

MINNESOTA'S GOLFING HERITAGE



MINNEAPOLIS GOLF CLUB

In 1916 there were only two golf clubs in Minneapolis, the Minikahda Club and Interlachen Country Club, both with full memberships and long waiting lists. As a result, a meeting was held in February, 1916 to discuss the possibility of starting a third golf club in Minneapolis.

Later that same year, another meeting was held and it was announced that a site consisting of 133 acres was available for \$500 per acre. With no money available to finance the project and already \$250 in debt the outlook was not good. Not to be deterred however, Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws were drawn up

and filed in July, 1916.

The first order of business required a membership drive. 100 members were needed and by August 1, 1916 128 members were signed. The initiation fee was \$25 and annual dues were \$30.

Interestingly enough, these far sighted men saw fit to make the hiring of a qualified "Green-Keeper" one of the first orders of business. Victor Larson, who was then Assistant "Green-Keeper" at Interlachen, was hired as the first "Green-Keeper" at Minneapolis Golf Club. He held that position for twenty-five years.

Equipment purchased included a second-hand, four-wheeled tank with hose and sprinkler attached. For \$12 a horse suitable for work on turf was purchased from the Humane Society. This horse was appropriately named Spark Plug.

On the day selected for the grand opening, a Saturday, the members met for lunch at the club house, an old farm house which had been refurbished. At two o'clock a Grand March to the first tee took place, led by Eugene Bibb complete with his golf clubs aboard a decorated Spark Plug. However, as they neared the first tee, Spark Plug became excited and threw poor old Eugene Bibb. I suspect that Eugene was probably the first greenschairman, although there are no records to confirm it.

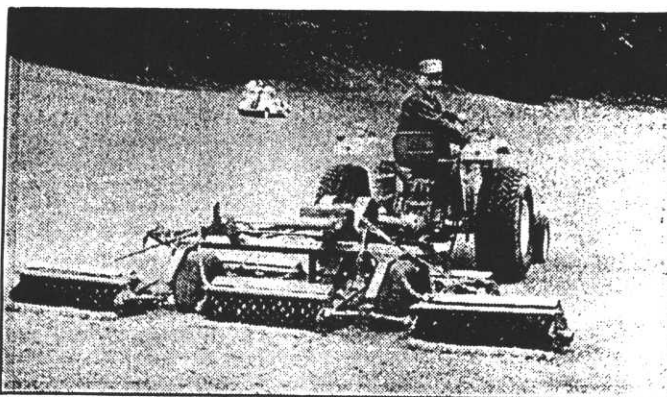
This was followed by a competitive driving contest and rounds of golf. Scores were rather high as a golf pro had not yet been hired. Eugene Bibb did not compete!

Later that same year the club was offered the property located in the Westwood Hills district of what was to become St. Louis Park. This was thought to be a more promising site by some and so the membership split. Some going south to the St. Louis Park site and the rest staying at the Golden Valley site. Thus the Minneapolis Golf Club and the Golden Valley Country Club were started at the same time.

The site in St. Louis Park had already been inspected and the course laid out by Willie Parks, the famous Scotch Golf

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Champion and noted Golf Course Architect. After much discussion, the members agreed to retain the services of Tom Bendlow, Golf Course Architect from Chicago, to alter the Willie Parks design to their specifications. Willie Parks had previously returned to Scotland.

Minneapolis Golf Club was mostly completed by 1918. The first Golf Professional was D. W. Clark, hired in 1917. The membership had reached the limit of 400 in 1918, memberships selling for \$210 and dues set at \$80 per year. Caddies were bused to the club in a Ford bus purchased for that purpose.

In 1917 the club budget which included construction was \$74,000. \$54,000 for grounds construction and \$20,000 for irrigation and clubhouse reconstruction. In 1925 the fairways were irrigated. This system was updated again in 1937-38 and the new maintenance area was established at that time too. The irrigation system was updated again with a two row Toro electric system in 1972.

The club has hosted the 1940 Western

Amateur, the National Amateur in 1950 and the 1959 PGA Championship. It has also hosted the Minnesota State Amateur and is scheduled to host it again in 1988. The Minnesota Golf Championships are held annually at the Minneapolis Golf Club.

The Minneapolis Golf Club has had six golf pros; D. W. Clark, Dow George, Ernest Penfold, Lester Bolstad, Gunnard Johnson and Joel Goldstrand. The Minneapolis Golf Club has seven Golf Course Superintendents; Victor Larson, Herb Cohrs, Jack Kolb, Vern Hanson, Dan Evavold, Mark Smith and Dale Caldwell.

Minneapolis Golf Club has carved a niche for itself historically on an international scope in the field of golf course maintenance. The first greensaire was designed and used at the Minneapolis Golf Club as was the first Mete-r-matic topdresser. Both of these pieces of equipment helped revolutionize the art of golf course maintenance. They are still being used today in basically the same form as they were when they were developed.

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CORRECTION

THE SEPTEMBER MEMBER-GUEST SCRAMBLE AT MIDLAND HILLS WILL BE ON SEPTEMBER 15.



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