

OUR HISTORY

Encouraged by Englishman Haley H. Hawkins, a group of sportsmen founded the Wallingford Golf Club in 1898. From that simple beginning the club was on its way to becoming over the next 75 years one of the most respected golf layouts in Connecticut. As nearly as can be determined, Wallingford is one of the oldest golf-country clubs in the state - ranking in age with the Brooklawn, and New Haven.

From the rough and ready and often hit or miss operations of the turn of the century, the club has grown and prospered, fighting off from time to time the impacts of wars, depressions and occasional summer drought. The usually lush fairways and excellent greens of today are a far cry from the course those golfers of yesteryear traversed in their struggles with par.

Six years after its founding, the Wallingford Golf Club became the Wallingford Country Club. Its formal incorporation under the latter name came in 1913.

The original site of the club in 1898 was on two parcels of land on the east side of Wallingford in the vicinity of East Center Street. The entrance to the course and clubhouse was on Constitution Street, near the terminus of Electric Road and Center Street. Finished on April 1, 1900, the first clubhouse was furnished with lockers, running cold water and had an area where the golfers could bring their own "19th hole" refreshments. Pleasingly placed in a grove on elevated ground near the first tee, the clubhouse dominated almost the entire course and afforded a picturesque view of the town and surrounding countryside.

There was no difficulty obtaining both active and associate members when the club began. Active membership was limited to 100 and that figure was easily reached by the opening of the 1900 season, and there were still many applicants left on a waiting list. Women golfers then were almost as numerous as the men, and there were A and B golfing categories for the males and the distaff side. Each Category had its own trophies for tournaments which were regularly played twice a month. In addition, the club sponsored a team of 10 players that competed in an inter-club league with Middletown, Meriden and New Britain.

The original course was nine-hole layout that had a total distance of 2,402 yards. It ran over undulating land, interspersed with well-placed natural hazards. The first greenskeeper of record was a Charles Foster, whose main job was to trim the rough grass down to point where it was possible to roll the ball into the hole. Grounds crews consisted of farmers from the area who hired to use their horse-drawn sickle cutters in clearing the fairways. The roughs were always cut twice during the summer whether they needed the cutting or not.