



Outlook—'70

What's Happening

THE GOLF BOOM continues! More than 11 million golfers from all economic levels of our society play the game regularly and their number is increasing at the rate of about 10% a year.

Despite the tight money situation and high interest rates, developers continue to build new golf courses. Regardless of the type project—be it a housing development, high rise condominiums and apartments, mobile home sites, ski resorts, hunt clubs and equestrian operations or a summer theater venture—somewhere in the master plans will be golfing facilities. More than 430 new golf courses are in some stage of construction throughout the nation today.

Public Growth Phenomenal

For many years, the majority of the nation's golf courses were private country clubs. It was only during the past decade that this picture changed. A study of NGF facility statistics for 1958 and 1968 reveals the following:

Semi-private courses experienced a meteoric rise of 115% during the 10-year period ending Jan. 1, 1969. Municipal operations increased 45% and private clubs 42% during the same decade.

The overall growth for all types was 67%—going from 5,745 courses in 1958 to 9,615 in 1968. Active golfers now total more than 11 million, up from about four million a decade ago. A recent NGF study as to where golfers play gives the following picture: 45% use municipal courses; 35% semi-private and 20% private.

NGF's New Speedy Program

In an effort to help the nation's public golf course operators speed up snail-paced play reported on many courses, NGF initiated a nationwide Speedy Play program in 1968. This program included a series of posters and information sheets.

The posters depicted various violations of etiquette which induce slow play. A precocious little rabbit named Speedy was created to symbolize NGF's attack on slow play. Speedy is pictured as correcting these breaches of etiquette, for example—leaving carts or cars in front of greens and looking too long for a lost ball.

Trends in Operational Policies

Many public golf courses are implementing policies and programs designed to increase golf play, especially for weekdays.

Public golf courses located in heavily industrialized communities have found that assisting various industries in organizing golf leagues and making their golf facilities available for league play on certain days has increased play and income materially. One municipal course in the greater Albany, N.Y. area reported that 40 industrial golf leagues were using its 18-hole facility in 1969.

Some courses are catering to special company and organizational events such as golf outings and picnics and are making their golfing facilities available either on a daily rental basis or individual green fee charge. A semi-private golf course operator in the greater Pittsburgh, Pa., area states his course served 97 days of such golf outings last year.

Likewise numerous private golf associations use public golf courses for their golfing activities. One New York county reported that 17 private golf associations were using its five 18-hole municipal facilities as their home courses.

Semi-private courses frequently have a low-cost annual membership arrangement which requires members to pay a green fee each time they play. A Mid-Atlantic course operator has the following scale of annual membership fees: single person \$50; husband and wife \$75; each additional family member \$15. Holders of such memberships may play 18 holes on weekdays for \$3; weekends and holidays \$4. They may bring guests who may play 18 holes by paying \$1 more than the quoted fee for card-holding members.

Use of powered golf cars has become an accepted practice at all types of golf courses in the United States. A well-managed, well-maintained fleet of golf cars can be one of the golf course's best sources of income. The golf car industry reported on June 30, 1969 (end of fiscal year) that a total of 42,260 golf cars were manufactured during the year—an increase of 15% over the 36,760 units produced in 1968. It is estimated there were 147,000 golf cars in use in 1968.

Courses for Specific Uses

Another trend to help speed up play is to provide different types of facilities which may appeal to golfers of varying playing capabilities. The pattern that is emerging is for 27 or 36 holes of golf—18 regulation length and 9 or 18 regular par-3 or executive type (some par 4 holes). Such variety of facilities will be

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in GOLF

challenging and interesting to golfers at all levels of capability.

The recent trend to build and operate golf courses for kids only is another movement to ease the pressure on crowded golf courses. Nine such facilities are known to be in operation in the United States today. Six are a part of private club facilities; the other three are municipal.

Bangor, Me., operates—in addition to its 18-hole regulation length layout—a 4-hole, 335-yard course for youngsters ages 6 through 12. Play is free. However, in order to be eligible to use it, youngsters must take at least one golf lesson (also free). Lessons are given every Saturday morning. Juniors up to age 16 may also attend these classes. A special city employee supervises play on the kids' course. Bangor municipal golf course officials report an average play from 25 to 30 a day by youngsters during the golfing season.

Lincoln's Junior Golf Course (Nebraska) is for golfers 15 years of age and under. Here the rules read "Adult golfers may play only during hours when school is in session or after 9:00 p.m."

More than 100 youngsters age 17 and under regularly play the Hazeltine National Junior Golf Course at Chaska (near Minneapolis), Minn. This is a 9-hole, par-3 layout about 820 yards long and built adjacent to the regular 18-hole course.

One very familiar use is the course designed as a recreational focal point for a cluster of subdivision homes. Some recent high rise apartment and condominium projects also include golf facilities for use of the occupants. About 24% of all the new courses opened in the

nation in 1969 were part of real estate ventures.

Similar projects for mobile homes are under development in many areas. One such golf and country club, part of a planned huge mobile home community in Florida, currently has an 18-hole regulation layout and a 9-hole, par-3 under construction. The project provides for 4,000 mobile homes. Purchasers of sites for their mobile homes must agree to a monthly maintenance fee which provides full maintenance for the lawns, grounds and the golf courses.

Many schools, colleges, industries, fraternal organizations, military and Veterans Administration installations throughout the country own and operate golf courses. There are also courses for use of male golfers only.

A northern New Jersey golf course developer opened a new 18-hole facility in June, 1969 (Princeton Hills Golf Academy and Country Club), which is being used solely for golf instruction and golf outings. From mid June to Aug. 30, the facility is used to accommodate five two-week golf schools serving 150 students each. Facilities include motel-type accommodations sufficient to house the student body and faculty. No memberships or daily fee play are contemplated for this operation. When not being used for the golf academy, the entire facility is available on a daily rental basis to industries and other groups wishing to hold golf outings.

Golf courses are springing up these days in many small rural areas of the nation where until a few years ago country clubs of their own existed only in the wishful

thinking of a few residents. Chief assist here has come from long term (up to 40 years), low interest rate loans available to nonprofit associations in rural communities of 5,500 or less population for recreational purposes through the Farmers Home Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Since the program's inception in 1963, FHA has approved 800 such loans through fiscal 1968 for a total of \$88 million. About 600 of these projects included golf courses. Loans often cover 80% of the costs of such ventures.

The major airlines in the United States are using golf as an aid to their business. United Air Lines has a five-year contract with Arnold Palmer and offers commuters between Chicago and New York golf quizzes written by him and awards golf balls as prizes.

Eastern Airlines has its Flying Golfers Club now numbering 20,000 members with Jack Nicklaus as its flying pro, who expects to increase club membership to 50,000.

American Airlines solicits key business accounts to participate in its annual Astrojet Golf Tournament. It also pushes special golf tours to Phoenix—says it will have about 500 of them in 1969 (150% more than last year).

National Airlines sponsored a new \$200,000 open golf tourney this year. Pan American set up a VIP Executive golf school. Julius Boros supervised six week-long instruction sessions at the school located in the Bahamas.

Golf Growth Will Continue

There is every indication that golf course development will continue

to grow in the 1970s. Some 346 new regulation length facilities opened for play in 1969 (NGF's fiscal year ended Sept. 30). Another 381 were in some stage of construction. In addition, NGF files indicate 681 new regulation course prospects and 124 new par-3 prospects for the fiscal year.

Leading states in new golf courses opened for play in 1969 were: Florida (27); Texas (23); Ohio (22); Michigan (17); New York, North Carolina and Pennsylvania (each 15); Illinois (13) and 12 each for California, Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Good golf courses are expensive to build. While the cost may vary from \$200,000 to \$2 million, an 18-hole regulation length facility—

completed and ready for play—is seldom accomplished for under \$500,000. Golf courses are also expensive to maintain. Annual maintenance budgets for 18 holes run anywhere from \$50,000 to \$100,000 or more.

There is no indication that there will be any significant decline in interest rates, prices of land or construction costs. If market research results for a specific golf project are favorable, the time to build is NOW.

Golf has become a big business getting bigger each year because it fits snugly with the Leisure Age. It takes about five hours to get around the average golf course. These hours spent getting from the first tee to the 18th green provide creative use of leisure with the out-of-doors and

exercise thrown in.

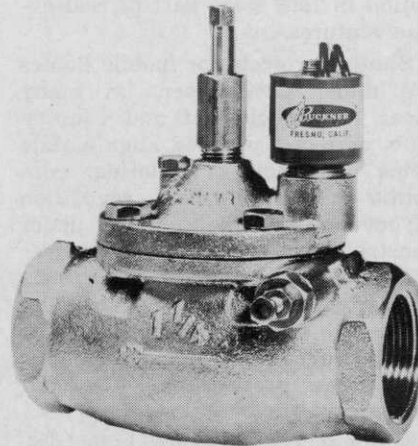
Spending by U. S. golfers for golf products will top \$1 billion in 1969—more than is spent on any other sport. Costs for golf are increasing—initiation fees and dues are rising as are green fees—to help offset mounting labor costs which were up about 8% last year.

Women golfers are increasing rapidly and now number more than two million in the nation. More are taking up the game each month. The number of junior golfers, growing faster than any other division, is just under a million.

The United States, with more than 11 million golfers and about 9,800 golf courses, leads the world in the continuing and apparently limitless expansion of the game of golf.

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Irrigation



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LOOK TO 1970 for accelerated use of modern irrigation principles for expanding turf acreage in recreation and beautification.

Automatic sprinkler irrigation has grown tremendously and, undoubtedly, will continue to be a major factor in encouraging the expansion and improvement of golf courses and other recreational areas, as well as beautification of cities, highways, and industrial areas.

Many things point to the sharply expanded use of automatic irrigation, including the constant search for lower maintenance costs, more efficient controlled use of water, and accurate night watering.

The landscape architect's first concern is that everything planted in accordance with his design can and will be properly maintained. He is, also, aware of the difficulty and cost of any labor, wasted water, or awkward restrictions on the use of water; and he knows that accurate and regular applications of water are the best assurance of superior land-

scaping results. These factors can apply to a school; small business, such as restaurants, motels; an entire shopping center; or highway and city street plantings.

Many new golf courses already are in the planning stages for 1970. As a result of the proved advantages of automatic systems, these new courses, as well as many existing golf courses with manual irrigation systems, undoubtedly, will get modern automatic irrigation this coming year.

The trend to retire the old manual and waterwagon methods of irrigating city and highway planting that started in a small way with the advent of dependable automatic irrigation equipment a few years ago is now in high gear.

We will see great strides in 1970 in increased production, sales, and installation of automatic irrigation on both new and old landscaping.

With the rapid increase in the demand for automatic sprinkler irrigation equipment, manufacturers

have constantly had their research departments keyed to better automatic valves, a wider range of dependable underground rotary sprinklers with improved quality, larger diameters, and better water distribution patterns. Controllers with features to meet many specialized watering requirements and simplified installation are presently or soon will be on the market.

Another factor required in this fast-growing market was the training and experience necessary to develop knowledgeable automatic sprinkler system installers. This is quite a new field, but, from only a few knowledgeable installers 10 years ago, the number has now grown to a point where there are dependable, experienced contractors readily available throughout the country.

Unless there are drastic changes in the present economy, 1970 will be the largest to date in the sprinkler irrigation industry for turf and general landscaping projects.