

THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Golf Course

Division of Student Affairs



University of Maryland Golf Course...

The Founding Steps...

In November 1954, Dr. Wilson H. Elkins, President, University of Maryland, commissioned a study for a proposed golf course to serve the University community. This effort was chaired by Mr. James M. Tatum, the Athletic Director. His committee consisted of six additional members, including the prime instigator for the project, Mr. Frank H. Cronin, University of Maryland class of 1939, track, boxing, and golf coach, and present day member of the University of Maryland Athletic Hall of Fame. Also serving on the committee were Dean Lester M. Fraley, College of Physical Education, Recreation and Health; Mr. George O. Weber, Director of the University Physical Plant; Mr. Mark M. Shoemaker, University Landscape Architect; Dean Gordon M. Cairns, College of Agriculture; and Mr. Robinson Lappin, Director, Dining Hall, who had assisted Mr. Cronin in garnering support for the golf course.

Mr. Tatum's report to Dr. Elkins in February 1955 outlined his committee's view that "there is no way of having a complete course of Physical Education without having at least some facilities for the teaching of golf." The interest in the sport by students and faculty was highlighted, as was the observation "that there are very, very few who could afford to belong to one of the neighboring country clubs." Another significant point was brought to Dr. Elkins' attention – that "every school with whom the University has intercollegiate athletic relations sponsors a golf team."

For the preceding eight years, the golf team had been renting facilities at a nearby course, Prince Georges Golf and Country Club, for both practice and competitions. Mr. Tatum's report pointed out that "we have to rely on the hospitality of that particular club for the treatment furnished our guest, the visiting team. Our visitors seldom see the University of Maryland."

Mr. Tatum's input to Dr. Elkins also included a recommendation for where the proposed golf course should be located. The Physical Plant Department, headed by Mr. George O. Weber, a member of Mr. Tatum's committee, completed a contour map of the University property. An area "west of the new highway (today known as University Boulevard, Maryland Route 193) which at the present time is being constructed west of the stadium (today, Byrd Stadium)" was recommended. A noteworthy aspect of this tract of land was the fact that a portion of it was a U.S. Army anti-aircraft site. The committee recommended that steps be taken immediately to terminate the lease with the federal government.

Among those enlisted to help evaluate the land for possible construction of a golf course on this site was Mr. Edwin Ault, club champion at nearby Indian Spring Country Club, who at the time was coordinating construction of a new 27- hole course for his home club; and, Mr. Al Jamison, Golf Professional at Virginia's Goose Creek Country Club who had formerly supervised construction of Bethesda Country Club.

A study of the construction costs of recently built area golf courses yielded an estimated cost of \$100,000 for an eighteen hole course, exclusive of a clubhouse, on this site. It was noted in the proposed financing plan... "That this cost might be reduced if construction is undertaken on a 'piece meal' basis, utilizing student labor, prison labor, physical plant equipment, and cooperative efforts of lumber equipment manufacturers in the clearing operations." A few notable asides are worth mentioning. Prison labor provided by a nearby correctional facility in Jessup, Maryland was used in course construction. A local farmer and husband of an assistant to Mr. Cronin also helped in the construction. And lastly, the original modest clubhouse was replaced in 1999 with the present day, approximately \$3M facility replete with a full service pro shop, locker rooms, restaurant, bar, and spacious banquet facilities.

Dr. Elkins accepted the committee's recommendations and presented the proposal to Mr. B. Herbert Brown, a member of the University of Maryland Board of Regents and Chairman of its Athletic Committee. Mr. Brown would prove to be a key proponent for construction of the course.

"The University of Maryland community is fortunate to have a facility of this quality located on campus. When the renovation is complete, the University of Maryland Golf Course will be one of the finest university courses in the country. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, I am excited about what our future holds."



—Mr. Jeff S. Maynor, Director of Golf, University of Maryland Golf Course and PGA Professional

The Critical Meeting...

At a June 24, 1955, meeting of the Board of Regents, chaired by Judge William P. Cole, Mr. Brown's Athletic Committee's findings were presented. A primary recommendation was to retain the services of Messrs. Ault and Jamison for the tee-to-green layout and to employ a licensed and established golf course architect, Mr. George W. Cobb, for specifications and construction plans and for supervision of construction. "The Athletic Council after being informed of Mr. Cobb's estimate of cost of construction, including his fee at \$7000, and having a report from Mr. George Weber, Director of the University Physical Plant, as to how his department could build this course working under Mr. Cobb's direction, decided it best not to contract for the golf course as a complete package but instead to subcontract wherever the Physical Plant Department could not do the work." Mr. Cobb's estimate for the course construction was \$93,000, including his fee.

The Athletic Council, however, had received input from the University Landscape Architect, Mr. Shoemaker, stating that due to the poor quality of soil on the proposed site that the grading and soil preparation estimate of \$8000 submitted by Mr. Cobb was probably \$7000 too low. Therefore, the recommendation was... "The Athletic Council decided in case the golf course was approved by the Administration that at least \$100,000, instead of \$93,000, should be earmarked for golf course construction."

After agreement had been reached by the Board of Regents to recommend to the Administration the proposed \$100,000 expenditure for the construction of the golf course, which would include a large practice area with a driving range, the issue of the yearly maintenance cost was addressed. Based on data "from the National Golf Foundation, individual local private clubs and courses owned by colleges and universities, such as the University of North Carolina, Purdue University, Louisiana State University, United States Naval Academy, Ohio State University and others, it was felt that \$30,000 would be about as sound an estimate for each year's maintenance outlay as we could make."

Also included in the Athletic Council's findings was mention of a noteworthy correspondence that was circulated to Dr. Elkins and other Board of Regents members. This letter, provided by a retired University professor, Dr. Charles O. Appleman, included "plans for a golf course which he had formulated for President Woods around 1920." [Albert F. Woods was President, Maryland State College of Agriculture (later to become the University of Maryland) from 1917-1926].

After their June 24, 1955, meeting the Board of Regents' input was presented to the Administration for approval, and subsequently, construction of the golf course began. Funding for the golf course was forthcoming in the form of non-appropriated funds provided by receipts from three post-regular season football games the University of Maryland Terrapins participated in – the 1952 Sugar Bowl, and the 1954 and 1956 Orange Bowls.

The Dedication Day ...

In a letter dated June 2, 1958, to faculty and staff members, Mr. William W. Cobey, the Director of Athletics, announced that within the near future “the first nine holes of the University Golf Course will open for play.” He also noted that due to weather conditions during the past winter there would be a delay in opening the back nine and that “we have a very fine driving range that is now in operation and is open to faculty and staff members.”

The initial membership structure and corresponding fees were outlined as follows: “The golf course membership will be restricted to students, faculty, staff members, and alumni. In order to maintain the golf course it has been necessary to establish a small annual membership charge, along with greens fees. For faculty and staff members the annual membership fee will be \$12.00. If a faculty or staff member desires to have an unlimited membership for his family, the annual membership fee will be \$20.00.

“Membership fees will be paid on a University fiscal year basis, from July 1 to June 30. The daily greens fee for eighteen holes will be \$1.00. Daily greens fees for guests of faculty, staff, and alumni members will be \$2.50, and on weekends \$3.50.”

In closing, Mr. Cobey noted that...“This has been accomplished by the University’s participation in several Bowl games, and with the approval of the University Administration. It is our hope that the student body, faculty members, and staff members will enjoy many pleasant days of recreation on the new golf course.”

The following spring, with the full eighteen hole course open for play, the dedication ceremony was held on May 15, 1959. Among those that played that Friday were President Elkins, Mr. Brown, Mr. Cronin, and Col. J. Logan Schutz (class of 1938, 1940 and a classmate and track teammate of Mr. Cronin) who would return to the University of Maryland in 1964 as Director of Alumni Affairs.

Some Members’ Feedback on the Question...

What makes the University of Maryland Golf Course special?

“It’s a great, classic, tree-lined layout with no houses.”

“I never get bored with the layout.”

“The course provides a good balance between challenge and playability.”

“Has great flora and fauna.”

“The University of Maryland is the hub of our state’s higher education system. Many of the members and patrons are alumni, faculty, staff and students who view the golf course as the University community’s premier recreational venue.”

“Since the University of Maryland Golf Course is located close to our Nation’s Capital, it naturally attracts golfers intimately connected—through government, the private sector, and academia—with the vital issues of our times.”

2008-2009 Golf Course Renovation

The University of Maryland Golf Course has not undergone a major renovation since its initial construction. In the summer of 2008, a \$3.5M upgrade will begin that is based on the design of renowned golf course architect, Mr. William R. Love. The course is scheduled to re-open in the spring of 2009. Although the course will be closed for play during the renovation, the pro shop, clubhouse facilities including the restaurant and bar, plus the driving range will remain open.

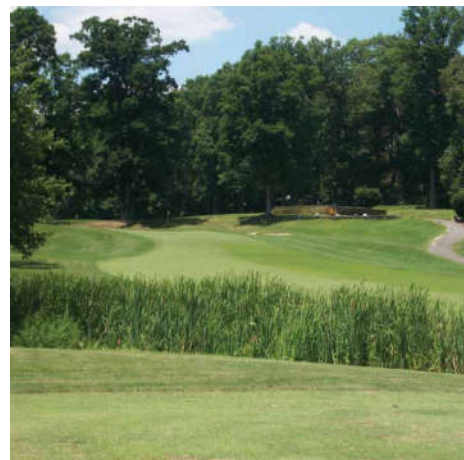
The intent of the renovation is to maintain the present routing while preserving the topography and character of the course. The upgrades are intended to enhance the playability and enjoyment for all levels of player, and at the same time improve the overall challenge of the course for tournament competition. Par for the course, 71, will remain the same for men and be reduced from 72 to 71 for women, with hole number 18 becoming a par 4.

Summarized below are the significant planned upgrades:

- The greens and green surrounds will be rebuilt to enhance playability, improve drainage, and facilitate maintenance.
- Teeing areas will be enlarged to provide more variety in tee locations and golf course set-up.
- Sand bunkers will be added and/or rebuilt to enhance playability and provide consistent playing conditions.
- The irrigation system and associated pump station will be enlarged to provide coverage for the rough and decrease the time requirements for watering.
- Golf car paths will be relocated to improve player access and improve the appearance of the holes.
- Tree lines bordering several holes will be selectively thinned to counteract encroachment over time and allow for improved consistency of the turf.
- Plantings will be added to improve visual quality and provide environmental enhancement.

The goal is to have the rededication coincide with the celebration of the University of Maryland Golf Course's 50th anniversary.

NOTE : In 2003 the University of Maryland Golf Course was named a "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" by Audubon International. The approximately 150 acres of wooded and rolling terrain located inside the Washington D.C. Beltway is home to multiple species of birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles as well as dozens of varieties of trees.



Golf Course Architect, George W. Cobb (1914-1986)

GEORGE W. COBB was born in Savannah, Georgia, in 1914 into a family of golfers and eventually became a scratch golfer. He graduated from the University of Georgia in 1937 with a degree in Landscape Architecture and served as an engineering officer in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II. At Camp LeJeune, North Carolina, he served as construction superintendent for his first golf course, one that would serve as a physical rehabilitation facility.

Often regarded as his most prominent (and his shortest) design, built in 1958 with support from the esteemed Bobby Jones and Clifford Roberts, is The Par 3 Course at Augusta National Golf Club. Cobb served as a consulting architect to Augusta National for many years and was involved in helping retouch the Masters course.

Among Cobb's original and notable creations are Georgia's Green Island Country Club (site of the PGA Tour's Southern Open from 1970-1990) and Quail Hollow Country Club in Charlotte, North Carolina (current site of the PGA Tour's Wachovia Championship).

Nearby to the University of Maryland Golf Course are two other Cobb designs – The Parks Course at Fort Meade and the Glenn Dale Golf Club.



Future

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Mr. Jeff S. Maynor for providing the background material from the University of Maryland archives used in writing the course history.

Special thanks go to Col. J. Logan Schutz for taking the time to relate his recollections of the key figures mentioned herein, as well as the May 15, 1959 dedication.

Mr. George N. Long, University of Maryland Golf Course Superintendent, patiently and thoroughly explained what it means to be named a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

Messrs. Maynor and Schutz, along with Ms. Terry L. Piper, Assistant Director of Golf, Business Office, and Dr. Jerry P. Wrenn, former Dean, College of Health and Human Performance, and current Chairman, Golf Course Advisory Board, gave their time to review the content herein.

Norman B. Starkey
Coordinator, 50th Anniversary Commemoration
University of Maryland Golf Course
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