

The World's Largest Sand Bunker

By C. C. McMULLEN

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, DHAHRAN GOLF ASSOCIATION, SAUDI ARABIA

With a lusty swing and a conventional divot, the newcomer to golf at the Rolling Hills Country Club in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, may gain ten yards per stroke.

Picture, if you will, a sand bunker roughly 100 yards wide and 5,310 yards long, with occasional breaks where the hands of time dumped a few acres of boulders and hillocks.

Greens? Well, maybe not. They are black oiled sand, swept smooth after play by our green-sweepers. Grass is only a memory, and there isn't a tree in the area.

What looks like an easy course from the clubhouse is a nightmare, made no less harrowing by the 120-degree heat and the strong dry winds.

Drives are exactly the length of the carry, and any "fairway" stroke not picked clean is probably a hole in your opponent's favor. A sand-bunker wizard might dote on our approaches, but we have no sand-bunker wizards. The yellow-and-black out-of-bounds stakes aren't helpful either.

Why try to play? That's a question best answered by saying, "Once a golfer, always a golfer, regardless of circumstances".

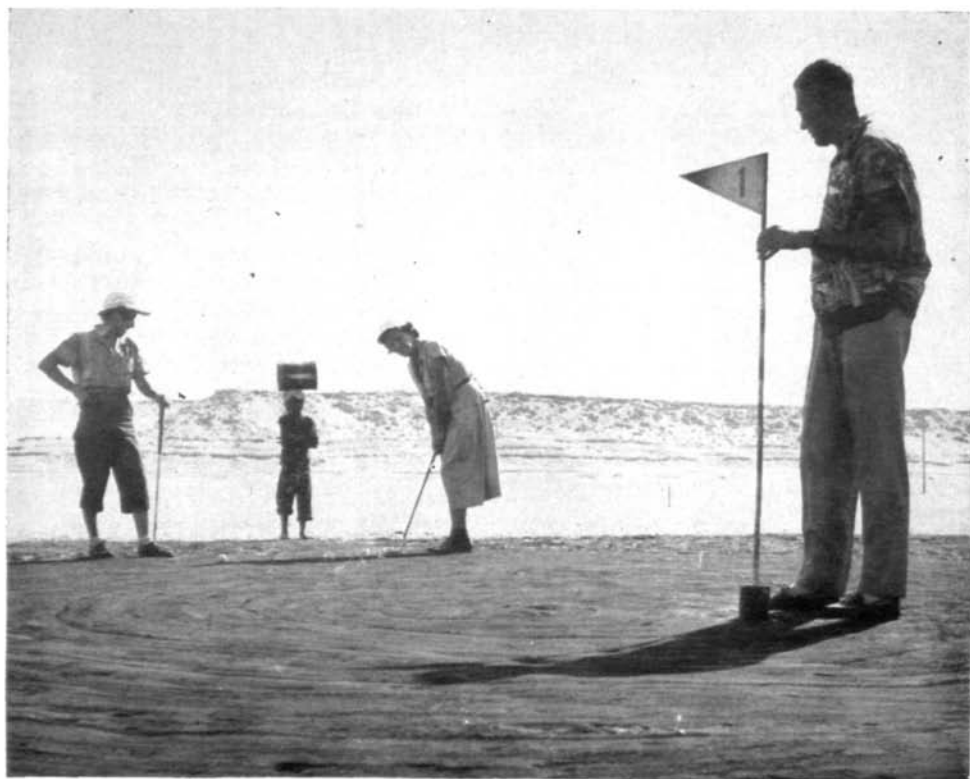


Photo by T. F. Walters

U. V. Stewart, a past president of the Dhahran Golf Association, holds the flagstick while Mrs. Mary Scholl and Mrs. Peggy Owen putt on the black, oiled-sand "greens" at the Rolling Hills Country Club.



C. C. McMullen, Chairman of the Board of the Dhahran Golf Association, in Saudi Arabia, stands ankle deep in sand to play a "routine" stroke from a sloping lie at the Rolling Hills Country Club.

Golf has been played in Saudi Arabia for approximately fifteen years, but it wasn't until November, 1948, that a half dozen enterprisers organized what is now the Dhahran Golf Association. This group has grown from the original six to nearly three hundred, and membership is restricted to those who own clubs and use them.

The purpose of organizing was to construct and maintain an eighteen-hole course, to establish USGA Rules of Golf and to build a clubhouse. The course has been constructed. We subscribe to the foreign services of the USGA and USGA Rules apply.

Now that the first objectives have been or soon will be attained, the Board of Directors is looking to the furtherance of golf. With the blessing of the Arabian-American Oil Company, the main em-

ployer in this area, a Middle East Golf Association has been formed. Associations in Lebanon, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have been accepted for membership, and the first competition was held on the Ras Tanura course, in Saudi Arabia.

An interesting development is the Saudi Arab caddies' penchant for swinging golf clubs. At first, they obviously thought we weren't quite bright. There was much laughing and posturing at our antics. Now it is considered a caddie's right to swing a club. We are furthering this interest and intend to hold caddie tournaments. They are a naturally graceful people, and we anticipate that some will become quite good. In any event, when they say, "Wajid zane", we feel assured we have completed a really good golf shot.