

A Blast From the Past

A Series of Articles From 1927

(Editor's Note: The following articles have been reprinted with permission from the USGA.)

January, 1927

Water Hazards

By Maynard M. Metcalf

Water hazards are of value only as mental hazards. As such they are legitimate, but they should be used sparingly. One or two is enough on any course. It is important to have one so that players may become accustomed to playing over water and may overcome the fear and uncertainty such a hazard causes. Otherwise they would fall down on other courses when playing over water.

One great purpose of hazards is to inspire a player in trouble to rise to super-golf and overcome the difficulty. A playable hazard is a spur to special effort and overcoming it gives a satisfaction that compensates for the initial disappointment of getting into the trouble. Without numerous such hazards a course is a tame affair. But a ball in a water hazard is generally unplayable and must be lifted—a depressing rather than exhilarating thing.

Of course the chief purpose of hazards, as of the rough, is to require accuracy of play in both direction and distance in order to avoid them. The ability to place one's ball with a good degree of accuracy is of the greatest importance whether on the tee or through the fair-way and especially in approaching. Hazards, both natural and artificial, are used to emphasize accuracy and as accuracy is of most importance near the green, it is here that one finds hazards most abundantly supplied on well constructed courses.

Of course water hazards are as good as any other from the stand-point of penalizing inaccuracy. But the fact that they are unplayable would properly interdict their use were it not for their value as mental hazards. Their presence in considerable number on any course is a defect, really a serious defect. Water hazards may often be so treated as to add to the beauty of a course. This is equally true whether the hazard be a pond or a stream. But if the pond or stream is off the fairway, outside the playing area for any but an egregiously bad shot, then it can be used far more effectively to beautify the course. Planting along its edges can be far more free and with thought only of the beauty.

May, 1927

Municipal and Public Golf

Just how Municipal Golf has expanded since the first public golf course was opened at Van Cortlandt Park in

New York City in 1895 is forcefully presented in a booklet just issued by the United States Golf Association. One hundred and forty-eight cities maintaining 208 Municipal and Public Golf Courses are presented, distributed through 37 States and the District of Columbia.

Statistics supplied by 120 courses giving the number of g-hole rounds played during the year 1925 show a total of 5,744,104 rounds. Ninety courses furnished information as to the cost of maintenance in the amount of \$1,298,241, an average of \$14,425 per course. Individual course maintenance costs range from \$2,000 to \$40,000 per annum, the lower figures applying to courses with sand greens. Playing fees are as low as 5 cents per round of 9 holes and as high as \$1.00 per day. A majority of the Municipal Courses are similar in their charges, 25 cents for 18 holes, with this charge doubled on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, where on a good many courses the patronage is tripled. Eleven courses listed are maintained free from playing charges. A large majority of the courses are self-sustaining, exploding the old theory that a Municipal Golf Course is a charge on the taxpayer.

Probably the longest Municipal Course is maintained by the city of Denver, Colo., known as the City Park Municipal Course, which is 6,767 yards in length and a par of 74. Rockford, Ill., enjoys a g-hole course of 3,511 yards with a par of 35. The shortest course appears to be the one located in Jermain Park, Toledo, Ohio, which is only 815 yards long, par 27. Municipal Golf Courses that have been maintained by cities for twenty-five years or more are: Franklin Park Course, Boston, Mass., opened in 1896; Ottawa Park Course, Toledo, Ohio; Riverside Course, Indianapolis, opened 1898; Lake Golf Course, Milwaukee; Cherokee Park, Louisville; Wing Park Course, Elgin, Ill., opened 1900; Burnet Park, Syracuse, N. Y.; Waveland Course, Des Moines, Iowa, opened 1901; Genesee Valley Course, Rochester, N. Y., opened in 1902. Savannah, Ga., park officials have started constructing golf courses on a most pretentious scale, and in December, 1926, dedicated an 18-hole course, the first of four to be built on a tract of 714 acres.

Thirty-two years ago the City of New York, through its Department of Parks, authorized the construction of a g-hole golf course in Van Cortlandt Park. This appears to be the pioneer movement in the United States for the establishment of Municipal Golf Courses. In the first four years the attendance had grown to such an extent that the Park Department felt justified in enlarging the course, and it was rebuilt and extended to 18 holes. In November, 1899, the new course was formally opened with a tournament in

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which 120 players competed. A. G. Hamilton is recorded as the winner, and the news-papers of that period state that he "Lived within a stone's throw of the grandest public golf course in the world." It was also stated that he had been identified with the Baltusrol Golf Club in New Jersey for many years. Pictures of scenes during that event bear little resemblance to the attire worn at the present time by golfers, and it is quite doubtful if a contestant of today would have the courage to appear on a course wearing a Derby hat.

In September, 1896, the Van Cortlandt Park Golf Club was organized at a meeting held in the Vanderbilt Building, Nassau and Beekman Streets, New York City. Twenty-one members were enrolled and the entrance fee was fixed at \$2.00 with annual dues of the same amount. The officers elected were: President, C. S. Jensen ; vice president, A. Owles; secretary, A. P. Meyer; and treasurer, W. E. Kingsbury. In 1922 the United States Golf Association inaugurated and conducted the first Public Links Championship at Ottawa Park in Toledo, Ohio. During the five years that these championships have been held 44 cities have been represented, three of this number being Canadian cities. Not more than 30 cities have been represented at any one tourney. The annual staging of this competition has served in no small way to arouse the interest of municipal authorities throughout the country and set them planning for the construction of public golf courses, especially in those localities where the recreation officials have been backward in providing facilities for the playing of the game. The number of Municipal Golf Courses opened each year since 1922 has been most gratifying, and

In 1823 nineteen courses were opened; in 1924, fifteen courses; in 1925, the banner year, twenty-one courses were ready for the public golfer, and this number was duplicated in 1926. This year nine more cities are preparing to dedicate

Municipal Golf Courses. A large number of Municipal Golf Courses have regularly organized golf clubs and associations which, serve to promote the interest of the members in the playing of the game, its etiquette and the proper enforcement of the rules. Only a small proportion of the courses listed in the booklet, sixty in all, have supplied information as to membership in each club. These 60 clubs have enrolled 15,842 players, but this total does not include clubs identified with the various New York City courses.

When the late Hon. Warren G. Harding was President of the United States in 1923, he donated a trophy for competition between cities, and this is now known as the Inter-City Team Championship. Four players are nominated by each city that enters a team, and the trophy is retained by the city returning the winning team for one year, and each member of the team receives a gold medal. Whenever the players from the city of Chicago win the Harding Trophy it is placed on exhibition in the City Hall, so that all may see that the humble public links player has at last been recognized and afforded an opportunity to journey forth and match his skill against brother golfers from all sections of the country.

June, 1927

A New Power Putting Green Mower

This machine weighs 165 pounds, and the weight is evenly distributed on the large aluminum rollers, reducing the pressure per unit of surface to a minimum, thereby eliminating the danger of packing the soil of the greens excessively. The large rollers are operated direct from the motor through an expanding ring clutch and are separated by an auto type differential which eliminates any danger of scuffing or scarring of the turf in turning.

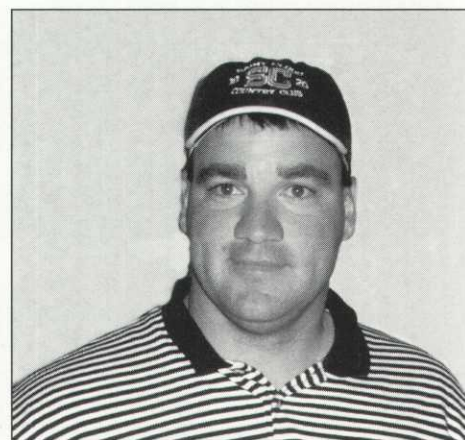
The machine cuts a 19-inch swath. This narrow cut and the compactness of the machine, together with the guard roller in front, enables it to cut undulated greens without scalping the high points. The speed of this machine and the ease with which it is operated enables one man to do approximately the work of two men with hand mowers.



DAN HANSON, Superintendent at St. Cloud CC had the course in terrific shape for the Scholarship Scramble on June 17.



JACK MACKENZIE, CGCS, addressed the MGCSA group after golf at the Scramble.



CRAIG THOMPSON, head golf pro at St. Cloud CC had all bases covered.