

U. S. GOLF COURSES APPROACHING NEW HIGH

Foundation Reports
Continued Gains

The record number of golf courses achieved in the booming Thirties may be exceeded this year if construction plans materialize on schedule.

There are now 5,745 golf courses in the United States, according to the National Golf Foundation which conducts surveys on such matters. Some 300 more are under construction.

The present peak is represented by the 5,856 courses in existence back in 1930. The depression and the war subsequently cut back the number of courses to a low of 4,809 in 1946.

Since the latter year, the trend has been steadily upward again, on balance, in spite of some losses each year to new real estate subdivisions, superhighways and suburban shopping centers. The 192 new courses which came into existence in 1958 was the highest increment since the World War II.

Of the 5,745 courses now in existence, 2,986 are private clubs, representing a gain of 99 during the year; 1,904 are operated with a profit motive, a gain of 72; and 855 are tax-supported, a gain of 21.

These courses may be broken down again into 3,308 nine-hole courses, utilizing 201,788 acres, and 2,437 eighteen-or-more-hole courses, using 348,491 acres.

Total investment approximates \$1,325,000,000.

Municipal courses, representing about 15 per cent of the total receive about 40 per cent of the total play. Semi-private courses, 33 per cent of the total, enjoy about 28 per cent of the play. Private courses, 52 per cent, get about 32 per cent of the play.

Recent trends in golf facilities include increased emphasis on the family-type recreation centers, and an increasing number of golf-real estate developments (about 10 per cent of all new construction projects are of this type).

Par-3 courses continue to gain in popularity. The opening of 38 new par-3 courses in 1958 brings the total now in

HOW IT'S DONE IN VIRGINIA

A group of officials of the Virginia Golf Association assembled in Richmond for a meeting at the end of last season and, appropriately enough, started things off with a game of golf.

Bob Scott, Chairman of the Handicap Committee, scored a hole-in-one on the 196-yard seventeenth at the Country Club of Virginia.

"Let's make it one, two, three, four," said Harry Easterly and placed one near the hole for an easy duce. Jose Davlia made the green and was down in two putts for his three. George Fulton's drive was bad but he was down in four.

play to 256. This is more than twice the number listed in 1955. Thirty-two more are now under construction, 124 more in planning.

With more than 300 new courses under construction and another 900 in planning, 1959 should be the biggest year for expansion of golf facilities. However, there will be a continued shortage of golf playing facilities for some time. At present there is an average of one golf course in the United States for every 30,461 people. In 1930 there was one for every 20,833.

Population growth and continued increase in play will demand more and more golf-course construction in the years ahead.

Increased week-day play, with continued increases in women and junior play, contributed to 1958's total play of approximately 75 million rounds. This is an increase of 5.7 per cent over the previous year when play was 71 million rounds.

An estimated 3,970,000 men, women and juniors played at least ten rounds of golf during 1958, an increase of 290,000 regular golfers over 1957.