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Einar John Allen, who has been pro of the Caldwell, Idaho municipal courses, has resigned . . . The first nine of the proposed country club at Charles City, Ia. is expected to be completed this next summer . . . Architect's drawings of the clubhouse have been completed . . . Round Meadow CC (Radford, Va.) clubhouse is rapidly nearing completion . . . Trail, B. C., Canada's Rossland-Trail G & CC is planning a new two-story clubhouse . . . Mid-1966 is the completion date set for 18-hole, par-71 course near Pismo Beach, Calif. . . . Bradley Anderson has been named pro at the new 18-hole Willow Creek GC at High Point, N. C. . . . He has been an assistant at Scioto CC in Columbus, O.

Bill Booe, head pro at Country Club of Northampton (Pa.) County (near Easton), has announced the appointment of Bob Hutnik as assistant pro . . . Russell Breeden of Greenville, S. C. will design the 6,700 yard course of the new River Bend Acres CC (surrounded by 300 extra large homesites) near Shelby, N. C. Located across from the development is the Shelby airport. Stan Sherman, for the last 13 years

at Royster Memorial Course, is pro . . . At 7345 yards, Sunny Jim GC near Medford, N. J. is one of the longest courses . . . Pro is Vic Rice and Harry Schaffer is supt. . . . Kennicut Development Corp. is developing a tract of land in Dutchess County, N. Y. into an apartment complex, homes, a hotel and golf course.

Work is going forward on the 18-hole course of Beaver Brook GC (Clinton Point, N.J.), with a spring opening planned . . . Contract has been let for new 60 by 100 feet two-story clubhouse . . . The Amherst (N.H.) CC (on the Souhegan River near Ponemah) is building a 9-hole course that will eventually be expanded to 18 . . . Bethlehem, Pa.'s. Saucon Valley CC pro, Ralph Hutchison, has been signed to a new five-year contract. Hutchison is the winter pro at the Cotton Bay Club in the Bahamas, where he has his two Saucon assistants, Bobby Kinard and Bobby Pfister, with him . . . A player group of 120 has purchased the 9-hole Lake Wilderness G & CC (Seattle, Wash. area) and has options on additional land to expand to 18 holes . . . Norman H. Woods of Vancouver, B. C., Canada will be architect for

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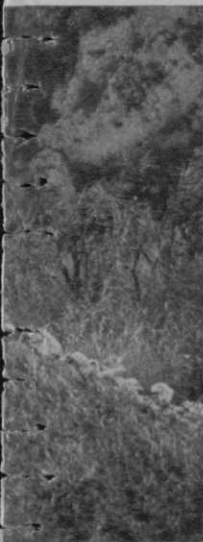
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George Knudson	Al Balding	Cape Breton Highlands (Nova Scotia)	Feb. 28
Joe Carr	Al Geiberger	Killarney Golf Club (Ireland)	Mar. 7
Johnny Pott	Roberto De Vicenzo	Maracaibo Country Club (Venezuela)	Mar. 14
Phil Rodgers	Alfonso Angelini	Villa d'Este Golf Club (Italy)	Mar. 21
Marley Spearman	Marilynn Smith	Luxemburg Golf Club (Luxemburg)	Mar. 28

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the 6120-yard, par-70 layout . . . Dick Joy is to be pro. Plans call for a chalet-type clubhouse . . . Five banks in the area have agreed to handle the \$460 membership payments by loan.

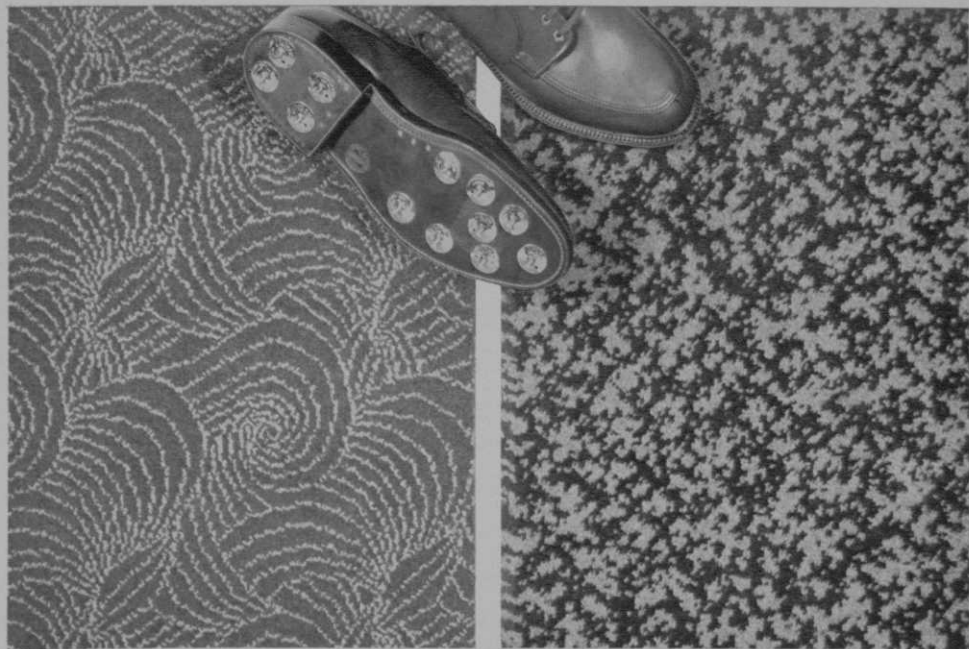
Forest Cove CC and course, part of a real estate development near Houston, to be opened this spring . . . Tater Hill CC nine is being constructed on 60 acres of a former potato farm in the West River Valley area between Windham and Andover, Vt. . . . Serving residents within a 25 mile radius of Londonderry, the course is expected to be ready by spring of 1966 . . . Mill River Club on Long Island was the scene New Years Day of an indoor golf "competition" for the benefit of the Long Island Caddie Scholarship Fund . . . Play on new greens by June is hoped for by members of Loup City (Neb.) GC . . . Old greens were sand and work of replacing them with turf began in the fall of 1963.

The Oakland (Calif.) Municipal GC will be constructed, with a planned opening in the spring of 1966 . . . To be built next to the Oakland airport, the par-72, 6531-

yard course will be financed through issuance of certificates of indebtedness worth \$750,000 by the board of port commissioners . . . A loan from the FHA has turned farmland into an 18-hole course for the Piney Point CC (Norwood, N. C.) near the shores of Lake Tillery with the Uwharrie Mountains for a backdrop . . . Porter Gibson of Charlotte designed the course . . . Citing the fact that there are 135 public golf courses in southern Calif. today and that there will be a need for more than 200 by 1985, the Los Angeles (Calif.) City recreation and park commission has set up a \$10,000,000 "10-year golf course land bank program" to acquire suitable sites within and contiguous to Los Angeles, and to provide funds to purchase and develop such facilities.

Work is in progress on the 9-hole course and recreational facility being built near Berryville, Ark. . . . The project is being constructed with an FHA loan of \$70,550 and the opening date is scheduled for Memorial Day . . . H. C. Hackbarth of Little Rock is the course architect . . .

(Continued on page 108)



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LAKE MERCED HOLDS THE LINE

When strategic acres were lost to a freeway, the first inclination at the San Francisco club was to relocate . . . Then someone suggested reclaiming a gulch and rebuilding several holes . . . The club remains in the same old spot, the course is going to be better than it ever was . . . and, of course, the members are happy

By **DON CURLEE**

When the State of California's highway department claimed a portion of San Francisco's well-known Lake Merced G&CC as right-of-way for a freeway it was useless for the 42-year-old club to resist. But by engaging patience, statesmanship, good business judgment and an imaginative golf course architect, Lake Merced expects to be fully playable and perhaps better than ever by this summer. Best of all, play has never stopped because of construction.

It wasn't just club property that the state needed, but a strategic 11.8 acres that included the clubhouse and entrance to the club, the water tower and most of the 10th fairway. Naturally the parcel had unusual value to the golf club and the adjudged fair market value was considerable too. The state eventually paid \$2.1 million (including land, buildings, improvements, severance, loss of access, loss

of playing privileges and cost of utility relocation).

To Sell or Hang On?

At first it looked as if nothing short of complete reconstruction and, very probably, substantial shortening of the course could salvage it. Others considered even more drastic action — selling the entire 150 acres and looking for a new site.

At the depth of the uncertainties an exciting possibility occurred. Why not reclaim Knowles Gulch, an eroded and ugly scar that ran for about 1,400 feet along the northern edge of the club's property? Approximately 450 feet wide and 150 feet deep, it served no better purpose than to catch sharply-hooked drives off the north tee. It was so forboding that few golfers even bothered to peer over its edge to look for their ball, much less try to descend its precipitous sides.

Nobody seems sure when or by whom the suggestion was made to reclaim the

gulch. They do remember that it sounded pretty impractical at the outset — but not to golf course architect, Robert Muir Graves. He regarded the gulch's 13.2 acres as fair exchange for the 11.8 lost to the freeway, and the one chance of keeping 18 full-length holes.

Hookers Backed Idea

Fill dirt is expensive and Graves knew it. The 400,000 cubic yards needed to level out the gulch would cost a pretty penny. So he proposed pulling it down from the adjacent fairway, building up the gulch and lowering the old fairway to create a step effect. Club members were elated with the solution, especially those with a tendency to hook.

In many ways this basic decision and the acceptance of Graves' other proposals for refurbishing Lake Merced were only the beginning. Construction — the tough part — had yet to be accomplished.

But all was not complete happiness, nor agreement. Is it ever, in any club? Necessarily based on relative land values, the negotiation with the state had focused great attention on the monetary value of the club's proprietary membership.

Tempting Offer

One San Francisco newspaper reported in late summer, 1963, that the club was considering an offer of \$16 million or more for the entire course. This, the article reasoned, amounted to a substantial monthly income for life for all members. It appeared at an inopportune time in the club's negotiations with the state and club directors denied validity of the report emphatically; they even demanded a retraction. They feared that the state might regard it as a "planted" story intended to affix an inflated value on the property. They were having trouble enough coming to terms without this.

The board of directors had become extremely sensitive about anything that might upset negotiations. They had learned the hard way that the state was a tough customer and a seasoned veteran at buying property.

Originally, the board thought the club could be represented in the negotiations by a delegation of two or three board members. This group, armed with a property appraisal and a rough estimate of



Old tenth green at Lake Merced was getting its final play when this photo was taken. Framework of new clubhouse is seen in the background.



New car storage room and caddie house are being used as temporary clubhouse during reconstruction.



Freeway excavation, which took about a 13-acre slice out of the San Francisco course, goes on in the foreground. Traffic is being temporarily routed over Junipero Serra boulevard.

The pro, supt. and contractors got together every week and devised ways of keeping at least 10 holes playable

the cost to reconstruct the course and build a new clubhouse got nowhere fast in the first session with the state representatives.

Bring in Attorneys

Club President James Frank recalls clearly the board's reaction when his inexperienced delegation reported the outcome. "We immediately hired two attorneys, each from a different firm, and a third consulting expert in highway condemnation," he says. That was the beginning of serious negotiations with the state's experts in 1963; they continued tooth-and-nail for 15 months.

Pressure was added because of a previous commitment by the club that the state could take possession of its portion by Sept., 1964. The club was anxious to get the amount of compensation settled so it could establish a budget for the work it had to do. (Directors eventually authorized expenditures in the full amount received for the parcel — \$2.1 million.)

Of course there were some early bills to pay too. Stanford Research Institute had been retained to survey potential new course sites in the immediate San Francisco Bay area. One was on prospective fill land in San Mateo County, covered at the time by waters of the bay.

Considered Buying Another Club

Before the final decision to stick with the old site and turn the liability of the gulch into an exciting asset, purchase of an existing club in Marin County across the Golden Gate, was proposed but an offer was never made.

Ironically, one important consideration was the very freeway which caused all the hubbub in the first place. It will bring the club within an easy 10-12 minute drive from downtown San Francisco. The other sites were much farther out.

Clearing and excavation began last April. Besides treatment of the gulch, which actually creates two new holes, the architect's plans also will accomplish:

- reconstruction (and relocation in many cases) of all greens, and en-

largement from an average size of 4,000 square feet to 5,200;

- acquisition of a separate practice area (part of one fairway was used formerly);
- of one fairway was used formerly);
- an increase in overall length from 6,542 to 6,731 yards center to center, and a championship length of 7,000 yards;
- installation of a fully automatic, underground sprinkler system;
- retention of about 35 acres of tree canopy (only 8.1 acres less than the original layout) and planting of hundreds of new trees;
- reduction of hill climbing — from 301 to 276 vertical feet.

Problems in the Gulch

A number of tough problems of coordination were encountered in construction. In the gulch, five major utility lines had to be relocated or accommodated. These included a 54-inch water line, a 36-inch storm drain, a 30-inch water line, a 30-inch gas main and a 15-inch sanitary sewer.

In the opinion of Bob Graves the real kicker was in keeping the course playable. With justifiable pride he recalls that the aggregate of playable holes has never gone below 10 at any time. He credits the unusual dedication of Ed Berardy, the supt., and the cooperative attitude of the contractors, Sunshine Landscaping (prime) and Wilmoth Construction (grading), both of Fresno, Calif., with preserving maximum playability.

Weekly sessions were held in which Graves, Berardy and the pro laid out temporary alignments for the week ahead. Each hole was handicapped and a mimeographed score card printed. Often a temporary hole's description went like this: "Old number 10 with temporary green."

Protecting existing turf meant that grading and construction vehicles often had to take the long way around instead of across expanses of grass and fairways, but it was taken in stride. (*Continued on page 100*)