreational planning of Athletic Director Theron J. Fouts and Golf Coach Fred Cobb the new athletic center attracts students and townspeople alike and is the home of Cobb's Lone Star Conference champion Eagle clubbers who will bid for National Athletic Association Golf honors next June.

The course has a fairway watering system. It is seeded with Bermuda and is interestingly trapped through its 3,050 yards. The water supply is drawn from a deep well located on the course and from a three-acre lake that forms the water hazard for the No. 3 hole.

Plans have been made for the construction of the back nine to lengthen the course to 18 holes to care for the heavy traffic of golfers since the formal opening of the club house and course May 3, 1947.

The formal opening included an exhibition foursome of Byron Nelson, a hometown Denton boy; Raymond Gafford of Fort Worth, Graham Ross of Dallas Athletic CC, and Earl Stewart, red-headed Texas amateur king. The golf stars voiced their enthusiasm for the new course and recreation center. Nelson indicated that the course should become one of the most popular in north Texas in a few years.

The course has six par four holes, two par three holes, and a 575-yard par 5 hole. The par four's run from 300 to 440 yards in length and the two short holes are 175 yards and 155 yards long. Water hazards are on Nos. 3 and 8.

The ultra-modern Austin-stone recreation center includes a golf shop, golf re-



The recently completed \$85,000 NTSC recreation building and clubhouse extends a welcome to golfers and party groups. Golf shop and lockers are on the basement floor. Solarium is at the left, the main room is for recreation and the rounded section houses the snack bar.



NTSC college golfers pause from practice session to talk things over with Coach Fred Cobb. Kneeling (L to R) Cobb, Cole Ham, Palmer Lawrence, Gene Towry, L. M. Crannell, Jr. Standing (L to R) Bob Yarbro, Buster Reed, Ross Collins and Fieldon Williams.

pair shop, snack bar, locker rooms, recreation room, solarium, and a first aid room.

The golf shop is located on the basement floor along with the repair room, first aid room, and locker sections. Tile showers in black and white are in the men's side while rose and black tile color the showers in the spacious women's locker room. Offices and the manager's apartment are also on the basement floor.

Upstairs, the solarium at the back side of the building has nineteen windows overlooking the last six holes of the course. The room is 45 by 13 feet.

The main room, used for college dances, is large and is serviced by both hot and cold air conditioning systems as is the rest of the building. Blond wood, white leather finished booths line one whole side of the recreation room. The circular snack bar is equipped to give complete fountain and sandwich service and has additional kitchen facilities for parties.

The white structure is trimmed in green which follows the school's colors of green and white. A large porch on the east side overlooks the first three holes of the course

and the lake that is used for canoeing, water safety, and golf-ball hunting.

Beyond the large parking lot in the front of the building are picnic grounds and plans have been made for the erection of tennis courts and other physical recreation facilities.

Most of the rough for the course is high mown Bermuda. Trees line several fairways and are hazards on every hole. Evergreen shrubs are laid out as yard markers at 200 yards.

#### Equipment Limits Classes

Over 200 young golfers are turned out each year at NTSC, according to Cobb. Playing with rented clubs from the golf shop, the students keep up the demand for golf equipment after they finish school and "get out on their own."

Limited equipment at the college golf course limits the number of golf classes and the number of students enrolled in each. "We could handle 200 students each semester if we had the equipment," states Cobb. "A fourth of our student body of over 5,000 are playing golf with the result we are having to lengthen our course to 18 holes."

Golf equipment has been hard to secure and the program has operated under a handicap due to a shortage of golfing paraphernalia. Expenses of maintaining a well-kept links and other facilities is met by charging each golf student a small fee for practice balls, use of clubs, and other incidentals when they enroll for the course.

Two courses, directed by Cobb, are offered. They are Beginning Golf and Advanced Golf. The beginner's class includes instruction in golf fundamentals, rules, golf terms, and the general acquaintance of the student with the game of golf. Classes are held in both classroom and on the course.

Advanced golf requires the student to play regularly. Personal instruction in perfecting the individual game is stressed.

The day is fast approaching when 18 holes will not be adequate for student instruction and play, according to Cobb, not

*(Continued on page 72)*



Pictured here is the 300-yd. par 4 No. 1 hole on the NTSC golf links with high-mown Bermuda rough area to the right.

# How Murphy Master Merchant Serves His Market

By SPENCER MURPHY

Professional, Glen Oaks CC, Great Neck, L. I., N. Y.

The ideas in merchandising that pros have acquired and applied since Pearl Harbor have been concerned mainly with pro shopping to offset shortage of merchandise and with closer personal service to members so the members will be sold completely on the pro and his shop when competition does get tough again, and it will.



Spencer Murphy

In the wake of the war it was natural that members needed more clubs than could be manufactured. Most pros two seasons after the war ended can look over clubs in their racks and see that members still represent a big field for sales to bring the age of playing equipment down to the average of pre-war outfits.

My case at Glen Oaks differs from that at the majority of clubs. When it became plainly evident that war was coming on I did everything I could to get a big supply of golf merchandise. That was what merchants in other lines were doing and I certainly found that it paid my members and me, and other pros I was able to help during a period of acute shortage.

By showing members you are able to supply them with what they need and want you encourage their buying and keep them heated with interest in always having the newest and best and most distinctive. It's worth the investment the pro has to make at a really first class club.

I make extensive display and sale of the standard popular brands, Spalding, Wilson, MacGregor, Hagen, Burke, Kroydon and the others. Because I do a job of selling this equipment where it fits I sell a lot of it and get supplies that are adequate under normal circumstances. My sales of standard brands I imagine are at or above par for most of the leading clubs.

## Solves Club Shortage Problem

When the war came on and there was a demand for clubs that couldn't be supplied by the manufacturers I solved the short-

age by getting together some of the remaining expert clubmakers and going into the manufacture of my own clubs. Prior to the war I had the eastern rights to the George Nicoll irons. As the result of wartime operations I have been made exclusive agent for Nicoll irons in the U. S. and have given them a carte blanche order for all the heads they can send me. Norman N. Browne, Nicoll's manager, has given me excellent cooperation.

The woods are my own design. At a factory near my club a dozen of the top ranking clubmakers, working overtime six days a week, are keeping the factory busy meeting the orders. I have found, as most other pros have, that the pro endorsement and ideas in a golf club sell it to exacting trade anywhere. I've got several leading store accounts over the country and now can see the manufacturers' viewpoint in controlling quality store distribution of golf merchandise at a fixed selling price.

We as professionals can talk earnestly about controlling the market but the only way to do it is to give the customers what they want when they want quality merchandise. Catching a big volume of the lower priced lines is another problem but one which the pro can solve by beating the stores in better display and really expert fitting of the club to the player and his purse.

As a result of manufacturing my own clubs I have been able to provide women's clubs in considerable volume. Of course, when you keep the women happy you have an idyllic condition in any club. I, too, have supplied the women of many other clubs, which should keep them from squawking to their harassed home pros.

## Hunt for New Ideas

During the war and since the pro hasn't been under pressure to look for new ideas in selling clubs. Many of the ideas he picked up in selling apparel and accessories when he wasn't able to get enough clubs will pep up his club selling if he applies these ideas when the competition again begins to get tough.

One field for us to explore thoroughly in our hunt for new ideas is that of women's golf. That market is going to surpass the

(Continued on page 98)



Tommy Armour



Byron Nelson



Ben Hogan

# THE GREATEST



George Schoux



Toney Penna



Claude Harmon

All players here pictured are members of the MacGregor Pro Advisory and Technical Staff.



George Fazio





Jimmy Demaret

# NAMES IN GOLF!



Herman Barron



Craig Wood

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# Courts Rule on Club's Liability for Injuries

By RENZO DEE BOWERS

The law has made it plain through repeated court rulings that there is nothing in the game of golf which should be considered inherently dangerous. Occurrences of a damaging nature on the links must be the result, in one form or another, of negligence on the part of a player if they're to be whipped up to become the nubs of lawsuits. Whenever that happens, a court will be very happy to order the perpetrator to hand over such an amount of money for the benefit of his victim as will fairly compensate for all damages caused by the ill-considered act, whatever it may have been.

To this extent the law keeps an eagle eye upon golf players. But they're not the only objects of its watchfulness in the game. Owners and operators of courses also come in for a noticeable share of its attention, sometimes for good, sometimes for ill. Just by way of an indicator, owners or operators may get penalized by the judges if players or other persons happen to receive physical injuries because of some construction fault or maintenance failure of the links. They may be mulcted in damages if their employees fail properly to perform their duties around the grounds with the degree of care and efficiency which players have a right to expect and which will prevent accidents. They may come out the worse for it if they neglect to adopt and enforce reasonable rules of play under which groups of players may carry on their exertions simultaneously without danger of being accidentally hurt or exterminated.

One who does get hurt on the links may be out of luck when he goes to court about it unless his injury is traceable to negligence on the part of a player or of the owner or operator of the course. It is a rule of law through which many an accused person has squeezed to safety that one engaging in any sport, whether as player, spectator, or employe, assumes the risk himself of injury from accident, mischance, or inadvertence, in the absence of negligence of some one who owed him a duty. For this reason, the owner or operator of a golf course is not considered by the law to be an insurer of the safety of persons who frequent the premises or play over them. The only legal obligation is to use reasonable care for individual safety, and not to

become negligent with respect to some duty owed to persons rightfully upon the course.

## Suits That Didn't Collect

Some far-fetched and screwball attempts have been made to run owners or operators through the judicial wringer in bizarre endeavors to squeeze out gravy. For instance, not long ago a boy was struck by lightning on an Illinois course and the owner got sued for that. A bunch of caddies on another lay-out in an off moment engaged in a free-for-all in which one was severely beaten up, and damages for his hurts were sought from the golf club. A caddie on a Massachusetts course claimed damages from the owner on the ground that while he was standing nearby watching two other caddies preparing to play on a day when the caddies were allowed that privilege, one of the players carelessly took a practice swing with his stick and "hit him across the nose and about the eye."

Lawsuits of the kind may not be prosecuted in good faith or with the expectation of favorable verdicts. In most cases they meet the fate of attempted shake-downs when shown up in court. They get thrown out.

But owners and operators will be held to accountability if their acts of omission or commission can reasonably be found responsible for human injuries. Here is a succinct statement of the basis of any financial liability of the kind that can be imposed upon them: They can be made to dig into the kitty upon proof that they either permitted something to be done around their course that as a matter of safety to others should not have been done, or failed to do something looking toward protection which it was their legal duty to do.

## Negligence Must Be Proved

The judges apply a general legal principle of a relieving nature in this connection, which was expressed by the New Jersey court as follows: "Mere ownership of a golf course does not of itself impute liability for any and every injury suffered by a player or another person by reason of an occurrence on the course." This authoritative declaration merely reaffirms



the sine qua non of the law, that some act of negligence on the owner's or operator's part must be proved before there can be a squeeze-play for damages....

In the particular debacle of the links out of which that judicial ruling arose, one whom we'll call Hal Jenkins went one morning to view the links of a new golf club at the invitation of a member, with the prospect that the visitor would be seduced by the attractiveness of the lay-out and would wish to become a member. Jenkins was accompanied by his brother and by their wives.

In making the inspection, the party traversed the whole course; and while they were returning to the starting point, wham! suddenly, without warning of any kind, an errant golf ball driven recklessly from somewhere on the links by an unidentified player, clouted Jenkins squarely on the temple with the force of a mule's kick and dropped him prone to the ground.

Hal Jenkins had a severe brainstorm from that clouting, and he afterward sued for his injuries. Asking bountifully that his joys might be full, he pleaded that damages be assessed against the club, its president, the member who had invited him, and the one who showed him around the course. But he drew a goose egg in all quarters. The New Jersey court ruled that neither the club, its official, nor the other individuals were liable. They had been guilty of no negligent act to bring on the injury. The unknown player responsible for the swatting was the sole culprit.

### What Constitutes Negligence

What, then, would constitute legal negligence of an owner or operator from which an injured person nursing wounds chargeable to the links could hope to eke out compensation for his suffering and expenses? Consider a few actual happenings here and there in illustration.

Not many years ago an amusement company which had leased the Chicago Garfield Park course for the season was called into court to defend a charge for damages made against it by one who had been injured while playing on its links. On that May day when the injury occurred, many people were roaming the course with sticks in hand. Mart Statton, the man who got hurt, was paired with another.

The course itself had been in existence more than 25 years, and had often been used to play the Cook County championships. It was a 9-hole course, with length of 2,006 yards, laid out on a 30-acre plot. The terrain was practically level with shrubbery on some of the holes, mostly along the outer edges, and with several wooded spots scattered over its extent.

Statton and his companion on this day had played six holes, and had driven from the seventh tee toward the green. The fairway on this hole was perfectly flat, without bunkers, traps, mounds or trees. Four girls were playing ahead of Statton, and as he stood on the seventh tee he had a clear view of the entire course. He drove down the seventh fairway a distance of 200 yards to a point 35 feet left of the normal center of the fairway. The average width of this fairway was 40 yards or so, and its entire course was slightly toward the southwest.

### Parallel Hole Injury

After teeing off, Statton and his partner walked down the fairway; and when Statton reached his ball he stood waiting for the foursome ahead to clear the seventh green. While he stood over his ball waiting, Joe Simes, in a twosome behind, was preparing to drive from the sixth tee toward the sixth green. In the shot he made, Simes hooked his ball and the sensitive pill angled off into the fairway where Statton stood, socked him terrifically in the eye, and caused gruesome injury.

Statton charged that stroke of hard luck up to the lessee of the course, and haled it into court to collect for his hurt. "It was negligence," his lawyers argued, "for the association to maintain a 9-hole golf course on so small a tract as 30 acres. It was negligence to operate the course with fairways six and seven running parallel and played in opposite directions and to have them narrow and unprotected by shrubs, rough, and spaces. It was legal negligence to lay out and maintain the sixth and seventh fairways in such manner as to constitute an endless hazard to players."

Statton got judgment for \$10,000 against the lessee-operator in the trial court. But the judgment was vacated by an appellate court and the action unconditionally dismissed. "There are no building codes for golf courses," the higher court said in effect. "Owners may construct and maintain them as they see fit. It was not legal negligence to have a 9-hole course on thirty acres. It was not negligence for this lessee to operate it with parallel fairways played in opposite directions and unprotected. Besides, Statton had cooked his own goose. He could see the course when he went upon it to play. If he didn't think it safe, he should have stayed off; so, even if the operator had been guilty of negligence which resulted in Mr. Statton's injury, he is in no position to complain of the fault. He was himself guilty of contributory negligence in playing the course with his eyes open, and that prevents him from compelling this lessee to pay."

There's another angle to the problem of

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# Charlie McKenna "Wins" P. G. A.

## playing "THE HAIG"

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THE P.G.A. Seniors Championship, at Dunedin, Florida, was won by Charlie McKenna, Professional at the Oak Hill Country Club, Rochester, N. Y. Playing the new "HAIG" ball in its first tournament appearance, McKenna won from a record field of contestants, with a 69-72 for a 141.

Built especially for low-handicap players, the new "HAIG" ball has an amazing, quick-responding, *thin-wall* center. And this *center* is in the *exact center* of every ball—proved on the Hagen production line by fluoroscopic "X-ray" inspection. The result is a ball with fast getaway—a sweet "feel"—the kind of click that only a superior golf ball can give—and maximum distance. A ball that holds a *true* course in flight and rolls *true* on the greens. And like every other item in the Hagen line—including popular Hagen Trophy-Plus, International and Speed-Flo balls—the "Haig" is sold through Professionals only.



### WALTER HAGEN

Division of Wilson Sporting Goods Co.  
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# Seniors Championship

## its first public appearance



*H*eaded by schedules in Fortune, Time, New Yorker, and Golfing Magazine, Walter Hagen Golf Equipment is being nationally advertised to feature the professional shop as sole headquarters for Hagen equipment. The clip-on card below, signed by Walter Hagen, will appear in all national advertising.

*If it bears my name  
it's sold through  
professionals only  
Walter Hagen*

A rectangular card with a thick black border is shown at an angle. A metal paperclip is attached to the top right corner. The card contains handwritten text in cursive script.

constructing or maintaining a golf course which owners and operators ought to bear in mind. There may be a legal hazard in the location chosen for the enterprise.

For instance, in laying out and establishing the Hillcrest golf course in the state of New York, the club placed its links along a busy highway where high speed traffic surged to and fro. It was separated from the thoroughfare only by a solid 6-ft. board fence.

One day a player whammed his ball in such manner from the fairway that it went sizzling over the fence and into the highway. Fate was at that instant rocketing an automobile along the road at nearly a mile a minute. The golf ball struck squarely against the windshield, shattering broken glass into the faces of the driver and another riding beside him, with horrible effect.

#### **Rule Against Clubs**

Courts and juries make field days of cases like that. The owners of the golf course were saddled with very heavy damages at the suit of the injured autoists. The court ruled that the owners were legally liable for damages upon either of two grounds: they permitted play on links too close to a public highway; and they were maintaining a nuisance dangerous to public safety.

There is no doubt that courts will penalize operators of golf courses in damages in favor of injured players whenever their acts of omission or commission can be reasonably found the moving cause of the casualties. This legalism is most frequently demonstrated in occurrences wherein the owners or operators are charged with responsibility for hurts which were actually inflicted by players using their courses.

The Alicia golf course at Memphis, Tenn., which charged a fee for the use of its links, employed a starter who went from place to place on the course to direct players when to shoot. Upon one occasion, a starter negligently had a player drive from a tee while a previous player from that tee was yet within striking distance and in full position where he was likely to be hit. He was in fact hit in the eye by the player whom the starter had negligently directed to drive without taking into consideration the previous player. Judgment was lodged against the golf course for that remissness. The starter was its agent. It was legally responsible for its agent's act. The law regarded it as only fair that it should stand back of whatever its agent did in the course of his employment.

#### **Safety Rule Obligation**

Another obligation of golf courses to its

players has been stated to be: "It is the duty of the owner of a golf course to exercise ordinary care in promulgating reasonable rules for the protection of persons who rightfully use its course, and in seeing that the rules are enforced." The owner, however, to indulge a repetition, is not an insurer, which means that it is not financially liable for mishaps, accidents, and misadventures on its course not due to its negligence or the negligence of its employees.

The Starmount golf course in Guilford county, N.C., adopted a rule that where two or more matches were going at the same time, the front match should be allowed at least two drives by those immediately following in order that the hazard of striking any forward player with a driven ball might be lessened or eliminated. Players on the course were familiar with the rule and the management employed rangers to enforce it and to supervise the course. The rangers became careless in time and often when they were needed they were in the wrong place.

Upon one occasion a twosome and a threesome were in play. The threesome was behind. One player in this match forgot the rule of the course and no ranger was on hand to remind him. He recklessly teed off prematurely without allowing a player in the twosome to move far enough from the tee for safety. The driver gave the ball a terrific whack, and it zoomed straight for the doomed player of the twosome. It struck him on the knee, the upshot of the injury being that he was made a cripple for life.

Thereafter nature took its course, which led directly into a court of law. The injured man demanded financial atonement from the golf course owners as well as from the player in the threesome who had negligently teed off. And he got it—from both. The golf course, said the court, was remiss in its duty to players for whose benefit it had made a reasonable rule. It had failed to have its rangers on hand to enforce the rule. Through that neglect and remissness, a player had been grievously hurt.

### **Cornell U Turf Conference March 18-19**

Plans are being made for turf conference at Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., March 18-19. John F. Cornman, asst. prof., N.Y. State College of Agriculture, is arranging the program which will be presented primarily to golf course supts. but will provide valuable material for all interested in turf development. The conference at Cornell is being planned to initiate an active and aggressive program of turf research and education for New York state.