

OLD CLUB, NEW COURSE FOR WOMEN'S OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

THE WICHITA COUNTRY CLUB, in Wichita, Kan., site of the USGA Women's Open Championship, starting at the end of this month, has one of the newer golf courses. Construction started in 1949, and the facilities were opened in December, 1950. But the Club's history stretches back farther than that, for this in actuality was the fifth change of clubhouse and course since its incorporation.

The Wichita Country Club is one of the oldest golf clubs west of the Mississippi River. The founder of golf in Wichita was Bennett B. Cushman, who at the end of the nineteenth century had been an active golfer at the Chevy Chase Club, near Washington, D.C., and who in 1900 moved to Wichita, bringing along with him his very real golf enthusiasm.

After several months of conversation and education of Wichitans by Cushman, the Wichita Country Club was formally incorporated on September 8, 1900. The cups at that time were tin cans and the greens were as nature, unaided, had developed them. There were no flags, no artificial hazards and, of course, no caddies. There were no dressing rooms or showers, no place even to wash one's hands. Membership was fixed at 100.

First Tournament In 1900

The Country Club held Wichita's first golf tournament on October 19, 1900, and in spite of jibes by bystanders and wisecracks of the town's funny men the event was a great success and the game took hold from the beginning—so much so that mature businessmen feared that some of the younger set were devoting entirely too much time to golf and too little to business.

The estimated value of goods, chattels and lands were set at \$8,000 in 1901, at which time the Club had moved into its

Unusual Hazards in Golf

The following dispatch arrived from Boston the other day:

"Golfers among the Massachusetts State Prison inmates today had their 'secret' golf course and their golf clubs taken away from them.

"In addition, Deputy Warden Albert Thompson and a guard, Victor Anchukiatis, were suspended for lowering four golf clubs from the wall to the prisoners.

"Acting Warden Perley S. Vance said he had no knowledge of any golf course within the prison walls.

"An employee of the Correction Department said, however, that some of the prisoners who work in the foundry built a miniature course in the yard outside the shop."

clubhouse commonly known as the Bird Cottage.

The Club has played host to several major tournaments in the past, both on the old and the present courses. In 1936 John Dawson won the Trans-Mississippi Amateur and in 1948 Charles Coe was the winner of the same tournament. Skee Riegel was the winner of one of his first major tournaments, the Western Amateur Championship, in 1947.

The Mid-Continent Open was held at Wichita Country Club for several years during the 1920s. Winners included Walter Hagen and Jock Hutchison. Purses of \$1,500 to \$2,000 at that time attracted all the outstanding professionals.

Last year Beverly Hanson was the winner in the Women's Open Invitational, which carried a \$5,000 purse. She scored 78-73-71-73 — 295 and won by seven strokes. The lowest eighteen-hole score was 71.

The Club has developed two intercollegiate champions in a period of four years. Marilyn Smith, now playing professional

USGA COMPETITIONS FOR 1956

<u>Championship</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Dates</u>
OPEN	Oak Hill Country Club Rochester, N. Y.	June 14-15-16
WOMEN'S OPEN	Northland Country Club Duluth, Minn.	_____
AMATEUR PUBLIC LINKS	Harding Park Golf Course San Francisco, Cal.	_____
JUNIOR AMATEUR	Taconic Golf Club Williams College Williamstown, Mass.	_____
GIRLS' JUNIOR	(not determined)	
WOMEN'S AMATEUR	Meridian Hills Country Club Indianapolis, Ind.	Sept. 17-22
AMATEUR	Knollwood Club Lake Forest, Ill.	Sept. 10-15
SENIOR AMATEUR	(not determined)	_____

golf, won the Women's Collegiate Championship at Columbus, Ohio, in 1949, and Jim Vickers won the National Collegiate Athletic Association Championship at Purdue University in 1952.

USGA Member Since 1910

The Club has been a member of the USGA since 1910, and Frederick L. Dold, one of its members, was a member of the USGA Executive Committee for five years. Prior to that he had been president of the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association. John Butts, another member, was president of the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association in 1954. Messrs. Dold and Butts are Co-Chairmen for the Club for this Women's Open Championship.

The course, running 6,330 yards over slightly rolling country with a women's par of 72, presents a good test of accuracy. It has had few changes since its construction by William Diddel, of Carmel, Ind., who did the planning and worked closely with Wes Updegraff, former green super-

intendent, and Mike Murra, the Club's professional for twenty-nine years.

The present green superintendent is Everett Queen. Fairways are mixtures of blue grass and bent and the greens are C 1 and C 19 bent. Natural hazards are employed, and there are only about fifty sand traps. An interesting feature of the course is the large rolling greens, several of them measuring more than 8,500 square feet. This places great emphasis on the approach and on putting.

The nine Women's Open Championship played thus far, beginning in 1946, have been won by five contestants—Miss Patty Berg, Miss Betty Jameson, Mrs. George Zaharias, Miss Louise Suggs and Miss Betsy Rawls.

Mrs. Zaharias, the Champion, has three triumphs to her credit, having also won in 1948 and 1950.

The USGA, at the request of the Ladies' Professional Golfers' Association, assumed sponsorship of the Championship in 1953.