

Municipal Golf in Los Angeles

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Given great impetus by the opening last summer of the 7,003-yard, 18-hole Rancho Municipal Golf Course, public links golf in Los Angeles has continued its steady growth, with increased play on the city's municipal courses offering a specific example of the game's appeal.

In addition to Rancho, which is located in West Los Angeles, the Los Angeles City Recreation and Park Department also operates the 18-hole Wilson course (6,866 yards), the 18-hole Harding course (6,469 yards) and the nine-hole Roosevelt course (2,623 yards). All are standard golf courses. Three additional pitch-and-putt courses are operated: the nine-hole Coolidge course in Griffith Park, the nine-hole Rancho course and the 18-hole Holmby Park course. Three driving ranges are among the other municipal golf facilities of Los Angeles.

A total of 483,161 rounds of golf were played on these seven courses in 1949. The Rancho course was opened in July, 1949, for the USGA Amateur Public Links Championship. It was, therefore, in public use for only half the year.

From 1944 until June 1, 1950, a standard green fee of \$1 prevailed on all full-size, 18-hole courses. The inflation which affected all living costs in the post-war period made itself felt in the operation of Los Angeles' city courses, too. While revenues continued to exceed operating costs, this trend resulted in a steady shrinking of the increments to surplus upon which the city depended to build new and badly needed courses.

Operating expenses for the Los Angeles municipal courses in the fiscal year 1948-49 totaled \$311,437. Subtracted from the gross revenue of \$377,225, this left a net of \$65,788. This surplus went into development of new golf facilities. For reasons mentioned above, any surplus at the conclusion of the 1949-50 fiscal year is bound to be considerably less.



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The outlook for the fiscal year 1950-51 is much brighter. The Recreation and Park Commission, after very careful study and analysis and following consultation with leading golfers and golf writers, authorized an increase in the rates at city courses which brought these charges more nearly in line with present-day conditions.

The basic green fee of \$1 for 18 holes was increased to \$1.50. The basic fee of 50 cents for nine-holes was raised to 75 cents. A new fee of 50 cents was established for making advance reservations.

As part of the new plan, a greatly improved reservation system has been instituted. Reservations are now made

entirely by telephone to a central reservation office established in the City Hall headquarters of the Recreation and Park Department. A great improvement has been effected over the old reservation system which caused many golfers to wait long hours in line and which was hard to keep free of abuses.

Though the rates were increased, the great majority have readily accepted the new situation, recognizing its validity and importance to the future of golf in Los Angeles. The point of view was aptly expressed by Joseph C. Dey, Jr., Executive Secretary of the USGA, who wrote:

"I certainly was interested in news of the rate increase of Los Angeles' municipal courses and the plan to use the proceeds on additional courses. It is obvious that you have saved the day for public-course golf in one of

the most golf-minded sections of the country."

As a result of the increased revenues anticipated under the new rate structure, the Recreation and Park Department expects to start in the fiscal year 1950-51 building another course to help relieve the pressure on existing courses. The new facility is planned for the Sepulveda Flood Control Basin in the San Fernando Valley, and an application has already been filed with the federal government to obtain the long-term use of this valuable and well-located land.

Municipal golf has come a long way since the early days. And municipal golf has not only been continuously self-sustaining but has produced its own surplus revenues with which to build new city courses—the only way in which this could be accomplished.



When Stanley Bielat, of Yonkers, N. Y., Frank Rutkiewicz, of Honolulu, Salvatore Fiorillo, of Norristown, Pa., and John Dobro of Chicago reached the semi-final round of the Amateur Public Links Championship in Louisville, they felt they were entitled to sit down and relieve their aching feet. So they did. Bielat survived the other three to win the Championship.