

Golf Course Architect Began Work As Hobby

By EARL BUJOL
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Because one man, who was virtually given up for dead, changed his hobby 37 years ago, the Palmetto Golf and Country Club course—now well under way between Bossier City and Benton—will have one of the best-constructed layouts in the nation.

That man is Perry Maxwell of Oklahoma City, builder of the Palmetto course.

Maxwell, described by sportsman's Grantland Rice as "Dean of American Golf Architects," brought experience gleaned from construction of 80 golf courses and remodeling of 30 to 40 more in 22 states to the Bossier parish site.

Recognized as one of the best in his business, Maxwell has a long and brilliant record in golf-course construction.

Probably topping the list is the famed Augusta National course at Augusta, Ga., scene of the Masters tourney. Known in the vernacular as the "Bobby Jones" course, it was originally constructed by Dr. Alister MacKenzie of Scotland, who holds a world-wide reputation for golf course design and construction. (MacKenzie was builder of the famed Cypress Point golf course on the Monterey peninsula south of San Francisco, Calif.)

However, when the Augusta course developed kinks in some of the greens after its opening, Maxwell was called in and eventually remodeled over half the course.

In 25 commercial years in the business, Maxwell has climbed into the higher strata of his profession, having built dozens of top-flight courses.

According to the genial constructor, however, it all began because of his own ill health. In his younger years, Maxwell suffered from tuberculosis, and in an effort to rid himself of the sickness, he spent years roughing around the West.

To improve his health, he became a tennis enthusiast, playing at every opportunity.

"In the winter, it wasn't so bad," he commented.

But in the summer heat, the game wore him down physically to such an extent that he weighed only about 115 pounds.

"So my wife decided I'd better quit," he explained.

When he did, Maxwell, in 1913, turned to golf as a sport. At the time he was living in southern Oklahoma. Becoming interested in the sport as a hobby, Maxwell soon extended this natural curiosity to construction and lay-out.

His first golf course was the Dornick course at Ardmore, Okla., constructed mostly in his spare time.

"The thing I remember best now is removing 500 or 600 wagonloads of stones from the rocky, nine-hole course," he chuckled.

Maxwell continued on a non-professional basis for six more years, constructing "six or eight" courses during the time.

In 1925 he started constructing golf courses commercially.

Among his favorites Maxwell lists Crystal Downs at Frankfort, Mich., a private course built for the late Willard Dow of the Dow Chemical corporation. Another private course built by Maxwell was the Prairie-Duns course at Hutchinson, Kans., ordered by William and Emerson Carey, Jr., two of four brothers to the Carey Salt fortune.

Other famous courses constructed under his direction were the course at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor; Iowa State university at Ames; the Melrose course in Philadelphia; the Grand hotel course in Mobile, Ala.; the Colonial at Fort Worth, Texas (scene of the 1941 National Open, won by Craig Wood); Southern Hills at Tulsa, Okla. (1946 National Women's Amateur championship); the Oklahoma Golf and Country club at Oklahoma City (scene of the Western Amateur championship, ranked second in the nation to the National Open); and extensive re-

modeling at the Pine Valley Golf course in Philadelphia, Penn.

Next year, Maxwell plans to reconstruct 14 of 18 holes at the Sulcon Valley Golf course at Bethlehem, Penn., where the National Amateur Championship tournament is to be played.

At the present time, besides the

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Palmetto job here, which Maxwell said should be ready to play on this fall, he is constructing courses at Oklahoma university at Norman and another in Oklahoma City.

The course at Oklahoma university is being built under the direction of his son, Pres, who has worked as Maxwell's superintendent for the past 15 years. Pres is also aiding his father in the construction of the course here.

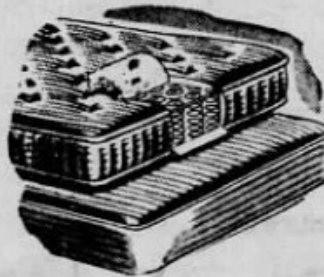
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