



# Golf Course Designed For Senior Citizens

design  
stresses  
golfers'  
needs  
as well as  
beauty

**S**EEDING newly built golf courses can pose a problem, especially when heavy rains followed by drought combine to foil the effort. This was the case with the new 18-hole course of Rossmoor Leisure World at Cranbury, N. J.

This course was built for senior citizens as part of a new community designed by Rossmoor Corporation, a development organization. Home buyers in the new area expected a course ready for late season play in 1966.

Ross W. Cortese, head of the Rossmoor group, solved the problem by buying 79 acres of sod from Princeton Turf Farms, Inc. Sodding began in late summer and was completed over a

2-month period, in time for some fall play. Cost to Rossmoor for sod and installation on the course approximated \$200,000. It serves golfers who live in the present 596 home units of the community. More are being built in the development managed by James E. Cooper.

Princeton Turf supplied Merion bluegrass for the 90-foot wide fairways and Penncross bentgrass for greens. Roughs were reseeded.

Rossmoor Corporation also builds senior citizen communities and golf courses in other areas. Two of these, in Maryland and near Chicago, along with the Cranbury, N. J. course, were designed by golf course architect Desmond Muirhead. Muirhead is

a partner with golfer Gene Sarazen.

### Course Part of Community

In the case of these courses, Muirhead was especially concerned with the relationship of the golf course to the community. He stressed to Rossmoor planners the need to avoid the pitfall of surrounding the course with houses, or, at the extreme, surrounding each fairway with a double line of houses. Rather, Muirhead preferred to keep the golf course intact. In this way, the entire community could enjoy it. A road circumventing the entire course would provide the advantage of a park-like green area. This in turn would open up many handsome views for the benefit of the surrounding community.

The Rossmoor course in New Jersey has been built on 130 acres of gently rolling terrain. Muirhead designed both roads and course to insure efficient use of land. No large triangles of unused space are found in the final course plan. This flexibility enabled the best golf terrain and golf holes to be selected and incorporated in the final course area. Also, for the benefit of players, no holes face due west into the sun.

Muirhead was also involved with the landscape. A golf course should be beautiful, he believes, rather than a group of tees and greens coming to a point. A well-planned course, he says, is a thing of logic and sequence with a road around it. Then an entire community can benefit with a view of trees and lakes.

### Landscape Design Emphasized

"A golf course should, in fact," Muirhead says "be treated as a large landscape design." For instance, although many trees have been planted, at Rossmoor Leisure World, gaps left at intervals allow fairways to inter-penetrate. This increases the sense of spaciousness and permits formation of vistas and panoramas for

both auto traffic and golfers. Once the trees are mature a tour of each fairway, from tree to green, will unfold a variety of views.

Though stress has been placed on beauty in the Rossmoor courses planned and built by Muirhead, course design for benefit of players has been foremost.

For senior citizens, Muirhead felt, new criteria in specifications were needed. It is obvious, he says, that courses 7000 yards in length which are laid out with Jack Nicklaus and other touring pros in mind are not too popular with golfers more than 52 years of age. Generally, the drives of the latter players average well under 200 yards. Extensive studies were made and questionnaires distributed among prospective players to find what these senior golfers preferred. Results proved to be somewhat different than the normal conception of a golf course.

Thus, Rossmoor Leisure World's New Jersey course became a carefully tailored unit, built to match the hitting power of the players. Average drives, computed from other Rossmoor senior courses, also were found

to be between 150 and 210 yards.

Length of the holes was adjusted accordingly. Par 4's and par 3's are genuine 4's and 3's for the players concerned and not par 5's and par 4's as they are on many championship courses. For instance, the par 3's run from 160 to 100 yards instead of 220 to 180 yards, which is average for so-called championship courses. "Any par 3 over 160 yards or par 4 over 410 yards are par 4's and par 5's for the ordinary golfer," Muirhead reports.

The total length at the Cranbury course varies from 6355 yards down to 4590 yards. This is effected by large tees and 2 or 3 tees per hole, which, together with changing pin position on the greens, gives the course infinite variety both in length and playing characteristics. Thus the course can be adjusted to the players or to the tournament. Playability can vary from an interesting challenge for a low handicap senior golfer to a relaxed frolic on "Ladies Day." A long, regular, and short set of tees avoids any stigma to the male golfer playing from the ladies' tees, and allows women

Elwood C. Tantum, general manager of Princeton Turf Farms, Inc., Princeton, N. J., left, and Field Foreman Vince Grubb, also of Princeton, discuss sod delivery schedules.





Rossmoor Leisure World's sod is carefully installed on this section of the 120-acre golf course. As summer drought cancelled hopes of the grass seeding on its own, 79 acres of turf was ordered to carpet fairways and greens. Only grass in the roughs will be left to rely on nature.

to play from the regular tees if they so desire.

#### Nine-Hole Courses Vary

Since many Rossmoor inhabitants like to play only 9 holes, the course has been varied so that each 9 is somewhat different. Care has been given to see that the overall unit for the 18 is maintained. Each 9, from the different tees, is also of a different length. The lengths range progressively downward from 3200 yards as follows: 3100, 2900, 2700, 2600, and 2400 yards. Most all tastes are catered to.

At every stage the New Jersey course is challenging, according to Muirhead. Holes are carefully organized to challenge a player regardless of whether he hits short, medium or long. For example, No. 3 hole is unique. A 4-fingered lake folds into the fairway with a tee against each fold, so that the hole plays from 160-180 yards per water, and for a championship senior tournament from 160-110 or 75 yards from the different tees. The green and rear trap are designed to increase the permutations by which the hole can be played.

Holes such as this obviously add great potential value to a course.

Hole No. 4 which will play around 500-400 for the average player, has lakes and traps placed to hinder only the long-hitting seniors. Other fairway traps have been reduced to a minimum. Each trap has been carefully placed to test the better golfer and longer driver. Traps near greens, and the greens themselves, are planned so they can be easily viewed from the hitting area, and in order to hold a long iron approach shot. Length of the hole is varied so most every club can be brought into play.

Grades around the greens are constructed for easy maintenance with a gang mower. Rolls are light and so placed that approaches close to the pin will produce even putts. Wilder approaches will putt over a roll or a rise.

The 2 large lakes on the New Jersey course cover 7 acres and are entirely lined with large strips of 10 mm. plastic sewn  
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Poor turf area on fairway of Dauphin Island golf course was photographed in late July prior to treatment with compost soil conditioner.

Note same fairway area, below, on Dauphin course some 3 months later. At this time, bermudagrass carpets the entire area.



## Mobile Soil Conditioners For Golf Course Balding

The Mobile Municipal Composting Plant, Mobile, Ala., has made available a product to help remedy bald spots . . . on golf courses, that is.

Mobile-Aid, an organic compost soil conditioner that contains beneficial bacteria to improve soil structure, is particularly effective, according to the producer, in soil that lacks nitrogen, phosphorus, potash and other elements necessary for healthy growth of grass and plants, says the company.

Test results on bald spots at the Dauphin Island, Ala., golf course are illustrated above. Because of the soil's sandy nature, areas on the edges of fairways repeatedly resisted attempts to grow grass. Late last July, 2 truckloads of Mobile-Aid were applied to several spots. Within 3 months, Bermudagrass carpeted these areas, even though it was not the prime growing season, says the company.

Mobile-Aid also tends to prevent wide variations of alkalinity and acidity, according to the company.

### Golf Course

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together and back-filled with sandy material. This process insures conservation of water. These are believed to be the first golf course lakes so constructed in the eastern U. S.

Rossmoor Leisure World New Jersey is the seventh Leisure World course. Once the Rossmoor Leisure World Chicago course is completed, Rossmoor Leisure World will be among the largest owner of golf courses in the world.