

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 9-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 9-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 9-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 which 120 players competed. A. G. Hamilton is recorded as the winner, and the newspapers 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 1923 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.

TO MEASURE THE AREA OF A GREEN

Rectangular. Multiply the length in feet by the breadth in feet. Allowance should be made for projections from or indentations into the rectangle.

Circular. Take the distance from the center to the outside and multiply it by itself. Then multiply the product by 3.1416.

Triangular. Multiply the length of one side by half the distance from the middle of that side to the tip of the triangle.

Oval or Elliptic. Add the long diameter to the short diameter, divide by 4, multiply the resulting figure by itself, and then multiply this final figure by 3.1416.