

THE SPORTS CORNER

BY JACK HORNER



MUNICIPAL COURSE OFFERS IDEAL LOCATION.

It's been more than a year since we did a piece on the need of a municipal golf course in our city. Long before then, however, many of our public-minded citizens felt such a course was needed much worse than a lot of other things our city has been receiving through the aid of the WPA. A lot of water has passed under the bridge during the past year, so to speak, and today work has actually begun toward the construction of a nine-hole golf layout for our fairway addicts. Work started Tuesday under the direction of Perry Maxwell, golf architect from Ardmore, Okla. As you know, or should know by now, the course is being built on the property behind the Gillespie Park school.

No one is any more pleased to see progress being made on the layout than this humble scribe. To prove we're interested in the project, we observed some of the work Tuesday with Maxwell and Huger King as guides. King, a member of the city council, is a member of the council's committee for seeing that everything is ship-shape. He's tickled, too. "I'm hoping we can play on it by next summer," he explains. Mayor Lewis and Bill Sullivan have already challenged Huger and Cleo Davis to play an inaugural match. "We've accepted, too," Huger declares. Boy, that'll be some match, we betcha!

Maxwell is more enthusiastic over the prospects the property offers for an ideal course than Huger and the rest of the city councilmen put together. He took us over to the first tee, or where the first tee will be placed. "Look down that fairway," he said, pointing down a long sloping valley-like strip of land where the first fairway will be located.

"That will be a grand fairway," Maxwell commented. "A hook or a slice will likely roll into the middle of the fairway since it dopes that way. That will please many golfers, too," he added. Walking up to the edge of Ashboro street, from where you will drive off the first tee, Maxwell

smiled broadly when we asked him his opinion of the layout. "Frankly, this is an ideal location. The property offers the finest possibilities you could ask for. I'm not bragging because I'm doing the work, either," he voiced. "The location is perfect."

"The course will be first class," Maxwell added, at the same time worrying over the loss of his glasses on a tour of the layout a few minutes earlier. "It offers a very beautiful location from a landscaping standpoint. It has fine natural hazards, something lacking on many golf courses," he continued.

We were impressed with Maxwell's remarks concerning the layout. After all, he's an expert at this work and he should know. If you're interested in some of his work, he built the Oldtown and Reynolds Park courses in Winston-Salem. Thurman Edwards, former Starmount assistant, is pro at Reynolds, you know. Incidentally, Maxwell says Golf magazine has an article on the Oldtown course in its latest issue. He has built courses at the University of Michigan and also at Iowa State university. He remodeled the Ekwanok course, Manchester, Vt., where the National intercollegiate golf championship tournament is being held this week, and many others.

ARCHITECT PLANS MINIMUM NUMBER OF TRAPS

We might also add that Maxwell, at present, is doing some remodeling work on Bobby Jones' Augusta National course. He's rebuilding No. 16, the long par five hole where Gene Sarazen scored his famous double-eagle a few years ago. His second shot rolled into the cup. The hole is being lengthened, and other minor changes are being made to the layout. Maxwell also did remodeling work on the Augusta course a few years ago. "Bobby Jones always calls on me when he needs to make any changes," Maxwell says proudly. "Jones is a grand fellow, too," Maxwell adds, "and everyone likes him. He can still shoot in the low 70's."

Maxwell constructed the famous delrose park layout at Philadelphia, and rebuilt the well-known Pine Valley in the same city. He has had a hand in remodeling and rebuilding golf courses all over the country. Frankly, I think the city council is to be commended for obtaining the services of one of the nation's foremost golf architects to construct the local municipal layout. Maxwell knows his business. You only have to talk to him to discover this, but he amazes you with his remarks when you walk around and let him show you what he means.

"This job will not be tricky," he said of the proposed local layout. "It will be rolling but not hilly. There will be no severe climbs. I plan to put in only a minimum number of traps. This location has enough natural hazards. By natural hazards, I mean trees and streams. The majority of the traps will be located around the greens," he continued.

"I never like to see a golfer penalized for hitting a beautiful shot," said Maxwell. "There's no sense in traps in the middle of fairways. Time and again I've seen players hit swell drives that failed to carry over the traps. There's no use in such a penalty. As I said before, though, this location has too many natural hazards. I'll not fill the course with sand

traps. I like to see a few around the greens, however, for that puts a premium on the second shot. The greens will be planted with Bermuda grass. I plan to have one par five hole and two short par threes with a par of 35 for the nine holes," Maxwell commented.

The city, looking ahead to the future, has already purchased additional land adjoining the present golf site where it can add nine additional holes when the demand calls for it. "We know the second nine holes will be needed," Huger King explained. "Therefore, we're prepared to add them as soon as we need them."

As work continues with the clearing of the ground in preparation for the course, everyone is asking when it will be ready for play. "Who will be the professional," someone asked me the other day. Well, that's something that can't be answered this early. Maxwell believes the course will be ready for play late next summer or early fall. This is the wrong time of year to plant the grass, he says. "It's just like planting corn out of season," he remarked. Therefore, the course may be ready by next fall and it may not. Only time will tell. Several have applied for the job of pro. Incidentally, Jack Helms is being strongly considered. Don't be surprised if he gets it, too!