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Curling Arena is Newest Of Projects Completed By Arthur Latcham

The projects, both completed and anticipated by Mr. Arthur Latcham, create one of the most unusual stories in the realm of local sports annals. But Mr. Latcham is an unusual man, as indicated in a press interview with Mr. Ken McKee of the Globe and Mail.

Six years ago, Latcham, who is 66, retired, having become a relatively wealthy man during his working lifetime. He had never played a game of golf, and in fact, still hasn't.

This might be considered a distinct handicap for a man planning to design and build golf courses. But then, Latcham is not cast from any average mold anyway. While he wasn't interested in playing the game himself, he knew that thousands of others were, and that Metropolitan Toronto did not have enough courses for what the financial pages refer to as the average man. Also, he had some farm property in Markham-Gormley-Stouffville area, where he had lived as a boy, and what better use was there for it than to build not one, but several, golf courses.

As a result, Latcham got to work, and recently was described as the largest one-man golf operation in the world. The title, of course, is unofficial but nonetheless hard to disprove.

The results of those six leisure (?) years now include three golf courses, totalling 63 holes (27, 18, 18), plans for another 18-hole layout, two nine-hole, par-3 courses, a golf centre that includes everything except a 638-yard hole (he has that elsewhere), and for good measure, a curling club.

The four-sheet rink is at his newest location, Rolling Hills, where 27 holes will be open to golfers this spring.

On a rather blustery day recently, Art Latcham was in his curling club, gazing out over the snow-covered fairways. He puffed nonchalantly on his pipe, possibly recalling his days as a teen-aged homesteader in Saskatchewan nearly half a century ago, and pondered a question. The everpresent deck of cards was on a nearby table, and he rolled 50-cent pieces casually through his fingers, for this man has been delving into the art of legerdemain for 51 years. He is a respected member of the Hat and Rabbit Club, the magician's lodge, although he has seldom, if ever, performed professionally.

Eventually, he answered: "I design golf courses because I like to, and for my family's eventual benefit, I would like them to make money, or to sell them to advantage, but if not, it won't bother me too much."

Latcham had sold one of the courses (The Willows, formerly Markham), but reacquired it

when new owners failed. He operated it as a pay-as-you-play club last year and may return it to private membership this summer.

Critics of his courses (one of which, Meadowbrook, is par-73, 7,300 yards), suggest, somewhat unkindly, that Latcham would have been wiser to consolidate all the money, time and effort of the last six years, put them into one course, and hire a golf architect to design it. They also hint he is merely playing with the land until he can subdivide it for building purposes.

He disagrees with the first argument, denies the second.

"I can show you half a dozen courses laid out by experts, where changes were necessary after they were built. Anyone can find some fault with a course, after it's finished. As for subdivision, I doubt any of us will live to see this area built up," he noted.

Rolling Hills is located north and west of Stouffville, near Bethesda, Meadowbrook, two miles south, is a couple of miles east and south of Gormley, while The Willows is two miles south of Stouffville.

His DeHaviland Golf Centre, managed by Burt Turcotte, is in North York.

In the main, Latcham's courses provide golf for the average person, willing to travel a little further to escape the high tariffs at the more exclusive courses, and the pre-dawn lineups at the most accessible pay-as-you-play clubs.

Several golfers from as far away as Port Credit (about 30-35 miles) played the Willows last year.

Although already planning another 18 holes at Rolling Hills, Latcham feels Metro's golf boom is reaching the saturation point, and that the saturation point is also approaching for curling construction.

That's why he has abandoned plans for a rink at DeHaviland, a site which, incidentally, was considered for the proposed major league baseball stadium.

A Globe and Mail survey last summer indicated more than 60 golf courses were operating within a 35-mile radius of Toronto.

The ideal situation, Latcham feels, would be to operate several 18-hole courses from a single, centrally located club-house, and thus keep overhead to a minimum. This would seem to be his aim at Rolling Hills.

"I wish we had Meadowbrook adjacent," he said recently. "The more money you put into a club, the harder it is to sell." He cited an instance last year where he advertised one of his clubs for sale, and received 15 replies. However, only one was considered solid enough to follow up.

times almost inaudible man has

This quiet, grey-haired, at never engaged in any hard sell promotion of his courses, but is considering the possibility. However, he still has to be convinced. He won't hire a pro for a public course, feeling a manager can do more. He has to replace George Clifton, pro-manager at Meadowbrook. Clifton resigned to go to Pine Valley.

The pro will go to whichever club he opens to membership.

"People become interested by word of mouth association, and hear from their friends. We get about 33 per cent new business every year at DeHaviland," he reported.

How does he determine new players from old?

It's easy. "They're the ones who ask to see my card tricks. They haven't seen them before," he answered, nimbly retrieving a nine of hearts from the questioner's ear.

Seek "Outdoor Girl Of Canada"

Another nation-wide search is being conducted to find a typical "Outdoors Girl of Canada," it has been announced by Frank H. Kortright, President of Canadian National Sportsmen's Show.

The winner will be selected from a group of finalists at the opening of the 1962 Canadian National Sportsmen's Show to be held in Toronto from March 9th to 17th. After being crowned "Outdoors Girl of Canada," the winner will be the recipient of a \$500 Dominion of Canada Savings Bond and other valuable prizes.

This unique competition is jointly sponsored by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and the Canadian National Sportsmen's Show.

Any Canadian girl, with the exception of professional models and professional athletes, is eligible to enter, providing she participates in some form of outdoor sport or recreation. Nominations, however, must be submitted by a fish, game and conservation organization, any place in Canada.

The closing date for entries has been set at February 3rd next. Clubs wishing to nominate a candidate should write to the Canadian National Sportsmen's Show, 85 King Street East, Toronto, for entry forms. A cash award of \$100 will also be paid to the Club or other organization submitting the nomination of the winning contestant.

In March, 1961, Adele Grace of Arrnprior, Ontario, an attractive high school student, won the title. She had been nominated by the lower Mississippi Fish and Game Club. She edged out seven other finalists from various parts of Canada. All finalists were brought to Toronto for the final judging at the expense of the Sportsmen's Show.

CN ANNOUNCES PASSENGER SCHEDULE CHANGES

TORONTO - LINDSAY - PETERBORO - BELLEVILLE

Train No. 94-97, leaving Toronto 5:35 p.m. daily except Sunday, will, effective Wednesday, January 31st, operate Monday to Friday only and terminate at Markham, Ontario.

In reverse direction, Train No. 93-96, leaving Belleville 5:20 a.m., daily except Sunday will, effective Thursday, February 1st, be discontinued. Train No. 85-86-87, leaving Lindsay at 7:50 p.m., Sunday only, will, effective Sunday, February 4th, be discontinued.

Consult local agent for further information.



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