

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Hiawatha Golf Course

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 4553 Longfellow Avenue

City or town: Minneapolis State: MN County: Hennepin

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<hr/>	
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<hr/>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

**State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
- ___ determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ___ removed from the National Register
- ___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
-

Site

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

 SOCIAL/clubhouse
 RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

 SOCIAL/clubhouse
 RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/Tudor Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

WOOD

STUCCO

STONE/Limestone

STONE/Slate

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

See attached continuation sheets.

Narrative Description

See attached continuation sheets.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1934-1972

Significant Dates

1934-1935

1952

1966

1968

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

William D. Clark (golf course architect)

Stravs, Dorr, Bersback, and Chapin (clubhouse architects)

Henry F. Olson (clubhouse builder)

Robert A. Sundt (1966 clubhouse renovations)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

See attached continuation sheets.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

See attached continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See attached continuation sheets.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Hennepin County Library, Minnesota Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): HE-MPC-01743; HE-MPC-01744

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 203 acres _____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

See attached continuation sheets.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property includes 203 acres. The property is bound by East Forty-third Street to the north, Lake Hiawatha to the east, East Minnehaha Parkway to the south, and Longfellow Avenue to the west. The nominated property excludes an area of approximately nine acres in the southwestern corner of said boundaries that contains the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Hiawatha District Service Center.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nomination includes property historically associated with the Hiawatha golf course and clubhouse. It excludes property north, east, and south of Lake Hiawatha that developed as part of the greater Lake Hiawatha Park. It also excludes the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Hiawatha District Service Center that was constructed to service this district, including Lake Nokomis parks and houses Department of Forestry offices.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Charlene Roise, Katie Randall, and Elizabeth Gales
organization: Hess Roise, and Company
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date: August 2, 2022

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered, and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

See attached continuation sheets.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Section 7.

Draft 8-10-22

Narrative Summary

Hiawatha Golf Course lies in South Minneapolis, Hennepin County, on approximately 203 acres of gently rolling terrain surrounded by early twentieth-century streetcar suburbs on all sides. The Minneapolis park board dredged Lake Hiawatha (then Rice Lake) and cultivated the land for a golf course between 1929 and 1931. The clubhouse was constructed in 1933 and designed in the Tudor Revival style by locally prominent architects and city planners Stravs, Dorr, Bersback, and Chapin. The eighteen-hole course was designed by William D. Clark and opened in 1934-1935.

As evidenced by aerial maps, the property's current appearance is strikingly similar to its appearance in the mid-1930s with the exception of a few adaptive changes to the course layout made to accommodate construction of the Learning Center in 1999, and minor alterations made to mitigate flooding. The course routing holds well to Clark's design, and character defining features mentioned in early park board records, such as elevated tee boxes, are evident on the landscape today. Noncontributing structures, added for continuing maintenance and modern programming, do not diminish the integrity of the property overall and are primarily located out of sight from the course and clubhouse or are constructed to harmonize with the site and existing built environment.

Narrative Description

Hiawatha Golf Course is located in South Minneapolis, and includes one contributing site, one contributing building, three contributing structures, one noncontributing site, one noncontributing structure, and one noncontributing building.

The nominated property is accessed where East Forty-sixth Street intersects Longfellow Avenue. It is bound by residential neighborhoods laid out in a strict north-south street grid to the north and west, Lake Hiawatha and additional residential neighborhoods to its east, and the curvilinear Minnehaha Parkway and Lake Nokomis to its south. The Minnehaha Creek intersects the property, running east-west, and connects the two lakes. Minnehaha Creek and Lake Hiawatha provide natural water hazards to nine of the eighteen holes. The rest of the terrain is mostly flat with gently rolling hills. The landscape is dotted primarily with deciduous trees that separate the fairways. The course is fenced on all sides with a chain link fence. Various species of volunteer plants and trees grow along the fence line. Discontinuous cart paths of poured asphalt and gravel run through portions of the course. A service path of dirt and gravel connects the Minneapolis Park and Recreation District Service Center that fronts East Minnehaha Parkway (outside the nominated property boundaries) to the course and encircles Lake Hiawatha. Though this path is used by park maintenance staff, it doubles as a cart path inside course boundaries.

The entry is marked by a Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board sign at the intersection of Cedar Avenue and East Forty-sixth Street (outside the boundaries). Approaching the clubhouse, East Forty-sixth Street runs between the side elevations of houses fronting Cedar and Longfellow

Avenues on either side and is divided by a median strip that contains lamp posts and immature trees (outside the boundary). The street terminates at the clubhouse parking lot, which is poured asphalt and sited in front of the clubhouse. There is an organically shaped putting green south of the clubhouse. The eighteen-hole course is directly behind the clubhouse to the east, comprising most of the nominated property's acreage. The Learning Center is southeast of the clubhouse and bound by holes 18 to the north, 17 to the east, 16 to the south, and 15 to the west. Lake Hiawatha is east of the golf course, and Minnehaha Creek exits the lake to the southwest towards the property's southern boundary.

The primary resources and focus of this nomination are the eighteen-hole course and clubhouse. There are additional contributing structures, such as cart bridges that cross the creek in four places. All but one date from the mid-twentieth century. Bridges appear at these locations in aerial photos in 1940. Three of the four are small footbridges. Only the second bridge was wide enough for vehicular traffic; it maintains this width today. Noncontributing resources include the building and site associated with the Learning Center constructed in 1999. See Table 7.1 for a list of resources. See the accompanying map for these and other features not counted separate from the overall site.

Table 7.1 – Contributing and Noncontributing Resources			
Resource	Classification	Status	Map ID
Eighteen-hole golf course (1934-1935, 1993-1999)	Site	Contributing	A
Clubhouse (1933, 1966, c. 1990)	Building	Contributing	B
The Learning Center (1999)	Site	Noncontributing	C
Golf Ball Vending Shed (2002)	Building	Noncontributing	D
Bridge 1 (1953)	Structure	Contributing	E
Bridge 2 (1956)	Structure	Contributing	F
Bridge 3 (1953)	Structure	Contributing	G
Bridge 4 (c. 2005)	Structure	Noncontributing	H

Resource Inventory

A. Eighteen-hole Golf Course - 1934-1935, 1993, 1999 (Contributing Site)

Hiawatha is an eighteen-hole regulation golf course, par 73, that comprises most of the property's 203 acres. It was designed an all-grass course by William D. Clark for the Minneapolis park board when dredging of Lake Hiawatha began in 1929, and opened in two phases between 1934 and 1935. Clark designed all the municipal courses for the park board during this era. Originally scheduled to open in June 1933, a drought forced the park board to stagger opening.¹ The north half containing the first nine holes opened for play on July 30, 1934, and the south half opened the following year.² The course was created on the west shore of the lake using the dredge fill material. A metal fence was installed around three sides of the course in

¹ "Drouth Menaces New Golf Course," *The Minneapolis Star*, June 5, 1934.

² David Smith, "Hiawatha Golf Club," Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board, 2008, https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/golf/courses/hiawatha_golf_club/.

1933. The fourth side was fenced in 1934.³ For many years, the course was the most popular in the park system, though seasonal flooding was a recurring issue. In 1948, fairway 1 was raised to prevent flooding.⁴ In 1953, maintenance crews added fill along the lake shore and creek bank to prevent overflow and built two forty-foot timber bridges over the creek, replacing two that were damaged by high water the previous year.⁵ A similar bridge was built in 1956.⁶ After two major flooding incidents in the 1980s and 1990s, the front nine holes underwent flood mitigation efforts in 1993, and the back nine underwent the same in 1999. Flood mitigation included increased drainage, additional retaining walls, and the addition of controlled wetlands in the northwest corner of the property and twelve new ponds strategically placed throughout the course as water hazards. Other fairways were slightly elevated to increase drainage. These changes were overseen by golf course architect Garrett Gill. Gill also designed The Learning Center the same year. To make room for the driving range, hole 16 went from a par 5 to a par 4, reducing its yardage from 547 to 412, and hole 18 was reduced by about fifty yards.⁷

Hiawatha is a generally flat course with mature trees separating tight fairways and small greens. Character defining features of the course include raised tee boxes, organically shaped bunkers (also known as sand traps), and natural water hazards created by Lake Hiawatha and Minnehaha Creek. Additional non-historic ponds were added in low-lying areas to mitigate flooding where water historically collected during heavy rains. Greens and tees are Bent grass, and grass throughout the rest of the property is a mix of Kentucky Bluegrass with Bent grass recently incorporated in the rough and on fairways to reduce pesticide use. Small-scale landscape features such as retaining walls and park furniture, including benches, water cooler shelters, ball washers, and trash receptacles, dot the course (Photos 3 and 16). Four cart bridges span Minnehaha Creek, allowing golfers to cross the creek and the creek to engage players as a water hazard on several holes (Photos 10, 12-14). Small memorials are extant throughout the course alongside trees, boulders, and benches. These date after the period of significance and were placed by members of the community in memory of various individuals. There are thirty-nine identified memorials of various types and material. See the appendix for a list.

Water infrastructure on the course includes two primary systems: one for irrigation and one for drainage. Following flooding in the mid-1950s, the park board installed drain lines which run from the sixth fairway to a concrete sump at Forty-third Street South and Nineteenth Avenue South and installed an electric pump in 1958. The purpose of this machinery was to keep the fairways dry, allowing better golf games and fewer interruptions to play during open season. A similar system was installed in 1964 to serve the seventh fairway. The drainage system now includes a small pump house constructed in 1992, two sump pumps, and buried steel pipe that runs beneath the course. Most of it is below grade and either not visible above ground or only

³ Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Minneapolis (Minneapolis: Board of Park Commissioners, 1933 and 1934).

⁴ Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Minneapolis (Minneapolis: Board of Park Commissioners, 1948), 66.

⁵ Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Minneapolis (Minneapolis: Board of Park Commissioners, 1953), 64.

⁶ Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Minneapolis (Minneapolis: Board of Park Commissioners, 1956), 62.

⁷ R.J. Smiley, "The Ten – Hiawatha Golf Club," *Tee Times Magazine*, <https://teetimespress.com/11/27/2017/1791/the-10-hiawatha-golf-club/>.

visible as a landform. The pipe that runs beneath the seventh fairway is partially visible above grade (Photo 5). The system empties into Lake Hiawatha. Coarse aggregate concrete culverts define the openings at the lake. See the attached map of features not counted separate from the overall site for pipe, pump, and culvert locations. The course's current irrigation system dates to the 1970s and is an overhead system with a mix of steel and replacement PVC pipes buried beneath the course.

Each hole has its own unique set of features, such as different types of bunkers and water hazards, but all eighteen holes share a set of common features: an elevated, rectangular tee box, three pairs of tee markers (one black, one blue, one white), and a scorecard post at the starting end. Each hole also has an accompanying flag at the finish. Round, in-ground yardage markers exist between each tee box and hole.

Hole 1 (473 / 447 / 381 yards; Par 5) faces northeast and is a mostly straight fairway that runs slightly downhill and ends between two ponds. There are greenside bunkers on either side of the hole (Photo 1).

Hole 2 (518 / 509 / 410 yards; Par 5) faces north and is a dogleg right with a pond east of the fairway at the start. Lake Hiawatha is a lateral water hazard on this hole, as it curves around the north shore of the lake. This hole also has two fairway bunkers just around the bend to the north and greenside bunkers on either side of the hole.

Hole 3 (129 / 121 / 92 yards; Par 3) faces north and is a very short and straight fairway with greenside bunkers on either side of the hole.

Hole 4 (317 / 287 / 242 yards; Par 4) faces west and runs parallel to the fence on the northern course boundary. It slopes slightly downhill and features a fairway bunker to the south and greenside bunkers on either side of the hole. A buried pipe elevates a portion of the fairway slightly (Photo 3).

Hole 5 (416 / 386 / 316 yards; Par 4) faces west and runs parallel to the fence on the northern course boundary. It features a human made pond south of the fairway towards the hole. The tee box was temporarily lowered to the west and is level with the fairway as course agronomists treat the historic elevated tee box for the presence of the European Chafer beetle, an invasive species that damages turf grass and was first identified in South Minneapolis in 2020. As soon as it is safe to do so, the tee box will be returned to its historic location.⁸

Hole 6 (368 / 338 / 254 yards; Par 4) faces south and is a strategic hole with a slight dogleg right and several hazards at play. To the east of the bend is a human made pond (Photo 4). There is a second smaller pond inside the bend, and the fence line to the west is out of bounds. Bunkers flank the fairway approaching the hole.

Hole 7 (540 / 507 / 456 yards; Par 5) faces northeast and has a straight fairway, slightly sloped, with a small pond to the south, and a larger pond to the north that is separated

⁸ Interview with Course Superintendent Daniel Ament by Katie Randall, June 8, 2022.

from the fairway by a small, organically shaped bunker. A drainage pipe runs beneath the fairway, elevating a portion of the fairway down the middle (Photo 5).

Hole 8 (200 / 170 / 130 yards; Par 3) faces south/southwest and has greenside bunkers on either side of the hole and a pond to the southwest. There is an eight-foot-tall chain link fence behind this tee to protect players on this hole from players teeing off on tee 5 and a portable restroom west of the fence.

Hole 9 (418 / 372 / 294 yards; Par 4) faces southwest and has a pond to the south of a straight fairway between holes 1 and 9 and another pond north of the fairway between holes 7 and 9. There is an organically shaped greenside bunker on the east side of an elevated green. This hole was noted by several golfers in 1949 as one of the most difficult holes to play at Hiawatha.⁹

Hole 10 (501 / 471 / 390 yards; Par 5) faces northeast and plays downhill, running parallel to hole 1. It is a long, straight fairway flanked by bunkers with a pond to the north. It ends with Lake Hiawatha to the east of the green (Photo 6).

Hole 11 (388 / 378 / 316 yards; Par 4) faces south and is a dogleg left, hugging the west shore of Lake Hiawatha with two small ponds to the west, a fairway bunker in the crook of the bend, and a green that terminates at Minnehaha Creek.

Hole 12 (168 / 151 / 136 yards; Par 3) faces southeast and engages Minnehaha Creek as a water hazard, forcing players to shoot across the creek towards an elevated green where greenside bunkers encircle three sides of the hole. There is a small pond to the west of the hole (Photo 10).

Hole 13 (485 / 441 / 403 yards; Par 5) faces west and plays downhill, running alongside Minnehaha Creek (Photo 11). This creates a thirty-yard lateral and direct water hazard forcing players to cross the creek before reaching the green. There is also a greenside bunker guarding the hole to the north. A three-foot retaining wall of molded concrete block was added behind the tee for flood mitigation ca. 2000. This is the hole Tiger Woods performed an exhibition on for the grand opening of The Learning Center in 1999.

Hole 14 (350 / 297 / 247 yards; Par 4) faces west/northwest and crosses Minnehaha Creek at the start with an additional pond water hazard to the north of the fairway and a greenside bunker guarding the hole.

Hole 15 (164 / 155 / 120 yards; Par 3) faces east and is a relatively short fairway with greenside bunkers flanking the hole. The pond that separates holes 14 and 15 creates a water hazard to the south of the fairway.

Hole 16 (412 / 385 / 333 yards; Par 4) faces northeast and is a dogleg right with a pond immediately to the north. The fence around the driving range however separates the pond

⁹ "The Toughest Hole," *Minneapolis Star*, June 10, 1949.

and fairway. After the bend, the fairway crosses Minnehaha Creek before arriving at the green.

Hole 17 (395 / 314 / 292 yards; Par 4) faces northwest, immediately crossing Minnehaha Creek before bending in a dogleg right. There are ponds on either side of the fairway and bunkers flanking the green.

Hole 18 (371 / 323 / 265 yards; Par 4) faces southwest towards the clubhouse and is a straight fairway with a greenside bunker guarding the final hole.

B. Hiawatha Clubhouse - 1933, 1966, 1992 (Contributing Building)

The clubhouse at Hiawatha was constructed between 1932 and 1933 by local builder Henry F. Olson and designed by local architects and city planners Carl B. Stravs, William G. Dorr, Louis Bersback, and Rollin Chapin. Described by Park Superintendent Theodore Wirth as a “very cozy cottage,” the clubhouse was designed in the Tudor Revival style with elements of the contemporaneous Dutch Colonial Revival style. Both were popular residential styles in the surrounding early-twentieth-century neighborhoods, allowing the clubhouse to blend in architecturally.¹⁰ The clubhouse interior was renovated by local architect Robert A. Sundt in 1966 to update the kitchen, sales center, and manager’s office on the northern end of the building. The sunporch on the east elevation was enclosed then as well. In 1992, the park board reroofed the building and hired architect James Forberg to design a golf cart storage and garage addition to the north elevation. The addition was sympathetic to the rest of the building in style and materials. The sales center was also expanded with a small addition off the east elevation, connected to the rest of the building by the 1933 sunporch.

Exterior (Photos 18-23)

The Hiawatha Clubhouse faces west towards the East Forty-sixth Street entrance to the club and golf course. The parking lot for the golf course is in front of the building and is poured asphalt. Concrete sidewalks lead to the entrance and connect to a putting green just south of the clubhouse. The patio in rear of the clubhouse, golf cart garage, and golf course are also accessed by this sidewalk south of the clubhouse. There is a flagpole in the south lawn and low shrubs, grasses, and perennials planted against the walls of the clubhouse.

The clubhouse is a one-and-a-half story building with a gambrel-front-and-wing roof clad in multi-colored slate tiles. The foundation is stone. The walls of the entrance wing are made of local limestone, surmounted by a stuccoed gable with false half-timbering. Wood used on the exterior trim is redwood. A wide, tall limestone chimney fronts the west elevation north of the entry and features a pair of decorative clay chimney pots at the top. A second interior stone chimneys sits atop the ridge line and has three large clay chimney pots. Most windows were replaced with fixed light or sliding glass windows during the 1966 renovation. Some were more recently replaced with vinyl. None of the wood windows from the 1933 construction date are extant.¹¹

¹⁰ Smith, “Hiawatha Golf Club.”

¹¹ Building Permit No. B400167 (1966), Hennepin County Library, Minneapolis; Robert A. Sundt, architectural drawings of the alterations to the Hiawatha Golf Clubhouse, 1966, Northwest Architectural Archives at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

On the west elevation, the 1933 section is comprised of the gambrel-front-and-wing block. There is a one-story hyphen with a hipped dormer that connects the gabled garage addition that was built in 1992. The main entrance to the clubhouse is recessed beneath the northern end of the front gable and consists of a non-historic metal door with a light in the top half, a curved wall, and a second door to the right of the curve that accesses the men's locker room. It is a wood door with a light in the top half covered by a wood screened door; both date to 1966. There is a round stone column supporting the projecting gable and flagstone on the porch floor. To the south of the entrance is a narrow, fixed light window with wood shutters and a larger group of three narrow, fixed light windows flanked by wood shutters. Wood shutters are board-and-batten. There are paired wood louvered vents with shutters in the gable.

To the north of the entrance there are additional groupings of narrow windows, stone wall, and stuccoed walls with half-timbering on the other side of the front-facing chimney. Where the 1933 section ends, there is a slight setback in the wall and change in the roofline. The wall of the ca. 1990 addition is clad in stucco, and the foundation is concrete block. A one-story hyphen connects the garage to the rest of the clubhouse. There is a hipped roof dormer on the hyphen with louvered vents. Windows on the addition mimic the size and shape of the 1933 section and also have board-and-batten shutters. There is a single-stall garage setback several feet from the rest of the building with a metal rollup garage door at the northern end of the west elevation.

The south elevation features a projecting gabled bay with stucco and half timbering. Windows on this facade are smaller, square windows that are grouped or paired with board-and-batten shutters. The windows are vinyl with applied muntins and privacy glass as these are in the bathrooms and locker rooms.

On the east elevation, a sunporch wing with a gable-on-hip roof projects over a terrace. The sun porch was enclosed and the covered terrace added as part of the 1966 remodeling. The sunporch has a wood rooftop balustrade. Walls across the rear elevation are stucco with half-timbering. To the south, the projecting bay has a clipped gable with flared eaves. There is a poured concrete patio with metal picnic tables in front of this bay. To the north, the garage addition has a gable-on-hip roof with a single-stall garage to the north and a projecting gabled bay with an additional two-stall garage to its left. Both have metal garage doors.

The north elevation consists of stucco walls with half-timbering and grouped windows that mimic those on the 1933 section with board-and-batten shutters.

Interior (Photos 24-26)

The interior of the clubhouse features a dining room, bar area, and sales center in the central block; men's and women's locker rooms in the southern block; and a kitchen and manager's office in the northern block. The garage addition is connected by a hallway to the north. The walls in the clubhouse are plaster with half-timbering and knotty pine paneling, and doors throughout have an oak face veneer. In the dining room, the ceiling features exposed trusses of chamfered wood beams with iron brackets and nails, and there is a prominent limestone fireplace on the south wall that reaches to the ceiling with a clock mounted in the stone at its center and a splayed lintel above the firebox. Three chandeliers hang in the dining room that were built from

repurposed materials.¹² The building's architects had specific design instructions for these fixtures: "Use old wagon wheels not less than four feet diameter, complete including hub, iron rim etc., suspended from top purlin...each wheel shall be equipped with six pendants, wrought iron hammered open one fifty watt inside frosted Mazda lamp...suspended from rim on hammered hooks." They added, "Wood portion on wheel shall be cleaned, burned in spots and finished with one coat of Minwax." The extant fixtures match that description with six lanterns suspended from each wheel. The kitchen along the north wall has red oak cabinets with laminate countertops. The floor in the kitchen is red quarry tile. The floors in the dining room and sales center are a mix of tile and carpet that were replaced sometime ca. 2000.

The finishes in the bathrooms and locker rooms date to the 1966 renovation period. White four-by-four tile adorns the walls; small, square mosaic tiles are on the floors, and laminate countertops are on the sinks. Bathroom stalls and stall doors are metal. Large metal lockers are separated by wood benches in the men's locker room.

C. The Learning Center/ Driving Range, 1999 (Noncontributing Site)

The Learning Center was designed by regionally prominent golf course architect Garrett Gill in 1999. It consists of a driving range with fifty natural grass tee stations that run north to south in front of a paved cart path (Photo 27). The Learning Center Golf Ball Vending Shed is across the path, northwest of the tees, and there is a circular putting green across the path, southwest of the tees. The driving range is fenced by a ten-foot chain link fence on three sides: north, east, and south of the range. There is netting above the fence line at heights ranging from twenty to thirty feet that is supported by metal posts.

Historic aerial imagery reveals that this land at the center of the course, was largely undeveloped with a cluster of trees and a single cart path traversing the area prior to construction of The Learning Center in 1999. Only two holes were reduced to add the driving range. Hole 16 was altered the most and reduced from a par 5 to a par 4, cutting its yardage from 547 to 412. Its green used to be located where the tee stations are now. Hole 18 was reduced to a lesser extent by fifty yards.

D. Learning Center Golf Ball Vending Shed, 2002 (Noncontributing Building)

The Learning Center Golf Ball Vending Shed was added in 2002 to shelter golf ball vending machines and bathrooms that service the driving range. It was designed by Minneapolis-based Seaborne Architects. It is a rectangular building with a gable roof that measures twenty by twenty-eight feet. It has a composite shingle roof and a concrete slab foundation. The walls are clad in stucco with decorative half-timbering. There is a single leaf metal door on the south elevation and two metal rollup garage doors on the north elevation (Photo 28).

E. Bridge 1 (Hole 14), 1953 (Contributing Structure)

This small beam bridge is part of a paved cart path and has an unfinished wood railing on either side. It spans Minnehaha Creek east-west and is forty feet long and eight feet wide. It has poured concrete abutments and steel beams. There is a wood sign attached to the railing that reads, "Canoeists Caution Golf Playing Area" that dates to ca. 1970 (Photo 14).

¹² "Hiawatha Golf Clubhouse," Minnesota History/Architecture Inventory Form No. HE-MPC-01744, Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, Saint Paul.

F. Bridge 2 (between Holes 13 and 16), 1956 (Contributing Structure)

This is a simple beam bridge of poured concrete with tube metal handrails (Photo 13). It spans the creek north-south and measures approximately forty feet long and twenty-four feet wide. It is the only bridge wide enough to accommodate vehicular traffic.

G. Bridge 3 (between Holes 16 and 17), 1953 (Contributing Structure)

This is a timber beam bridge spanning the creek north-south with concrete abutments that is forty feet long and five feet wide with a wood railing (Photo 12). There is a gentle slope to the floor and railing on either end.

H. Bridge 4 (between Holes 11 and 12), ca. 2005 (Noncontributing Structure)

This small steel pony truss bridge spans Minnehaha Creek north-south and is approximately seventy feet long and eight feet wide (Photo 10). It has a wood floor and curved steel handrails.

Integrity

Hiawatha Golf Course and Clubhouse displays good overall integrity, particularly of location, setting, feeling, design, and association. Situated on the west shore of Lake Hiawatha and surrounded by early twentieth century suburbs on all sides, the property retains integrity of **location**. It continues to function as an eighteen-hole golf course and clubhouse and thus clearly conveys its historic **association** with park and recreation in Minneapolis. It also hosts the annual Upper Midwest Bronze Amateur Golf Tournament and weekly meetings of the Old Negro Golf League (ONGL), cementing its association with Black golfers in the Twin Cities. Although more recent development has replaced some buildings of historic age in the wider vicinity since the period of significance, the overall setting remains largely residential (most of which appears to be pre-1970) with a defined commercial node at the intersection Cedar Avenue and Minnehaha Parkway. The property retains its unobstructed view of Lake Hiawatha (HE-MPC-01745), the beach, playground, and recreation center (HE-MPC-01746 and HE-MPC-04536) on the opposite shore, and partially obstructed views of the surrounding residential neighborhoods through the tree and fence line surrounding the course on the north, south, and west sides. Its entrance is prominent on East Forty-sixth Street and visible at Cedar and Longfellow Avenues. The property thus retains good integrity of **setting and feeling**.

The two primary resources on the nominated property are the eighteen-hole golf course and clubhouse. Both retain good overall integrity of **design**. The eighteen-hole golf course retains a high degree of historical integrity as a championship, regulation size golf course from the 1930s. Despite alterations to the landscape related to flood mitigation and the addition of The Learning Center in 1999, the course holds its routing well from its period of significance. Figure 9 reveals that the course routing has not changed since the course opened in 1934. Historic aerial photography confirms that the land used for construction of The Learning Center was largely undeveloped greenspace prior to 1999. The biggest impact to the course was to fairway 16, which was reduced from a par 5 to a par 4. Otherwise, the original routing is intact. Character-defining features of the course include elevated tee boxes, organically shaped bunkers, small greens, tight fairways, and natural water hazards created by Lake Hiawatha and Minnehaha Creek. Based on plans from the 1920s by Park Superintendent Theodore Wirth and course

architect William D. Clark, these features were designed and crafted out of dredge material. Aerial photography and topographical maps confirm these character defining features remain unchanged from the period of significance. These extant landscape features continue to challenge recreational, amateur, and professional-level golfers.

The clubhouse retains a high degree of historical integrity, including its essential form and massing and the utilization of space. Renovations to the clubhouse in 1966 occurred within the proposed period of significance. The addition of a garage to the northern elevation in 1992 blends architecturally with the 1933 design and does not overwhelm the building in massing. The two-stall garage opens to the rear, facing the golf course, with an additional smaller garage door opening to the front that is setback from the front facade and obscured from view by landscaping around the primary entry. The property retains distinctive Tudor Revival features and finishes such as false half-timbering, massive chimneys with decorative chimney pots, and tall, narrow window openings arranged in groups. Elements of Dutch Colonial Revival influence are evident as well, such as the prominent gambrel roof on the facade and flared eaves on the east elevation. Overall, the integrity of **materials and workmanship** is somewhat diminished. Modifications in 1966 were either sympathetic to the original materials used or date to the period of significance. Plaster and stucco were repaired with like materials, for instance, and some windows were replaced then. Other windows, however, such as the clerestory windows in the main block of the clubhouse were replaced with vinyl sometime in the last thirty years. These changes are minor and do not affect the property's ability to convey significance as a 1930s golf associated with racial integration of municipal courses in Minneapolis in the 1950s. The Hiawatha Golf Course and Clubhouse retains sufficient integrity to support its eligibility for the National Register.

Section 8.

Draft 8-10-22

Statement of Significance

Minneapolis's Hiawatha Golf Course is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Entertainment/Recreation and Social History. It was one of five golf courses developed by the city's board of park commissioners in the first three decades of the twentieth century, a time when the popularity of the relatively new sport of golf was skyrocketing. This was also a period during which discrimination against Black people was a strong and oppressive undercurrent in daily life. Discrimination was not as overt in Northern cities as in the South, but it was just as effective at segregating housing, the workplace, and recreation.

The history of the Hiawatha course illustrates the insidious ways that racial bias infected sports and social life in the city as well as the determined efforts of Black people and others in the community to counter it. While Black golfers were apparently able to play on Minneapolis's municipal courses from the outset, they were barred from using the clubhouses by private clubs that leased the facilities and denied membership. It was at Hiawatha that this practice was finally ended in 1952 by a prominent local golfer and professional in the Black golf tournament circuit, Solomon Hughes. Hiawatha came to be the home course of the Twin Cities Golf Club, a group formed by Black golfers in the early 1930s when they were excluded from the private clubs. In 1966, the Hiawatha Golf Club was the first of the private clubs at the Minneapolis municipal courses to invite a Black person to join—albeit after resisting pressure to do so for decades. Two years later, the Bronze Open Golf Tournament made Hiawatha its home. Started as the Negro Open in 1939 and promoted by the charismatic Jimmy Slemmons, it became a major social, as well as recreational, highlight of the year for Black families from throughout the Midwest.

The eighteen-hole Hiawatha course continues to hold a special place in the hearts of the Black community. On Tuesday mornings during the season, it hosts the ONGL (Old Negro Golf League), a group started around 1990. After finishing their rounds, players gather by choice in the parking lot to swap stories, much as they had to do before the clubhouse was integrated in 1966. Because of this ongoing tradition and the close tie that many Black golfers have with the course today, the end of the period of significance is established at 1972 by the National Register's fifty-year guideline. The period begins in 1934, the year that the course's first nine holes opened for play.

From Rich Man to Everyman: The Evolution of Golf

Residents of Saint Andrews, Scotland, were playing a primitive version of golf as early as the fourteenth century, but the sport as we know it was a product of the 1800s. It took root in the United States in the late nineteenth century and flourished in the twentieth century. Initially a game for the country club elite, the sport became accessible to a broad socio-economic group with the development of municipal golf courses. Caddies became an essential part of the golfing industry, and this job was a way lower-class young men could gain an entree into a game that

was otherwise beyond their social circles and financial capabilities. Especially in the South, the caddie corps was largely Black.¹

Aspects of the game became standardized by the late nineteenth century. Golf courses are nine holes but eighteen (a “round”) is required for tournament play. The goal of the game is to hit a ball with a club from the teeing ground to the hole, situated on a putting green, using as few strokes as possible. “Par” is the number of strokes typically necessary to accomplish this. Making a hole in one stroke under par is a “birdie,” two strokes under par an “eagle,” and one stroke over par a “bogey.” Players seek to keep shots on the fairways and putting greens but balls often end up in the higher grass of the “rough” flanking the fairway or in hazards such as bunkers, sand traps, or ponds. Handicaps, to level the playing field between players with different levels of expertise, are based on a player’s recent performance and can range from zero (a “scratch” player) to a maximum of fifty-four. At the end of a round, the handicap is subtracted from the player’s gross score (total strokes). Handicaps are adjusted, either up or down, as players submit more scores to a handicapping authority. These authorities only consider scores from courses offering full rounds (i.e., eighteen holes).²

As the sport evolved in the twentieth century, the two primary golf organizations in the United States that sponsored high-profile, well-funded national tournaments only accepted handicaps established by affiliated groups, typically state golf associations. This proved to be a problem for Black golfers, who were denied membership in these groups. Without a sanctioned handicap, they could not play in the major tournaments.

The handicap system was developed in 1911 by one of the main national groups, the United States Golf Association (USGA). It was founded in 1894 and held its first amateur tournament the following year. According to one historian, the 1895 event “provided clear evidence that there were few even competent players in the United States.” By 1915, though, there was a “critical mass of competent, relatively evenly matched players.” Private clubs that became members of the USGA were largely responsible for this evolution. Players established handicaps at local tournaments that allowed them to advance to national championships hosted by the USGA for both amateur and professional golfers.³

The Professional Golfers Association (PGA) was established in 1916 for professional golfers with two membership categories: “playing” professionals, whose income came primarily from winnings on the tournament circuit, and “club” professionals typically employees at golf clubs who gave lessons and sold equipment. The PGA was initially neutral on the subject of race but inserted a “Caucasian only” clause in its bylaws in 1934 that remained in place until 1961. Despite this change, the PGA perpetuated its dark legacy of prejudice into the late twentieth

¹ Richard J. Moss, *The Kingdom of Golf in America* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 63-64; Geoff Shackelford, *Grounds for Golf: The History and Fundamentals of Golf Course Design* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books/Saint Martin’s Press, 2003), 14-32.

² Fergus Bisset, “What Is a Golf Handicap?” *Golf Monthly*, accessed August 4, 2022, <https://www.golfmonthly.com/features/the-game/what-is-a-golf-handicap-205309>.

³ Moss, *The Kingdom of Golf in America*, 63-64.

century by sponsoring events at some seventeen clubs across the country that remained exclusively Caucasian.⁴

Even before the PGA codified discrimination in 1934, neither the USGA nor the PGA were friendly to Black golfers. As an alternative, they founded the United Golfers Association (UGA; originally the United States Colored Golf Association) in 1925. It offered similar golf and social events including the annual open tournament, originally known as the Negro National. Except for a few years when World War II took priority, the tournament was played every year from the group's inception until 1976, when the UGA folded. Charles Sifford, winner of six UGA tournaments between 1952 and 1960, went on to become the first Black golfer admitted to membership in the PGA in 1964.⁵

Minneapolis's Municipal Golf Courses

The Minneapolis park system was conceived in 1872 when Horace Cleveland, a Chicago landscape architect, lectured enthusiastic audiences in Minneapolis and Saint Paul on his vision for a park and parkway system encircling the Twin Cities. After a decade of inaction by the Minneapolis city council, frustrated residents passed a referendum in 1883 to create an independent board of park commissioners.

With swaths of the city undeveloped, early build-out of the system was in areas close to the city's center and along key natural resources, particularly the Mississippi River along the city's eastern border and the Chain of Lakes in South Minneapolis. Minnehaha Creek, a connection between these two resources, edged the city's southern boundary at some points. The city's final southern expansion occurred in 1927, and, as a result, some parks and parkways in that area were developed relatively late (see Figure 1).

Theodore Wirth encouraged the park board commissioners to acquire the parcels that became Lake Nokomis and Lake Hiawatha parks soon after he became superintendent in 1906 (see Figure 2). The 410 acres for Nokomis were secured in 1907 for \$65,000 and improved between 1914 and 1924. Most of the land around Lake Hiawatha, originally known as Rice Lake, had been a dairy farm established in the 1880s. By 1911, residential development had reached the area and the farm was outgrowing the property, so it moved to a 700-acre farm north of Minneapolis. The park board did not purchase Hiawatha's 232 acres until 1922, and by this time its work on Nokomis had catalyzed residential development in the vicinity and inflated property values (see Figure 3). The price tag for the Hiawatha site and an additional 35 acres along Minnehaha Creek to the east was over \$560,000. The board raised some of this sum by selling houses that stood on the property, but most of the funds came from property assessments.⁶

⁴ Tina Burnside, "Twin Cities' Black Golfers Have a Legacy of Fighting Discrimination," *Hennepin History* 77, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 12.

⁵ Marvin Dawkins, Jomills Braddock II, and Shelby Gilbert, "African American Golf Clubs in the Early Development of Black Golf," *Western Journal of Black Studies* 42, nos. 1 and 2 (2018): 75-76; Sanjeev Baidyaroy, "Blacks, Golf, and the Emerging Civil Rights Movement, 1947-1954" (Honors thesis, Department of History, Carnegie Mellon University, 2011), 2.

⁶ "On the Route" (advertisement), *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 29, 1948; photographs and captions of Ewald Bros. Dairy, *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune Picture Magazine*, April 9, 1961, 17; "Theodore Wirth Analyzes Hiawatha and Nokomis Park Costs and Benefits to End Misunderstanding," *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 21, 1934; Theodore

By the time the park board began improving the Hiawatha property, it had established four other golf courses. The first was at Glenwood (later Theodore Wirth) Park, a nine-hole sand course opened in 1916. It was played around 14,500 times in its first season and 52,000 the next, with no fees charged either year. The course's popularity convinced the board to invest in a clubhouse and expand the course to eighteen holes. A course at Columbia Park was added to the board's portfolio in 1919. Initially six holes, the course was enlarged to nine in the following year and soon eighteen. By 1923, Glenwood had a handsome clubhouse modeled after a Swiss chalet, paid for by income generated from golf fees at the course. A Colonial Revival-style clubhouse opened at Columbia in 1925. Like Glenwood, the course at Columbia was sand. The greens at both were converted to grass in the mid-1930s.⁷

The sport continued to gain momentum, overwhelming the two courses even as the park board worked to improve them. The number of rounds played at Glenwood in 1921 showed an increase of 80 percent over 1920. "By the year of 1924," Superintendent Theodore Wirth later recalled, "it was realized that golf was a sport not only here to stay, but one that was growing by leaps and bounds." The board was glad to receive an offer from Chicago meatpacker Armour and Company of 154 acres of land adjacent to the city's northeastern corner where the company had abandoned plans to build a stockyard. The board's first grass course opened there in 1925.⁸

The board's three courses were in the northern part of the city. By the 1920s, land in much of South Minneapolis and adjacent suburbs had been subdivided for residential or commercial use and was either built on or too expensive to be acquired for a golf course. As a result, the board jumped on the opportunity to purchase 207 acres of farmland about 1.5 miles west of the city in 1925. First called Southwest Golf Course, it was later christened Meadowbrook. Flooding plagued the course almost from the outset, leading the board to dredge a small lake on the property and use the dredged material to fill in low areas of the course.⁹

Planning for the board's fifth course, to serve the city's southeastern quadrant, were underway shortly after the board acquired Rice Lake in 1922. The representative of the city council on the park board initially resisted "devoting so large an area to a sport for the 'silk-stockings,'" Wirth remembered. "We invited him to try out the game at our Glenwood Course early one Sunday morning, and although it took him about triple the strokes of par to make the eighteen holes, he became enthusiastic; and during that morning he met a surprising number of acquaintances from this district, every one of whom asked him when the Rice Lake Golf Course would be built."¹⁰

While that query would be repeated for over a decade as the course slowly became a reality, the place of golf as a popular sport was no longer questioned. In 1930, Charles Doell and Paul Thompson, respectively secretary and attorney for the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners, wrote: "For many years it was a game which could be indulged in only by the

Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System, 1883-1944* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners, 1945), 258. The Rice Lake farm was the start of Ewald Bros. Dairy, which developed the "Golden Guernsey" brand of milk and other products and became one of the area's largest dairies.

⁷ Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System*, 252-254.

⁸ Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System*, 253, 255.

⁹ Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System*, 256-257.

¹⁰ Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System*, 258.

rich. . . . Then, too, it was though to be an old man's game and not proper for the youth or even the middle-aged, and of course, it was out of the question for women to expect to play this game." But times had changed. "A great revolution in these ideas has taken place since the coming of the municipal golf courses. The game is now played by all classes of people and at a cost within the pocketbooks of most."¹¹

The Evolution of Hiawatha Golf Course

As it had for its other golf courses, the park board retained architect William D. Clark to design Hiawatha. Also following the precedent from other parks, including the neighboring Nokomis, the board planned to substantially modify the land and lake before installing the course. Much of the land was marshy and the lake was shallow. During a major dredging campaign from 1929 to 1931, some 1.2 million cubic yards were removed from the lake and used to raise the elevation of low areas in the park (see Figure 4). To pay for the course improvements, the board sold bonds totaling \$81,587, with the principal and interest to be paid from golf fees.¹²

Hiawatha was an all-grass course from the outset. In August 1932, the commissioners accepted a \$4,304 bid for installing "pipe for a water system" at the course. It was soon put to use. "Extremely hot weather was encountered during the construction period," Wirth wrote, and the greens, tees, fairways, and plantings had to be watered night and day in order to help them survive the heat and drought."¹³ This delayed the opening of the course, which had been scheduled for June 1, 1933, for more than thirteen months. In early June 1934, Wirth announced that the course would remain closed for another year unless adequate rain came, and even then, only the north half would open for the season. Finally on July 30, 1934, nine holes officially opened for play (see Figures 5, 6, and 7). The remaining nine were ready the following spring.¹⁴

The clubhouse at the course's western edge, aligned with East Forty-sixth Street, was ready on schedule in 1933 (see Figure 8). It was designed by the local architectural firm Stravs, Door, Bersbeck and Chapin and erected by contractor Henry F. Olson at a cost of \$17,000. "While modest in size, it is a practical and most attractive building," Wirth explained. "It has the appearance of a cozy English cottage and is constructed of local limestone, exposed timbers, and plastered gables, topped with a slate roof."¹⁵

Golfers thronged to Hiawatha. Wirth noted that "because of its favorable location and easy topography, the public was provided with perhaps our most attractive and popular municipal golf links." Statistics of use confirmed that it was the park board's most popular course from the time it opened until 1958, when its lead was usurped by Meadowbrook.¹⁶

¹¹ Charles E. Doell and Paul J. Thompson, *Public Park Policies* (Minneapolis: n.p., 1930), 118-119.

¹² Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System*, 258.

¹³ "Hiawatha Pipe Bid Is Accepted," *Minneapolis Star*, August 18, 1932.

¹⁴ "Drought Menaces New Golf Course," *Minneapolis Star*, June 5, 1934; "Park Board Opens Hiawatha Golf Course," *Minneapolis Star*, July 31, 1934; Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System*, 258; "Park Officials to Participate in Ceremonies," *Minneapolis Star*, July 27, 1934.

¹⁵ "Hiawatha Golf Clubhouse," Minnesota Architecture-History Inventory Form No. HE-MPC-01744, Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, Saint Paul.

¹⁶ Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System*, 258; photograph caption, *Minneapolis Star*, September 18, 1958.

During the same period, Saint Paul was also developing municipal courses. By the 1930s, golfers were enjoying rounds on courses at Como, Highland, Keller, Phalen, and Southview parks.¹⁷

Hiawatha's First Controversy

Even before the fairways were ready for the first players, Hiawatha was mired in controversy. Golf courses were often encircled by fencing, particularly in an urban location, and plans for Hiawatha called for fencing on all sides. This was opposed by some residents in the surrounding community, whose property had been assessed to support the improvements to Hiawatha and felt that the fencing would shut them out from the site. Local business owners objected as well because it “might interfere with the ultimate construction of a possible traffic highway across Lake Hiawatha at some future time.”¹⁸

At a meeting on September 5, 1933, the park board's joint Committees on Improvements and Finance recommended that a hedge be installed rather than a fence as previously approved. When the matter was considered by the full board, though, Wirth argued that the hedge would cost more and take years to grow large enough to effectively “keep people from traversing the golf course at will and perhaps being ‘beaned’ by flying golf balls.” He persuaded all but one of the commissioners, who voted to allocate \$11,200 for the fence. On September 29 the park board awarded a contract to Demeules Bros. Wire and Iron Works to install it.¹⁹

Neighborhood activists were enraged. They collected four hundred signatures on a petition protesting the vote and called a meeting, which drew some 150 people. The park board was represented by Karl Raymond, the director of recreation, who explained that “without a fence, . . . it was difficult to keep people other than fee-paying golfers off the courses, that on unprotected courses balls sometimes were stolen, trouble occasionally arose from non-golfers being struck by balls, and the greens and fairways were damaged by picnic parties.” The crowd was not swayed. It appointed a committee, including four lawyers, to attend the next park board meeting “to demand cancellation of the fencing project, and, if necessary, to seek a court injunction halting the fencing.” There was even talk of abolishing the park board.²⁰

The protests got the park board's attention. At its next meeting in October, the board decided to stop the fence's construction pending further study by the joint committee. At the board's November 1 meeting, the committee reported back. It concluded that enclosing the course was the best alternative but recommended, “in deference to adjacent property owners who show objections to the construction of a fence opposite their homes,” that the fence be installed only on the east and south sides and on the west side south of the clubhouse. The board later voted to

¹⁷ Jimmy Lee, “In the Sport Light,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, June 9, 1939.

¹⁸ Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners (hereafter MBPC), 1933 Proceedings, 155, in Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Records, James K. Hosmer Special Collections, Hennepin County Library, Minneapolis (hereafter MPRB/HCL-SC).

¹⁹ “Strong Attack on Park Board,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, October 11, 1933; MBPC, 1933 Proceedings, 155, in MPRB/HCL-SC; “Board Orders Hiawatha Fence,” *Minneapolis Star*, September 7, 1933; “Wirth Tells How City in Nokomis-Hiawatha Project Made Swamp into One of Most Useful Beauty Spots,” *Minneapolis Journal*, January 21, 1934.

²⁰ “School Repair Bond Issuance Held Possible,” *Minneapolis Star*, September 13, 1933; “Strong Attack on Park Board”; “Citizens Ask Park Board Be Abolished in Hiawatha Row,” *Minneapolis Star*, October 11, 1933.

modify the contract with Demeules Bros. to reflect the reduced scope and authorized a payment to the company of \$9,769 on December 6.²¹

The matter appeared to be closed, but in January 1934, Wirth warned, “I feel certain that the need for such inclosure will be demonstrated to everybody as soon as the course is opened for play.” He was proven right. In August 1934, W. F. Buckholz sent a letter to Wirth beginning with a compliment about “the splendid condition of the new golf course at Hiawatha,” adding “the course is now in better condition than any other public course, and ranks equal to Keller [Saint Paul’s premier municipal course] in my estimation.” At the same time, he “register[ed] a complaint” about “the number of youngsters that are permitted to run rampant all over the course, play in the sand traps and ride their bicycles from one end of the course to the other,” being “a serious annoyance to practically every golfer.” Buckholz acknowledged that the community “had defeated the fence project” and suggested that policing could eliminate the problem. The board also received a petition signed by 253 golfers “urg[ing] the Board to complete the fence.” The Hiawatha Golf Club sent a separate petition with the same message. In early September, the park board voted to complete the fence around the entire course. Work proceeded quickly. In October, the park board paid Demeules \$1,596.75 for completing that work (see Figure 9).²²

Public Courses / Private Clubs

Following the pattern of the city’s other golf courses, a private club was organized as an affiliate as Hiawatha’s course was nearing completion. Milt Sweningsen, who had served as vice president of the Minnesota Public Links Association, organized a meeting at Minneapolis City Hall in March 1934 and became the first president of the product of that meeting, the Hiawatha Golf Club. It would soon hold meetings in the clubhouse. In its first year, the club gained sixty-five members and joined the Minnesota Golf Association and Public Links Association.²³

The Hiawatha Golf Club was officially incorporated in 1936 by a dozen men, all residents of Minneapolis. Registration papers filed with the Minnesota Secretary of State asserted the group’s general purpose was “social in nature.” It sought “to promote a general interest in public golf playing, to promote, facilitate, hold and manage tournaments, competitions, etc., in the playing of golf upon public links; to co-operate with the public Park Commissioners for the successful maintenance of such discipline and courtesies upon the links as will best harmonize the individual with the public interest; [and] to have such power in reference to real and personal property as are given to corporations of this nature.” All of the incorporators became members of the corporation’s board of governors and one, Donald U. Nelson, became Hiawatha’s first manager and pro as an employee of the park board. Nelson had worked for the board in various

²¹ MBPC, 1933 Proceedings, 182, 188, 197, 208, in MPRB/HCL-SC; “Compromise Seen in Hiawatha Fence Row,” *Minneapolis Star*, October 31, 1933; “Portable Warming Houses Constructed,” *Minneapolis Star*, December 7, 1933.

²² “Wirth Tells How City in Nokomis-Hiawatha Project Made Swamp into One of Most Useful Beauty Spots”; W. F. Buckholz to Theodore Wirth, letter, August 22, 1934, in “Petitions and Communications, 1934,” Box 92, in MPRB/HCL-SC.

²³ “Hiawatha Golf Club to Be Formed Wednesday,” *Minneapolis Star*, March 23, 1934; “Hiawatha Club to Be Formed,” *Minneapolis Journal*, March 23, 1934; “Hiawatha Golf Club to Meet,” *Minneapolis Journal*, March 31, 1935; “Hiawatha Golf Club Meeting Set Monday,” *Minneapolis Star*, April 21, 1936.

positions for about a dozen years before going to Hiawatha, where he remained until his retirement in 1971.²⁴

The club's articles of incorporation stated that "any person of amateur standing, good moral character, and over seventeen years of age" was eligible to join the club. To petition for membership, an applicant filled out a form and submitted a year's dues of three dollars. Members were accepted only by a unanimous vote of the board, with no provision for an appeal.²⁵

While the incorporators were men, the club encouraged women and junior golfers early on. It branched into other sports as well. An October 1940 issue of the *Minneapolis Star* noted that "the Hiawatha golf club girls' bowling team . . . wear Indian suits . . . and they're tied for first!"²⁶

The club initiated the Hiawatha Open Tournament in 1938, planning to make it an annual event. It was the first open tournament at the city courses, attracting nearly 475 players in its inaugural year. An even higher turnout was expected the following year when prizes of over \$400 were offered. While other clubs soon organized open tournaments at their courses, Hiawatha's remained the largest for many years. T. O. Sather, president of a furniture company that sponsored the early tournaments, received the club's first honorary membership in 1940.²⁷

The Hiawatha Open was a sanctioned event of the Minnesota Golf Association. At sanctioned events, players could establish handicaps. This allowed them to compete at major tournaments offering substantial purses, sufficient for successful golfers to become "pros"—in other words, make it their profession.²⁸

A Club of Their Own

While Black golfers rarely participated in PGA tournaments in the first decades of the twentieth century, the association did not insert a "Caucasian only" clause into its bylaws until 1934. The clause remained in place until 1961. In 1934, before it went into effect, Robert "Pat" Ball, who the *Spokesman* called "the leading colored 'Pro' in and around 'Chi,'" played in an open tournament at the Keller golf course in Saint Paul. He "would have been trouble for some of the leading 'Pros' had it not been for a disastrous first round." Ball gained invaluable experience as the caddie for pioneering golf professional Bobby Jones and, a golf history noted, "was one of

²⁴ "Certificate of Incorporation of the Hiawatha Golf Club, Incorp.," June 22, 1936, Minnesota Secretary of State, Saint Paul; Louis Greene, "Missing Links," *Minneapolis Star*, July 24, 1938; "Prizes Lure Hiawatha Open Field," *Minneapolis Star*, July 16, 1939; "Donald U. Nelson," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, September 20, 1973; "Nelson, Donald U." (obituary), *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, September 30, 1988. Nelson was replaced by Bob Nordstrom, who had started as a caddie at the course in the early 1940s and became the assistant manager in 1958. ("Seventy-five Hiawatha Golfers Teed Off by Attempt to Move Their Manager," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 2, 1973.)

²⁵ "Certificate of Incorporation of the Hiawatha Golf Club, Incorp."

²⁶ Untitled article, *Minneapolis Star*, October 13, 1940.

²⁷ Greene, "Missing Links"; "Stars Rush Entries for Hiawatha Open," *Minneapolis Star*, July 16, 1939; "38,316 Strokes in Hiawatha Open," *Minneapolis Star*, July 22, 1939; "Prizes Lure Hiawatha Open Field"; Bill Carlson, "Hiawatha Open 'Too Expensive,'" *Minneapolis Star*, November 15, 1956; "Hiawatha Members Honor T. O. Sather," *Minneapolis Star*, April 25, 1940.

²⁸ Burnside, "Twin Cities' Black Golfers," 12.

the few black golfers to compete regularly against whites in the USGA—sponsored public links golf tournaments.”²⁹

Discouraged—and prohibited after 1934—from competing on the PGA circuit and denied membership in clubs controlled by whites, Black golfers formed their own organizations. A historical study noted that “African American golf clubs were important in the promotion of golf as a game symbolic of the leisure-time activities . . . of the middle class,” but “unlike their white counterparts, . . . members of African American golf clubs represented a range of social class backgrounds.” In 1931, Black golfers in Minneapolis and Saint Paul established the Twin City Golf Club (TCGC; sometimes called the Twin City Golf Association). TCGC met at various locations including the Hallie Q. Brown House and Sterling Club in Saint Paul and social halls and homes in Minneapolis.³⁰

The organization remained small for several years and sometimes floundered. An article in the *Minneapolis Spokesman* in September 1935 reported that the TCGC “was revived at a meeting” of eighteen members “seeking to again sponsor the advancement of golf among the Negro citizens of these two cities.” They called for any golfer interested in joining the club to meet a week later at the Fellowship Club at 3031 Garfield Avenue in South Minneapolis.³¹

With the 1936 season on the horizon, the club met at the Hallie Q. Brown House in Saint Paul in April and the Phyllis Wheatley House in North Minneapolis in May. Members discussed events for the upcoming summer including plans to hold tournaments every month at both Minneapolis and Saint Paul courses. For the first tournament in June, “members must turn in scores from the following courses: Keller, Armour, Como, and Hiawatha. Qualifying and flight play will depend upon these scores. Members must have their scores signed by at least two club members.” They also “secured the service of Raymond Wright as an instruction,” who was “well known around the Twin Cities for his play in caddy tournaments, having won one in 1929.”³²

By 1937, TCGC had gained sufficient momentum to host the seventh annual Central States (sometimes called the Mid-Central) Golf Tournament at Keller Golf Course on August 15. In addition to some twenty members of the TCGC, it drew entrants from clubs around the region including Chicago, Des Moines, Omaha, Saint Louis, Kansas City, Topeka, and Sioux City. An article in the *Minneapolis Spokesman* noted that “Mrs. Albert McFarland is in charge of the housing so anyone having a spare room on or around the 15th” should contact her.” Registration for the tournament was at the Sterling Club in Saint Paul.³³

²⁹ Burnside, “Twin Cities’ Black Golfers,” 12; Jimmy Lee, “Golf Divots,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, May 15, 1936; “Two Pro Golfers Who Played at Keller,” *Saint Paul Recorder*, July 18, 1952; Dawkins, Braddock, and Gilbert, “African American Golf Clubs,” 77.

³⁰ Jimmy Lee, “In the Sport Light,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 30, 1937, and August 5, 1938.

³¹ Dawkins, Braddock, and Gilbert, “African American Golf Clubs,” 76-77; “Golfers Meet to Form Twin City Group, Golfers Reorganize,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, September 6, 1935.

³² Jimmy Lee, “Golf Divots,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, April 24, May 1 and 15, 1936.

³³ “In the Sport Light,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, March 26, 1937; Jimmy Lee, “The Spotlight,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 9 and 30, August 6 and 20, 1937; “Duluth News,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 20, 1937; “Golfers from Five States to Play in Central Tourney,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 13, 1937.

It was not only the first time the tournament had come to the metropolitan area but also “the first time Keller golf course has been reserved for our people,” the *Minneapolis Spokesman* reported. Two days before the tournament, the paper proclaimed that the course “will be in perfect condition for the tournament, the famous \$5,000 Saint Paul open tournament having just been played here last week.” The event went well, as the *Spokesman* noted in its August 20 issue: “Everyone is complimenting the Arrangement Committee for the splendid way the tournament was run.” Hosting the tournament raised the visibility of TCGC. That year, its members were invited for the first time to participate in the Tri-State Invitational, held in September in Saint Louis.³⁴

TCGC took responsibility for the tournament again in 1938, perhaps because Minneapolis golfer John H. Williams served as president of the Central States Golf Association. This time the tournament was based at the Hiawatha golf course. Registration for the fifty contestants was at the Iowa-Minnesota Club at 343 East Thirty-eighth Street and refreshments and the trophy ceremony were at the Fellowship Club. TCGC members expected to make a respectable showing at the August 20 event but not win it, so when Minneapolis golfer Tommy Donaldson came in first, it merited a headline in the *Minneapolis Spokesman*. Second place was captured by Saint Paul’s Jimmy Lee. Buoyed by this victory, Donaldson and Lee headed to the Negro National Tournament at Palos Park in Chicago at the end of the month.³⁵

TCGC would host the Central States tournament again over the years, including in 1946 when the event resumed after a pause during World War II, but after being in the Twin Cities in 1937-1938 the tournament went to the Forest Park course in Saint Louis in 1939. To maintain the interest of local golfers and fans, the TCGC met in January to organize “an all-star invitational tournament” at the Keller golf course, hoping to attract golfers from clubs that had participated in the 1937 and 1938 events. The tournament, which TCGC planned to offer annually, was scheduled for its debut on August 6 as a warm-up to the Saint Louis tournament two weeks later.³⁶

Slemmons and the Negro Open

A month after TCGC’s first invitational, the James W. Slemmons Minnesota Negro Open Tournament debuted. The organizers, Jimmy Slemmons and Ted Allen, were members of the TCGC and worked at the Minneapolis Athletic Club in the late 1930s (see Figure 10). With no prior experience in the sport, Slemmons had started playing as the result of a wager in 1933. After much practice, he claimed a handicap of six. “After breaking 100 for the first time and

³⁴ Lee, “The Sportlight,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 9 and 30, August 6, 20, and 27, 1937; “Duluth News”; Jimmy Lee, “Sam Shepherd Wins Central States Golf Crown Second Time,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 30, 1937.

³⁵ Jimmy Lee, “In the Sport Light,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 5, 1938; “Golfers of Four States Gather for Central States Tournament,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 19, 1938; “Twin Citian Wins Golf Meet,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 26, 1938.

³⁶ Sol Hughes, “Fore! Golfers Plan Summer of Activity,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, April 12, 1946; Jimmy Lee, “The Sport Light,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, January 20, 1939; “Mound City Golfers,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 7, 1939; Jimmy Lee, “Twin City Golf Club Meet Sunday,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 4, 1939; Jimmy Lee, “Sport Light,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, November 30, 1945.

winning a pair of ten-cent socks from Woolworth's," golf historian Rick Shefchik wrote, "Slemmons decided to launch the Minnesota Negro Open."³⁷

When they started the tournament, "I was the organizer, and Jimmy was the promoter," Allen recalled. "He went out and got the merchants to donate the prizes. Jimmy was the best you ever saw at doing that." Prizes for the first tournament included "golf shoes, large floor lamp, card table, electric fan, man's belt and suspenders, waffle iron, electric toaster, electric roaster, three raincoats, two 32-piece sets of dishes, electric clock, golf clubs and beverages, and, of course, the silver trophy for the tournament winner." The latter was donated by the *Minnesota Daily Times*. The tournament also had the support of Cecil E. Newman, editor of the *Minneapolis Spokesman*. Started in 1934, this weekly Black newspaper and its counterpart, the *Saint Paul Recorder*, also published by Newman, became critical sources of local, regional, and national news for the area's Black community. Some of the tournament's prizes were displayed at the newspaper's Minneapolis office and golfers could register there.³⁸

Slemmons was "a tireless worker, with an infectious personality," according to the *Recorder*. Born and raised in Minneapolis, he held a variety of jobs, spent two years selling advertisements for the *Spokesman*, but he was "best known as a salesman of tires and electric appliances."³⁹

The first Negro Open was scheduled for September 10 at the Armour (Gross) golf course and was open to both men and women, although the men played thirty-six holes while the women played eighteen. It was won by Jimmy Lee with a score of 168. The title was claimed by Ray Lee in 1940 and Bert Davidson in 1941 before a four-year hiatus during World War II.⁴⁰

The Negro Open Becomes the Bronze

The TCGC and Negro Open were some of the ways that Black residents of the Twin Cities sought to unite their community, which was concentrated in three areas: Rondo in Saint Paul, North Minneapolis, and the area around Fourth Avenue between Lake Street and Thirty-eight Street in South Minneapolis. Together, the community was known as Bronzeville. The title "Mayor of Bronzeville"—and cash prizes—were claimed by the winner of an annual contest promoted by the Associated Negro Credit Union, following the lead of "Negro newspapers [that] have sponsored Mayor of Bronzeville contests" in "the East and South for several years." The mayors of both Minneapolis and Saint Paul sent letters to the credit union endorsing the election, which served as a fundraiser for the credit union's educational fund: "Five-cent votes, in books of twenty each," were available "to any person or any group wishing to sponsor an individual. Each five-cent vote is equivalent to ten votes in tabulating the returns." Sponsors were varied. In the 1941 contest, for example, singer George Saunders was backed by the Minnesota Jubilee

³⁷ Patrick Reusse, "Bronze Age Far from Over," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, July 29, 1990; Shefchik, *From Fields to Fairways*, 226.

³⁸ "First Minnesota Open Golf Tournament to Be Held Sunday, Sept. 10," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, September 1, 1939; Reusse, "Bronze Age Far from Over."

³⁹ "James Slemmons Elected 1945 Bronzeville Mayor in Spirited Election," *Saint Paul Recorder*, December 14, 1945.

⁴⁰ "First Minnesota Open Golf Tournament"; "Jimmy Lee Cops Minnesota Negro Open Golf Title with Total Score of 168," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, September 15, 1939; "Winner and Chief Competitors in First Negro Golf Meet," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, September 15, 1939; Reusse, "Bronze Age Far from Over."

Singers while businessman Martin Brown had the support of the American Legion's Johnnie Baker Post.⁴¹

Competitors for the initial contest in 1940 included Jimmy Lee, who was working as the athletic director for the Hallie Q. Brown House in Saint Paul, and the two founders of the Negro Open: Ted Allen, a representative of the North American Life and Casualty Company, and Jimmy Slemmons, who was working for a bakery and was sponsored by a "Twin City Volunteer Committee." With his profile elevated by the start of the Negro Open, Jimmy Slemmons received 23,600 votes and was the first to win the title. The result was announced Thanksgiving night at an inaugural ball at the Saint Paul Auditorium. Slemmons lost a bid for reelection in 1941 but reclaimed the title in 1945 in a "touch-and-go fight right to the finish," garnering 86,200 votes to Gene Harris's 75,200, the *Recorder* reported. Slemmons, who worked for the Northern Pacific Railroad at the time, was "aided in the final splurge by a heavy railroad vote." His job required him to be out of town the night the result of the voting was announced to seven hundred people who had gathered at Norway Hall. "The crowd had been having a grand time dancing," the *Recorder* explained, making it hard for Cecil Newman, the program's emcee, to get their attention. Mayor Hubert Humphrey, a strong advocate for human rights, made remarks before Newman proclaimed Slemmons the winner.⁴²

It appears the title was never again contested, and Slemmons proudly called himself the "Mayor of Bronzeville" for decades. According to a 1968 profile, in that role "he was best known for his efforts to obtain equal employment opportunities" for Blacks using the slogan "Don't spend your money where they don't hire your color." He was also instrumental in getting Black-sponsored floats in the parades of two major civic celebrations, the Aquatennial in Minneapolis and the Winter Carnival in Saint Paul. In addition to the challenge of raising \$2,000 to build each float, he "had to overcome resistance by the organizers of the festivals to allow a Negro-sponsored entry." As a member of the Shriners Fezzan Temple No. 26, he headed a music scholarship program and organized an annual Halloween party attended by some four hundred children. He and his wife, Beatrice, got married around 1933 and had no children, but they "raised lots of kids" in their South Minneapolis neighborhood.⁴³

Slemmons had broken barriers from the outset: he was the first Black baby born at Minneapolis's Northwestern Hospital. One of his longest-living accomplishments, though, was starting the Negro Open Golf Tournament, which was included as an official Aquatennial event by 1946.⁴⁴

⁴¹ "Leach and McDonough Endorse Mayor of Bronzeville Campaign; Candidates File," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, September 27, 1940; "Mayor of Bronzeville of Twin Cities to Be Decided by Popular Vote," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, September 20, 1940; "Bronzeville Mayor Candidates Announce Platforms as Race Gets Under Way," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, October 11, 1940; "Mayor of Bronzeville Election," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, October 18, 1940; "Ace Radio Commentator Todd Williams to Induct Bronze Mayor into Office," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, November 7, 1941.

⁴² "James Slemmons Elected Mayor of Bronzeville"; "James Slemmons Elected 1945 Bronzeville Mayor," December 14, 1945; "Ace Radio Commentator," November 7, 1941. Humphrey was beloved in the Black community for his unwavering support for civil rights. In 1947, the wife of a columnist in the *Spokesman* heard Humphrey speak and "a lady sitting next to her remarked: 'If I loved him any more, I'd need another heart.'" (Percy Villa, "Almost About Everything," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, May 16, 1947.)

⁴³ Craig Wilkins, "Jimmie [*sic*] Slemmons, Long Time Worker for Minnesota Negroes," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 25, 1968.

⁴⁴ Wilkins, "Jimmie [*sic*] Slemmons," July 25, 1968; Hughes, "Fore!" April 12, 1946.

As the years went on, the tournament drew more golfers from outside Minnesota, including sixty-seven for the ninth Negro Open in 1951. Local golfers were rattled when a competitor from Des Moines, Cleo Johnson, was the first tournament champion from another state. The tenth tournament on July 26-27, 1952, like most before it, was staged at Wirth, with registration at two popular venues, the Cassius Bar and Cafe in Minneapolis and the Chatsworth Inn in Saint Paul. Sometimes, the Negro Open was scheduled back-to-back with the Central States Tournament, which returned to the Minneapolis's Gross golf course in July 21-23, 1953, and was promoted as the "largest Negro amateur golf event in the nation" (see Figure 11). It was followed on July 25-26 by the eleventh annual Minnesota Negro Open at Wirth.⁴⁵

As its name suggested, the "open" tournament was at first only for Black players. Ironically, it became the center of controversy in June 1954 when the Duluth, Minneapolis, and Saint Paul branches of the NAACP accused tournament organizers of discrimination for refusing to accept white golfers. In a letter to the editor published in the *Recorder* on June 18, Frank Smith, president of the NAACP's Saint Paul branch, wrote, "In its uphill fight for equality of opportunities we as a race must not be found guilty of the things we oppose from other sources." Cecil Newman agreed in an editorial in the *Recorder*. "There was a time when a racially exclusive tournament could be excused on the basis that golf was a new game for many members of the Negro community. However, as the game improved in popularity among Negroes and the best players among them sought entry to local and national tournaments which were formerly all-white, it was time for Negro-promoted tournaments to change their admission policies."⁴⁶

Bailee Thomas, a columnist in the *Recorder*, also commented on the issue. "If the tournament was sponsored by a private club, it would have a legal right to accept entries on a racially selective basis—but the fact that it is a public affair, held on a municipal course, and donations and prizes are solicited on that basis—there is not much justification for closing the tournament to any white golfers who want to participate." An unnamed promoter of the tournament defended the policy, telling Thomas that if they opened up registration, "white golfers would win all of the prizes." To this, Thomas retorted: "So what! How will Negro amateurs ever improve their game unless they get to compete with the best in the field." He added that "the ending of discrimination is a two-way street."⁴⁷

Only about 90 men and women played in the 1954 Negro Open, down from 165 the previous year. There were various factors affecting attendance including the Central States Tournament, which had drawn players to the Twin Cities in 1953 but held its event in Denver in 1954. Still, the spat with the NAACP tarnished the Negro Open that year. Perhaps because the subject was so sensitive, Newman took the unusual step of putting his byline on an article describing the

⁴⁵ Reusse, "Bronze Age Far from Over"; "Large Entry Is Expected for Tenth Minnesota Open," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 18, 1952; "Two 1953 Golf Meet Dates Set," *Minneapolis Tribune*, December 21, 1952.

⁴⁶ Ed Blackwell, "Golf Tourney Promoter Threatens to 'Punch' Cratic, NAACP President," *Saint Paul Recorder*, June 18, 1954; "Saint Paul NAACP Opposes 'Negro' Open" (letter to the editor), *Saint Paul Recorder*, June 18, 1954; "Great Day for Golf" (editorial), *Saint Paul Recorder*, July 29, 1955.

⁴⁷ Bailee Thomas, "Brief News Scene," *Saint Paul Recorder*, June 18, 1954.

tournament on June 26-27. “Most of the players and spectators seemed to enjoy the affair despite the fireworks which had taken place prior to the meet.”⁴⁸

Newman noted that the Minneapolis NAACP had appointed a committee to confer with Slemmons and Allen about issues the group had raised. One was the tournament’s name. In his June letter to the editor, Smith stated, “I trust that in the future the directors of the Negro Open will . . . eliminate the word Negro in their promotion.” Slemmons and Allen agreed, and in 1955, the event became the Upper Midwest Bronze Golf Tournament. They also officially dropped any restrictions on contestants. “For the first time,” the *Recorder* reported, “the tournament was ‘open’ in the sense that there was no bar against white or Oriental participation.” Of the 99 participants, four were white and one was Asian. Two of the white golfers tied for the second-lowest score. In an editorial in the *Recorder* following the event, Newman wrote, “The promoters of the Minnesota Tourney deserve credit for changing both the name and the policy of the tournament.” He added, “Many Negro spectators, golfers and gallery members joined this paper in feeling very good about the whole thing.” In 1963, Jerry Gruidl, “a North Side kid,” was the first white to win the tournament. By 1990, around 20 percent of the participants were white.⁴⁹

Ted Allen eventually stopped working on the event to focus on his career as an insurance agent but remained a quiet cosponsor, while Slemmons, as the “Mayor of Bronzeville,” was ever enthusiastic about promoting it. His wardrobe became an expression of his flamboyant personality. A Bronze participant later recalled that “Jimmy would change outfits three or four times a day during the tournament. . . . You would see Jimmy when you teed off, and he was wearing red. You would see him an hour later, and he was wearing pink. And when Jimmy wore red, he wore red—a red tam, a red shirt, red pants, red socks, red shoes, red underwear.” Others started following his lead and for a time the tournament included a prize for best-dressed.⁵⁰

This was one of many aspects of the tournament that drew non-golfers, and it became a major social event for the Black community. A newspaper later reported that “people would take a week’s vacation from jobs in Detroit, Chicago, Kansas City and Des Moines, they would pack up the family and head to Minneapolis.” While the golfers were competing on the greens, “the rest of the family would visit relatives and turn the grounds of Wirth into the world’s largest moving picnic.” In 1963, the *Spokesman* opined: “It looks like the annual Upper Midwest Bronze Golf Tournament has supplanted the old Union Sunday School Picnics [once an annual event, usually at Minnehaha Park] as the outdoor get-together of the Twin Cities population.” An article the next year described “hundreds of spectators avail[ing] themselves of the opportunity each Sunday afternoon of the annual tournament . . . to visit and promenade around the Wirth clubhouse grounds and meet old friends that they never see but once a year at the Slemmons tournament.” While the 1966 Bronze counted 199 players from ten states, a crowd of 5,000

⁴⁸ Cecil Newman, “Golf Tourney Attracts Crowd but Number of ‘54’ Entries fall,” *Saint Paul Recorder*, July 2, 1954.

⁴⁹ “Detroit Doctor Wins Bronze Amateur Golf Tournament with a 146,” *Saint Paul Recorder*, July 29, 1955; “Great Day for Golf”; Reusse, “Bronze Age Far from Over.”

⁵⁰ “Ted Allen Again First to Sign Up for Bronze Tourney,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 9, 1964; Ralph Thornton, “Bronze Golfers Gather at Hiawatha,” *Minneapolis Star*, July 29, 1976; Reusse, “Bronze Age Far from Over.”

“thronged the course and clubhouse grounds.”⁵¹ The article added, “Since the tournament is completely racially integrated there were persons of all races and ethnic backgrounds in attendance and tournament sponsor James W. Slemmons was extremely pleased.” The winner of the tournament that year, Jerry Longie of Minneapolis, was white.⁵²

Breaking PGA Barriers

The change in the tournament’s name from Negro Open to Bronze symbolized deeper challenges roiling the sport of golf in the early 1950s. After World War II, the PGA faced mounting pressure to allow Black golfers to participate in tournaments. In 1948, it was confronted with a lawsuit in San Francisco seeking \$250,000 in damages for refusing to allow Ted Rhodes and Bill Spiller, top golfers in the Black tournament circuit, to participate in the Richmond Open. The Richmond tournament initially accepted entry fees submitted by the two men but returned them in response to pressure from the PGA. Rhodes and Spiller sued on the grounds that the PGA’s whites-only policy denied them the right to earn a living.⁵³

The suit was later joined by golfer Madison Gunter and the damages raised to \$325,000. In September 1948, the plaintiffs dropped the suit after the PGA “promised that there will be no further discrimination against Negro golfers in tournaments over which the PGA has control.” Black and white golfers around the country celebrated the result, but soon discovered that their celebration was premature as the PGA continued to ban Black golfers from tournaments.⁵⁴

During the same period, a confrontation was playing out in the Twin Cities. The Saint Paul Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees) sponsored an annual Saint Paul Open Golf Tournament, which was sanctioned by the PGA. Beginning in the late 1940s, the Jaycees pushed to make the tournament truly “open,” but the PGA refused to allow Black golfers to participate.⁵⁵

In 1948, Whitney Young, a Black member of the Jaycees and an official of the Saint Paul Urban League, asked his fellow Jaycees “if the tournament was really ‘open,’” according to the *Spokesman*. “He was assured that it would be, and on that basis began selling tickets for, and promoting the tournament.” Ted Rhodes and a professional golfer from Minneapolis, Solomon Hughes, submitted entries for the Saint Paul Open.⁵⁶

Hughes was born in Alabama in 1908 and was playing golf by the age of twelve. He started, like most Black golfers in the South, as a caddie at the local country club, but his skills soon had him working at the pro shop and giving lessons. He reached professional standing in the UGA circuit, winning its National Negro Open as a twenty-six-year-old in 1935. He enthusiastically

⁵¹ Reusse, “Bronze Age Far from Over”; “Publisher’s Corner,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 25, 1963; “Annual Upper Midwest Bronze Golf Tourney Saturday and Sunday,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 28, 1966; “Record Entry Is Expected for Annual Upper Midwest Bronze Tournament at Wirth July 25-26,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 23, 1964; “J. Longie Wins 1966 Bronze Golf Tourney with Score of 145,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 4, 1966.

⁵² “J. Longie Wins.”

⁵³ “Saint Paul ‘Open’ Bars Top Golfers,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 13, 1948.

⁵⁴ “Professional Golfer’s Association Decides to Abandon Discrimination against Race Golfers; California Reports Claim,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, September 24, 1948.

⁵⁵ “Two Pro Golfers.”

⁵⁶ “Saint Paul ‘Open’ Bars Top Golfers.”

introduced many Black men, women, and youth to the sport, including former heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis, who he met during World War II. Golf became a major focus for Louis after he quit the ring, and in 1945 Louis asked Hughes to tour with him.⁵⁷

A year or two earlier, though, Hughes had relocated to Minneapolis and did not want to abandon his young family, so Rhodes took the job with Louis instead. Hughes hoped his move from the South would enable him to become a pro at a local course but discovered widespread discrimination in the North as well. The TCGC, on the other hand, welcomed him with open arms. He gave lessons for the club while working as a waiter and porter on the Great Northern Railroad's North Coast line and sustaining his professional golf career. He won the Joe Louis invitational in Detroit in 1945, earning the substantial purse of \$700. Writing in the *Spokesman* that year, sports reporter and golfer Jimmy Lee observed, "The quiet spoken Hughes has found a host of friends since his stay here, he has given many of the local lads help—but only when asked. Hughes isn't the type of fellow who wants to have the distinction of being a 'know all,' yet he has had far more experience than any of the local talent. . . . We personally hope he continues to make Minneapolis his home."⁵⁸

He did, while maintaining his rank as one of the country's top Black golfers. He often competed against Rhodes, who won a series of UGA tournaments in 1946 and 1947. In 1948, Rhodes and Bill Spiller were allowed to play in the Los Angeles Open, one of only three major tournaments in North America where Black golfers could compete because the events had sufficient financial clout to force the PGA to bend its rules. Because Rhodes and Spiller finished in the top sixty, they automatically qualified for the Richmond Open, where the PGA's reapplication of the rules led to the lawsuit. It was in this context that Hughes and Rhodes sent in their entry fees for the Saint Paul Open in 1948.⁵⁹

The applications were returned because the men were not members of the PGA—a Catch-22 because the PGA would not allow them to join. The *Spokesman* and *Recorder* closely followed the conflict but Young and other advocates were unsuccessful in getting support from major local newspapers. An editorial in the *Minneapolis Star* opined, "It seems inevitable that some day Negroes will be accepted by [the] PGA. They ought to be!" The paper asserted, though, that "until the PGA changes its rules nationally there is not much that can be done about an individual tournament." Across the river, Ben Ridder, publisher of the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* and the *Saint Paul Dispatch*, disapproved of the PGA's policy but refused to let the paper cover the controversy because he feared "wrecking" the tournament if the PGA withdrew its golfers.⁶⁰

The group also pressured Saint Paul mayor Edward Delaney, pointing to the fact that Keller was owned by the city and subsidized by taxpayers. Because the tournament sponsors had rented the course, Delaney claimed the city's hands were tied. He asserted, though, that "in his opinion, any

⁵⁷ "Sol Hughes Professional Golfer Dies," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, October 29, 1987; Thomas B. Jones, "Caucasians Only: Solomon Hughes, the PGA, and the 1948 Saint Paul Open Tournament," *Minnesota History* 58, no. 8 (Winter 2003-2004): 382-393.

⁵⁸ Jones, "Caucasians Only," 384-385; Jimmy Lee, "Golf Club Sponsors Tournament at Highland Park Course," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 3, 1945.

⁵⁹ Jones, "Caucasians Only," 384-385; Lee, "Golf Club Sponsors Tournament."

⁶⁰ "Saint Paul 'Open' Bars Top Golfers"; "Negros and Golf" (editorial), *Minneapolis Star*, August 14, 1948, reprinted with commentary in *Saint Paul Recorder*, August 20, 1948.

succeeding contract should have a non-Jimcrow [*sic*] clause in it,” the *Spokesman* reported. He had “instituted a thorough check of the practice at Keller and was convinced that the club, in itself, is not discriminating.” Delaney arranged meetings with Young and the Jaycees trying to resolve the issue but “nothing could be solved . . . because action by the Junior Chamber would have put PGA on the spot.” Delaney also called Tom Crane, the PGA’s executive secretary in Chicago, who stated that allowing Rhodes and Hughes to play would weaken the group’s position in the California lawsuit.⁶¹

Hughes tried registering again in the following years but the pattern continued, regardless of increasing support from the tournament organizers. In 1951, the *Recorder* reported, Hughes’s “entry fee was returned on orders of the PGA despite the frantic entreaty of the Saint Paul Jaycees tournament committee to [the] PGA to allow the entry.”⁶²

In the meantime, the PGA was again facing rebellion in California. Joe Louis had won the UGA’s amateur championship in 1951, with the help of Rhodes’s tutoring, and his fame earned him an invitation to play in the 1952 San Diego Open. Spiller had qualified to play in the tournament. A week before the event, the PGA announced they could not be allowed to participate. Louis used his media contacts to shame the PGA into letting him in, but Spiller had to threaten another lawsuit. After further negotiations, the PGA agreed to let tournament organizers invite Black golfers to PGA-endorsed tournaments if they were on a short “approved list” of players exempt from PGA membership.⁶³

In Saint Paul, the Jaycees quickly accepted applications from Rhodes and Hughes for the 1952 tournament and on July 12, they teed up for the Open at the Keller course. “Gallery and most players . . . were friendly to Rhodes” and Hughes, according to the *Recorder*. Rhodes’s expenses were paid by Joe Louis, who also played in the tournament. Afterwards, Rhodes headed to Winnipeg for the Canadian Open, and then to Sioux City, Iowa, where he had been invited to play in a tournament. While the California compromise opened up some tournaments to Black players, their participation was at the discretion of the sponsors, so many events remained segregated. “Most golf pros play golf the year around,” *Recorder* observed. “Since the PGA ban on Negro golfers has still not been reversed Negro golfers may only play when local sponsors like the Saint Paul Jaycees insist.”⁶⁴

Turning Up the Heat on the Minneapolis Park Board

While the battle with the PGA played out on the national stage, Minneapolis was having its own time of reckoning. As Hughes had discovered, unlike the overt discrimination of the South, the North had more subtle but equally effective ways to enforce segregation. In Minneapolis, the private golf club system at municipal courses served this end. Regulations of the Minnesota State Golf Association, the PGA affiliate, prohibited a course from being associated with more than

⁶¹ “Saint Paul ‘Open’ Bars Top Golfers.”

⁶² “Sol Hughes to Play in Keller Open Tourney,” *Saint Paul Recorder*, July 4, 1952; “Hughes, Rhodes and Saint Paul Open,” *Saint Paul Recorder*, July 24, 1953.

⁶³ “Louis Agrees to Plan for Negro Golfers,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 19, 1952; “Ted Rhodes in Saint Paul Open,” *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, July 4, 1952; Jones, “Caucasians Only,” 390-391.

⁶⁴ “Two Pro Golfers Who Played at Keller”; Bailee Thomas, “Brief News Scene,” *Saint Paul Recorder*, July 18, 1952.

one club. The clubs operated independently from the park board but had a cozy relationship with course managers and received preferential treatment for use of the clubhouse and the links. Through the opacity of the clubs' administration, it was easy to keep out Black people if members wanted to—and they did.⁶⁵

The Twin Cities was not alone in having this arrangement. Black people in other cities had begun to raise legal challenges to exclusionary use of various municipal facilities and the community in Minneapolis was taking note. In August 1948, in an article on the Saint Paul Open's denial of the entry fees submitted by Hughes and Rhodes, the *Spokesman* cited a recent decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals in the case of *Culver v. City of Warren, Ohio*. At issue was the right of Black people to use a municipal swimming pool leased by the Veterans Swim Club. "All of the Negroes of the city who attempted to gain admission to the pool were refused even though a number of them were World War Veterans who were well qualified under the provisions of the Constitution adopted by the Veterans Swim Club," the court observed. "Applications of these Negro veterans would be received in some instances together with the required fees and then later the applications and the fees were returned without explanation." In its decision issued July 6, the court found that municipalities could not lease public facilities to private groups that discriminated against taxpaying citizens.⁶⁶

A few years later, in summer 1951, the TCGC's frustration reached a turning point. On August 21, TCGC sent a letter to the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners requesting recognition of the club at a city golf course and asking for meeting with the commissioners to advance this process, indicating that the park board's response should be addressed to Howard Bennett at the Minneapolis law firm Hall, Smith and Hedlund. The letter noted that previous discussions with Karl Raymond, the park board's director of recreation, had failed to resolve the issue. "It is obvious, of course, that municipal property and functions cannot and should not be carried on in a discriminatory manner," the letter noted.⁶⁷

"Whenever in the past years Negro golfers have made application to join the clubs at any of the municipal golf courses in the City of Minneapolis," the TCGC stated, "we have been told that there were no openings and that we would have to be put on a waiting list." In 1951, Hiawatha claimed membership of 175 with a waiting list of about 25. Gross and Meadowbrook had memberships of 123 and 90 with waiting lists of about 20 and 65, respectively. Columbia was the smallest club, with 64 members and no waiting list. Wirth, with 203 members, was the

⁶⁵ Frederick Jones, president, TCGC, to MBPC, August 21, 1951, Exhibits 1 and 5, in Standing Committee on Recreation, MBPC, "Operation of Municipal Golf Clubs upon the Municipal Golf Courses" (bound report), April 2, 1952 (hereafter SCR-1952), in MPRB/HCL-SC); Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee, MBPC, "Official Report on Actions Taken on Request of Twin City Golf Association," attached to letter from Ed Haislet, committee chair, to members of the Board of Park Commissioners, March 6, 1952, in SCR-1952.

⁶⁶ "Saint Paul 'Open' Bars Top Golfers"; 84 Ohio App. 373,83 N.E.2d 82, *Culver et al. v. City of Warren et al.*, Court of Appeals of Ohio, Seventh District, Trumbull County, July 6, 1948.

⁶⁷ Jones to MBPC, August 21, 1951, at SCR-1952. Bennett received a law degree from the University of Chicago and moved to Minneapolis in 1950. He went on to direct local branches of the NAACP and Urban League and become a municipal judge, the first Black judge appointed in Minnesota, in 1957. Governor Orville Freeman appointed him to the State Athletic Commission in 1959 and he was reappointed by Governor Elmer Andersen in 1961. In 1963, he was the first Black elected to the Minneapolis school board. ("Anderson Reappoints Bennett to Minnesota State Athletic Comm.," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, March 3, 1961; Curt Brown, "Confident Breaker of Many Barriers," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, April 30, 2017.

largest and had no waiting list, although the club had started to consider limiting membership when its ranks topped 200.⁶⁸

In addition to the injustice of their exclusion from the clubs, the TCGC pointed out that this impeded Black golfers from advancing to major professional tournaments, the “money circuit.” Members were unable to play in tournaments because they “have no club affiliation which is recognized by various tournament agencies and our players do not have handicaps which are recognized for participation in tournaments.”⁶⁹

The park board referred the matter to its Committee on Playgrounds and Entertainment. TCGC’s letter was initially discussed at an informal gathering of two of the committee members (Ed Haislet and Henry Rosacker), two top administrators (Superintendent Charles Doell and board secretary and attorney Howard Moore), and two staff (Karl Raymond, who administered the golf courses as the director of recreation, and Bucky Johnson). According to a later report, the group concluded that the golf clubs were, “for all purposes, actually private golf clubs without official relation to the Board of Park Commissioners; that . . . they were receiving certain privileges above and beyond what the ordinary and regular golf player was receiving—that is, extra service by the golf club managers, extra/special use of clubhouse, and reserved starting times; [and] that these clubs had closed memberships and admitted whom they pleased. One point, brought out quite forcibly by Karl Raymond, was that these clubs were discriminatory in their membership, not only as regards race, color and creed, but discriminatory in that they prevented the young, good golf player from joining and thus from acquiring an official handicap and participation in officially sanctioned events.”⁷⁰

Ed Haislet, the committee’s chair, had received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Minnesota and M.A. and Ed.D. degrees from New York University. He penned a book on boxing published in 1940 and was in the Navy during World War II. In 1948, he began a long tenure as the executive director of the Minnesota Alumni Association. A 1966 profile noted his involvement “in many civic and sports activities in the Twin Cities, the state, and nation. He has been an official of the Amateur Athletic Union, a member of the U.S. Olympic committee, an organizer and director of the Golden Gloves tournaments in Minnesota, and a member of the national Golden Gloves Rules committee.”⁷¹

Henry Rosacker was the oldest child of Hans and Amalie Rosacker, who emigrated from Germany to the United States in 1902. They used their experience in the floral industry in their home country to set up a retail and wholesale floral business, the Hans Rosacker Company, in the Twin Cities. Their children joined the company and it prospered, eventually employing a staff of sixty to operate a 250,000-square-foot greenhouse on Stinson Boulevard in Minneapolis and a farm near Lino Lakes. When the park board received the letter from the TCGC in 1951,

⁶⁸ Jones to MBPC, August 21, 1951, Exhibits 1 and 5, at SCR-1952.

⁶⁹ Jones to MBPC, August 21, 1951, at SCR-1952; “Hughes, Rhodes and Saint Paul Open,” *Saint Paul Recorder*, July 24, 1953.

⁷⁰ Standing Committee on Playgrounds and Entertainment, MBPC, “Report 1,” n.d., in SCR-1952; “Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee, Official Report” and Exhibit 2, in SCR-1952.

⁷¹ University of Minnesota-Duluth press release, October 21, 1966, accessed July 29, 2022, <https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/196749>.

Henry was a new member of the park board, having joined as a representative of Northeast Minneapolis that year.⁷²

Haislet and Rosacker would become very visible in efforts to respond to the TCGC in the next months. Other members of the committee were Dr. Roy E. Peterson, Frank Wolinski, and Walter Quist. Together with Superintendent Doell and Howard Moore, they met on October 10 with three representatives from TCGC—Frederic Jones, Bert Davidson, and John Williams—and their two attorneys, L. Howard Bennett and Douglas Hall. Because community members knew the futility of trying, there was only “one known instance” when “an actual application made by a Negro golfer [had] been turned down by one of these clubs,” Haislet noted in a summary of the meeting. “What the [TCGC] really wanted was that some of their Negro golfers would be accepted in the membership of each of the five private clubs.” Also discussed at the meeting was the alternative of having Black players remain in TCGC, but with an affiliation to a course that would make the group eligible for membership in the State Golf Association and PGA tournaments.⁷³

By the end of the meeting, the TCGC had agreed to wait to take further action—such as filing a lawsuit—while the park board negotiated with the five private clubs. This would also give time to determine whether the State Golf Association would allow more than one club to be affiliated with a course and would accept TCGC as a member if it had that arrangement. Although “Haislet indicated that the Board would see to it that there would be no discrimination in the use of public golf courses by the public,” an account noted, the TCGC members left the meeting “somewhat skeptical that the Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee or the Board of Park Commissioners would sincerely try to resolve this problem.”⁷⁴

The committee quickly acted on its pledge, though, arranging a meeting on October 22 with presidents of the five golf clubs and managers of the city’s courses. After reading aloud the TCGC letter, Haislet stated that discrimination in park board facilities was not acceptable and that the clubs were “invited to this meeting with the hopes that they would recognize the problem, and . . . take the lead” in resolving it. The presidents explained how applicants for membership were vetted. Course managers, all on the park board’s payroll, described the “very close relationship” they had with the clubs: “In many cases they held some special position such as tournament or program director; . . . they spent a great deal of time working with the golf clubs; and . . . from time to time they extended special favors to the golf clubs.”⁷⁵

The committee asked the presidents to work with their clubs to grant “selective memberships to Negroes,” but the presidents were defiant. They asserted that the park board “had nothing to say about their affairs, as they were private clubs”; that any park board rules “couldn’t be enforced; and that there was very little that the Board of Park Commissioners could do about it.”

⁷² Finding aid for Hans Rosacker Company Collection, Hennepin History Museum, accessed August 1, 2022, https://hennepinhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/HHM_B620-Rosacker.pdf; Mark Peterson, “NE Park Athletic Field Fixes Underway,” *Northeaster Newspaper*, May 19, 2021, accessed August 1, 2022, <https://www.mynortheaster.com/news/ne-park-athletic-field-fixes-underway/>; “Minneapolis Resignations Are Reported,” *Fergus Falls Daily Journal*, July 3, 1973.

⁷³ Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee, MBPC, “Official Report,” in SCR-1952.

⁷⁴ Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee, MBPC, “Official Report,” in SCR-1952.

⁷⁵ Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee, MBPC, “Official Report,” in SCR-1952.

Nevertheless, the committee asked the clubs to “take the matter back to their organization for any remedial action that may be necessary and . . . report back to the Board prior to December 1.”⁷⁶

That deadline came and went with no response from the clubs. A week later, committee members met to consider the board’s options. The first was to encourage members of the TCGC to apply to the clubs. A committee report on the meeting acknowledged, though, that “obviously nothing was going to happen, and, therefore, such a plan couldn’t be lived with by the board unless the board were looking for a way out, which they weren’t.” The second option was recognizing the TCGC as the only club associated with a specific course, but the committee found this unacceptable because TCGC’s seventy-five members “could not support a single course alone” and if they “settled to play one course only, it means all other golf play would slowly drop away, with the result being financial bankruptcy” for the course. A third alternative was to have all clubs apply for a permit “to be given certain privileges” at a specific course such as dedicated starting times and use of the clubhouse.⁷⁷

Before imposing the third option, the committee gave the golf club presidents another chance to take the high road voluntarily and admit TCGC members to their organizations. It was a futile gesture. At a meeting on December 20, the committee called on the presidents one by one, and none budged. According to a park board summary of the meeting, each president maintained “the clubs would follow their regular membership procedures . . . (and it is doubtful anyway that any of the Negro members would be admitted).” Frank Jaffray, president of the Columbia Golf Club, was the only one to give a little ground, but it fell short of what the committee found acceptable. Jaffray indicated that his board “report[ed] no objections to having colored members so far as golf competition and play is concerned, but do not desire their social affiliation.”⁷⁸

It was only when the discussion appeared to reach a dead end that the committee raised the delicate subject of the clubs’ many nonresident members. Because the courses—and clubs—were supposed to primarily serve Minneapolitans, the residency issue was a subject where the committee felt it had leverage. This led to a “heated and vigorous discussion,” resulting in an agreement by the presidents to try again to convince their boards to accept Black members or, as an alternative, support giving the TCGC a home course. The committee made it clear that if the clubs fought both alternatives, the park board would overhaul its leasing process to prohibit clubs from discriminating. The park board followed up with a letter on January 7 summarizing the discussion, urging the clubs to take “some constructive action” before the next meeting with the committee, scheduled for January 24.⁷⁹

The presidents did take action, but it proved unproductive. They met with TCGC representatives on January 13—without inviting park board committee members or staff—and tried to convince the TCGC to apply for membership in the State Golf Association rather than seeking

⁷⁶ Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee, MBPC, “Official Report” and Exhibit 3, in SCR-1952.

⁷⁷ Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee, MBPC, “Official Report, in SCR-1952.

⁷⁸ Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee, MBPC, “Official Report” and Exhibit 5, in SCR-1952.

⁷⁹ Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee, MBPC, “Official Report” and Exhibit 6, in SCR-1952.

membership in the private clubs. The TCGC rejected this proposal twenty-two to two. As the park board committee had earlier learned, the majority wanted to join existing clubs.⁸⁰

When the park board committee resumed its process on January 24, the presidents reported on the results of their consultation with club members. Columbia, Gross, and Wirth would consider applications from TCGC members but, as Columbia's president Jaffray observed, "There was some chance that colored applications would not be accepted." Hiawatha and Meadowbrook reiterated their preference that TCGC maintain its own club. The meeting was adjourned.⁸¹

The committee issued a report with its conclusions to the board on March 5, 1952. The cover letter chronicled the series of meetings leading to its recommendations, "which [do] away with both special privilege and discrimination on municipal golf courses, and . . . over a period of time, will greatly encourage the use of our municipal golf courses by the public."⁸²

The committee called for the elimination of existing clubs, which represented less than 10 percent of the users of city courses, and replacing them with public clubs closely regulated by the park board. The proposed regulations stated that golf course names were the property of the board and could only be used by a golf club with the permission of the board. Municipal golf clubs were defined as "a group of golfers who are organized by mutual association or incorporation for the object of promoting public golf play and good sportsmanship among all classes of golf players, and who have applied for and received a permit from the Board." The park board would oversee the operation of the clubs, could inspect club records at any time, and was responsible for approving club "charter, by-laws, rules and regulations." It could review applications for membership that a club rejected and have the power to overrule the club's decision. At least 75 percent of club members had to live in Minneapolis.⁸³

Benefits to the clubs included permission to meet at clubhouses "during the normal business hours," with permission "granted . . . from time to time by the Superintendent for the free use of the clubhouse outside the hours of normal business." Clubs could hold one golf tournament a season on a Sunday under the oversight of the Director of Recreation. Tournaments were not otherwise allowed on Sundays but were encouraged on weekdays. Course managers were directed "to co-operate with all groups, associations, and other golf organizations without special privileges to any one group."⁸⁴

The board announced its intent to vote on the recommendations at its next meeting. In response, the club presidents fired off a letter on March 17 protesting many of the committee's recommendations. The group was particularly concerned about the degree of control over club operations and membership that the park board had proposed, claiming that the clubs would no longer be "manag[ing] their own affairs," a PGA requirement for affiliated organizations. As a

⁸⁰ Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee, MBPC, "Official Report" and Exhibit 8 (Fred Jones to Frank Jaffray, January 21, 1952), in SCR-1952.

⁸¹ Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee, MBPC, "Official Report" and Exhibit 7, in SCR-1952.

⁸² Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee, MBPC, "Official Report," in SCR-1952.

⁸³ Edward Wicklund, "Ban Private Golf Groups, City Urged," *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 6, 1952; Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee, MBPC, "Report 1," n.d., in SCR-1952.

⁸⁴ Playgrounds and Entertainment Committee, MBPC, "Report 1," in SCR-1952. Stanley A. Stenvig lived at 3954 Stevens Avenue South (Exhibit 6).

result, the clubs would “be effectively and forever barred from membership in the USGA, the Minnesota State Golf Association and State Public Links Association.” The presidents proposed that “instead of the members of the Twin City Golf Association trying to disrupt the present set-up of the private golf clubs playing on the public courses of Minneapolis, . . . the interests of the Twin City Golf Association would be much better served by that association making application for membership in the Minnesota State Golf Association, the USGA, or the State Public Links Association, particularly so as to their complaints with reference to inability to establish handicaps and participate in outside tournaments.” The group pledged to support TCGC’s applications to those organizations.⁸⁵

The presidents disingenuously claimed that “no privileges with reference to the services of the manager have been granted to the members of these clubs.” They acknowledged that club members “enjoyed the privilege of having starting time reserved for them on Sunday, but this special privilege was accorded to the members of these clubs only because of the increased play (and the resulting increased revenue) which resulted from the existence of these clubs.” They had a response, too, when it came to the pivotal issue of clubhouse use: “As to any special use of the clubhouse and its property, the same has been paid for by the clubs, as required by the rules of the Park Board.” In a closing flourish, they asserted that over the past thirty years, the clubs had “built up in the Twin Cities a public links association which is superior to that of any other city in the country and is considered a model of perfection.”⁸⁶

The opposing sides pressed their views at the park board’s March 19 meeting. Letters supporting the committee’s proposal were read from groups including the Governor’s Interracial Commission, the Minneapolis branch of the NAACP, and the Minneapolis Urban League. A letter from the club presidents, on the other hand, asserted that “club members themselves would be discriminated against by the committee plan.” With the elimination of the existing club system, “we predict there will be a decided slump and decrease in interest and play on the public courses.” The representative from the city council on the park board, Dale Stanchfield, clearly supported the latter group and urged the board to postpone action to allow time to hear from “all sides.” He claimed that “we might have some serious financial problems from any action we might take. . . . Some of these people form the nucleus of our business.”⁸⁷

When it became apparent that the board would not vote on the recommendations at the meeting, Haislet walked out in frustration. Rosacker made a motion committing the board to vote on the matter at its April 2 meeting. He told the other board members: “If you haven’t got the guts, stay home.” The motion passed.⁸⁸

The division within the board forced the committee to drop nearly all its recommendations. What remained was consensus among the board to terminate existing club leases but replace them with permits that were unconditional except for a clause prohibiting discrimination.

⁸⁵ Representatives of Columbia, Gross, Hiawatha, Meadowbrook, and Wirth Golf Clubs to Howard Moore, secretary, Board of Park Commissioners, letter, March 17, 1952, in SCR-1952.

⁸⁶ Representatives of Columbia, Gross, Hiawatha, Meadowbrook, and Wirth Golf Clubs to Howard Moore, in SCR-1952.

⁸⁷ Edward Wicklund, “Action Delayed on Private Golf Clubs Ban over Bias,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 20, 1952.

⁸⁸ Wicklund, “Action Delayed.”

Enforcement of the clause was toothless. To comply, clubs simply had to annually submit “a written statement . . . confirming . . . that your Articles, By-laws, or other governing rules do not deny memberships in your organization to anyone because of race, creed, color or national origin.” To ensure that the club presidents concurred with the approach, Haislet convened a meeting in his office on March 29 with representatives from the clubs holding leases and the TCGC. Each signed a statement confirming that the policy “has our full approval.”⁸⁹

The board unanimously adopted the compromise policy at its April 2 meeting and issued permits for two clubs, Hiawatha and TCGC, which had provided statements that conformed with the new requirements. Representatives from the clubs at Columbia, Gross, Meadowbrook, and Wirth, who claimed they had not known the statements would be required that day, were granted provisional permits pending their submittal of the written statement. The golf course clubs would continue their relationships with their namesake courses while the TCGC remained without an official affiliation.⁹⁰

At the same meeting, the park board committed to “lend[ing] our full support and effort in obtaining . . . benefits for the TCGA” including membership in the State Golf Association and Public Links Association and eligibility to participate in championships these groups offered; eligibility for the Senior Public Links Championship; “recognized handicaps permitting participation for prizes where ‘net’ scores are used in events”; and invitations to public course club tournaments at Columbia, Gross, Wirth, and the Hiawatha Open in Minneapolis; Keller, Highland and Como in Saint Paul; and Nemadji in Superior, Wisconsin.⁹¹

The pledge also included trying to get a voting membership for TCGC on the board of the Public Golf Association of Minnesota (PGAM) and allowing five representatives from TCGC at PGAM meetings per PGAM bylaws, which were adopted when the group was established in 1923 and revised in 1938. Only members of clubs that were members of the PGAM could participate in the PGAM’s annual tournament “for the championship of the state.” Arrangements for this had apparently been made in advance of the board’s April 2 meeting. The TCGC was officially accepted as a member of PGAM the next day.⁹²

The weakness of allowing self-enforcement by the clubs to combat discrimination in their membership was obvious. An article in the *Minneapolis Tribune* observed, “This action by the park board does not actually require any of the private clubs to accept Negro members. The clubs presumably still could ‘black-ball’ Negroes and others in a membership committee as in the past.”⁹³ When the reporter asked Frederic Jones, TCGC’s president, “if he was pleased with the compromise, he said: ‘In a degree, yes. For the best interests of the community, I feel the compromise is quite proper at this time.’” The Urban League’s Shelton Granger was blunter:

⁸⁹ Standing Committee on Recreation, MBPC, “Report Re: Operation of Municipal Golf Clubs upon the Municipal Golf Courses,” April 2, 1952, in SCR-1952.

⁹⁰ Letters from Secretary, Board of Park Commissioners, to Frank Jaffray (Columbia), Charles Hill (Gross), Stan Stenvig (Hiawatha), Steven Critelli (Wirth), and Frederic D. Jones (Twin City Golf Club), April 4, 1952, in SCR-1952.

⁹¹ Standing Committee on Playgrounds and Entertainment, MBPC, “Report 2,” n.d., in SCR-1952.

⁹² By-laws of Public Golf Association of Minnesota, 1923, updated 1938, in SCR-1952; “Golfers Vote Negroes to Membership,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 4, 1952.

⁹³ “City Golf Clubs Agree to End Ban on Negroes,” *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, April 3, 1952.

“This action recognizes a system of voluntary segregation and gives it support by allowing it to continue.”⁹⁴

Many other organizations had endorsed the committee’s original recommendations including the Minnesota Council of Churches, Evangelical United Brethren Church, Minnesota Jewish Council, Lake Harriet Methodist Church, NAACP, and Minnesota Christian Missionary Society. After the April 2 vote, a representative of the Minneapolis Council of Churches was “disappointed” with the compromise, reflecting the general reaction of these group. “We are going to watch closely to see if there is unfairness in enforcing this resolution.”⁹⁵ They did not have to look too hard to see that little had changed. As the years went by, the clubs dutifully submitted their statements of nondiscrimination, but no Black golfers appeared in their membership rosters.

Some Progress, at Long Last

While the turmoil of 1951 and 1952 had little systemic effect, there were two major breakthroughs, both associated with Hiawatha. The first was possible because the TCGC had gained membership in the PGAM in April. As a result, Black golfers were allowed for the first time to compete in the local qualifying event, played at Hiawatha in June 1952, for the National Public Links tournament. Thirteen members of the TCGC competed and two of them placed, including Fern Hughes, brother of Solomon Hughes.⁹⁶

The second breakthrough was the integration of the Hiawatha clubhouse. At the same time Solomon Hughes was breaking down the entry barrier at the Saint Paul Open, he and Fern “worked quietly” to give Black players access to the clubhouse, according to their sister, Bessie. After Hughes first came to Minneapolis in 1943, Hiawatha became his home. His son Solomon Hughes Jr. remembers his father walking the golf course even on the days he did not play. It was a special place to him. Before 1952, his wife would pack him sandwiches with Kool-Aid because he could not enter the clubhouse to purchase food, drinks, or use the restroom. He was always sharply dressed and “respected the rules of the game.” His son said, “I think my dad believed the clubhouse was sacred to the game. He had proved himself in terms of his golf scores as a pro, so you couldn’t deny his ability just because he was Black. He was a pro golfer – period – and the clubhouse was the line in the sand.”⁹⁷ With little fanfare, Hughes integrated the Hiawatha clubhouse in the summer of 1952. Hiawatha was the first clubhouse in the city to be integrated. The TCGC already held many events at the Hiawatha course. After members could use the clubhouse, they became even more closely tied to the location.⁹⁸

It is not clear if the clubhouse’s integration or the Hiawatha club’s continuing practice of discrimination made some waves for the club in the mid-1950s, or if there was another reason why the major sponsor of the Hiawatha Open stopped its support. In any event, the club ran the

⁹⁴ “City Golf Clubs Agree to End Ban on Negroes.”

⁹⁵ MBPC, Proceedings, April 2, 1952, 67, in MPRB/HCL-SC; “City Golf Clubs Agree to End Ban on Negroes.”

⁹⁶ “Public Links Tourney Tops for the Nation,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, June 1, 1952; and “Eight City Stars Win Spots in US Publincs Trials,” *Minneapolis Star*, June 16, 1952.

⁹⁷ Solomon Hughes Jr., discussion with Katie Randall, Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 22, 2022.

⁹⁸ Jones, “Caucasians Only,” 385.

1956 tournament without a sponsor and lost money. The club concluded that entry fees were insufficient to cover costs and canceled the 1957 open.⁹⁹

That year, the Bronze tournament was wildly successful when Joe Louis signed up to play. He not only drew an even larger crowd than usual to Wirth but won, proving that he was a champion on the greens as well as in the ring. Ted Rhodes was part of Louis's entourage but, as a professional, could not participate in the tournament.¹⁰⁰

The Hiawatha Golf Club later resumed its open tournament but continued, along with the other clubs associated with municipal golf courses in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, to prohibit Blacks from joining. The matter came to a head after a Black golfer moved to the Twin Cities in 1965 from an Eastern city where he was a member of a private club at a public course. "When he found he could not become a member of a private club here except the all-Negro Twin City Golf Club, based tenuously at the Hiawatha course," the *Spokesman* reported, "he protested" to the State Commission Against Discrimination (SCAD).

SCAD apparently began investigating the issue later that year and decided to go after the discriminatory system rather than just one particular incident with full cooperation from the park board. SCAD found that "one predominantly Negro club [namely, TCGC] uses the facilities at Hiawatha, but this club does not take part in the city-wide tournaments." In March 1966, the agency sent letters to the five Minneapolis courses requesting reports on their progress in "correct[ing] membership procedures that have resulted in the total exclusion of Negroes from participation in this part of the Park Board's recreation program." The letters were "timed . . . to coincide with the clubs' first meetings of the year, at which preliminary steps at compliance with the state's anti-discrimination laws were expected."¹⁰¹

The first advance came not for the man who filed the SCAD complaint but for James (Jimmy) W. Bowman, who became the first Black member of the Hiawatha Golf Club in May 1966. It was front-page news in the *Spokesman*, which reported that Bowman was "an avid golfer and finds time almost every day to tee off." He was president of the TCGC at the time. He had graduated from Fisk University, where he lettered in football and basketball. Many whites were familiar with Bowman, a "well-known singer-pianist and orchestra leader," which undoubtedly facilitated his acceptance by the club.¹⁰² His son recalls he was often invited to play private white golf clubs in the area because of his celebrity status.¹⁰³

In August, the Gross Golf Club gained a Black member, Fred A. Strains, Jr., after he filed a complaint with SCAD, perhaps the action that touched off SCAD's investigation into the golf clubs. As part of the settlement negotiated by the commission, the club agreed to eliminate the requirement that applicants must have two sponsors, develop written criteria for membership and

⁹⁹ Carlson, "Hiawatha Open 'Too Expensive.'"

¹⁰⁰ Reusse, "Bronze Age Far from Over."

¹⁰¹ "Private Golf Clubs on Public Courses Asked for Progress Reports," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, March 10, 1966.

¹⁰² "Hiawatha Golf Club Admits James W. Bowman as Member," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, May 5, 1966; "Gross Golf Club Admits Negro to Full Membership," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, September 1, 1966.

¹⁰³ James Bowman Jr., in discussion with Katie Randall, Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 20, 2022.

to apply these without prejudice, and allow acceptance of an application by a majority rather than a unanimous vote of the board.¹⁰⁴

SCAD also went after Saint Paul in 1966, meeting with staff of the parks department and representatives of the golf clubs associated with the city's courses on March 26. "The meeting was an attempt to apprise the clubs of the law and prevent future difficulties," the *Spokesman* reported. SCAD asked the clubs to eliminate the requirement that applicants must be sponsored by a current member, develop written criteria for membership and to apply these without prejudice, and allow acceptance of an application by a majority rather than a unanimous vote of the board, giving a deadline of April 20 for compliance. That summer, Jimmy Lee and Duke Coram became members of the Phalen Park club.¹⁰⁵

Then progress virtually stopped. In 1968, Slemmons reported that "there are still only five Negro members of clubs located on ten public courses in the Twin Cities." Black golfers were undaunted, continuing to push for acceptance in clubs and tournaments. In 1973, TCGC member Bob Shelton was the first Black golfer to win the Como Invitational tournament, which drew more than three hundred golfers.¹⁰⁶

A New Home for the Bronze

Slemmons sent out silver brochures announcing dates for the twenty-fifty anniversary of the Bronze in 1967. The *Minneapolis Spokesman* reported that it "will be held as usual at the Theodore Wirth Golf Course" and also, "as usual, there will be a women's flight and a junior golfer classification" in addition to the thirty-six-hole men's competition. This proved to be the last year that the Bronze would be at Wirth, which was "rated one of the toughest to par in the area" and "has three of the longest par four holes in the state."¹⁰⁷

By the late 1950s, more than half of the tournament's participants were over forty years old, the *Spokesman* reported, and Slemmons "decided to change from the Theodore Wirth Course where it has been 24 out of 25 years in recognition that the hills on that course were taking their toll on the older golfers." The 1968 tournament on July 27-28 found a new home at the Hiawatha Golf Course and drew 276 golfers from around the Midwest. The *Spokesman* described the tournament as "usually the biggest public sports and social event of the summer participated in by folks from all walks of life." Registration was at the Pick-Nicollet Hotel, where a cocktail party and dance were held on Saturday night. Similar arrangements were made for the twenty-seventh tournament in 1969, when a color television was one of the top prizes. Among the entrants in 1969 was newly elected Minneapolis mayor Charles Stenvig, "known as a good amateur golfer," who played again in 1971 and 1973.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ "Gross Golf Club Admits Negro to Full Membership."

¹⁰⁵ "Saint Paul Private Golf Clubs Using Public Courses, Clubhouses Asked to Give Up Membership Racial Ban," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, March 21, 1966; "Gross Golf Club Admits Negro to Full Membership."

¹⁰⁶ Wilkins, "Jimmie [sic] Slemmons"; "Bob Shelton Was First Black to Win Como Invitational," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 9, 1973.

¹⁰⁷ "Silver Anniversary of Bronze Amateur Golf Meet July 28-30," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, June 29, 1967; Jim Williams, "Cal Tanner, Ann Gregory '59 Golf Champs," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 17, 1959.

¹⁰⁸ "Upper Midwest Golf Tourney at Hiawatha on July 27 and 28" and "Shake Hands over Golf Tourney Prize," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 4, 1968; "First Out of Town Entrant in Bronze Amateur," *Minneapolis Spokesman*,

The Bronze thrived at Hiawatha (see Figure 12). The twenty-eighth tournament in 1970 attracted a record 330 golfers. The *Spokesman* reported that the 1971 Bronze “was considered one of the best run events in years according to golf enthusiasts who have played and followed the tourney since its origin twenty-nine years ago.” A dramatic sudden-death playoff closed the 1972 Bronze, which attracted 341 golfers. The finalists were Al King of Kansas City, Missouri, and Johnny Wiggins of Chicago. Both were Black. Slemmons joked, “I had to go out of town to get the talent to win this title back from the white guys who’ve dominated it the last five years.” The women’s title was claimed by a Minneapolis contestant, Karen Eide.¹⁰⁹

More than 250 golfers signed up for the 1973 event, which was won by Minneapolitan Mel Harris. He repeated that feat in 1974 when the Bronze drew 273. A nineteen-year-old Coloradan, Tom Woodard, won the thirty-third Bronze in 1975. Patty Weisbrich, the women’s champion in 1973 and 1974, came out on top again. Woodard repeated his victory at the 1977 Bronze, beating out more than three hundred entrants.¹¹⁰

One contestant in the 1977 Bronze tournament was Dan Anderson Jr., a TCGC member who had moved to Minnesota from Texas a year earlier after visiting the state to participate in a charity golf tournament. Anderson was one of nine golfers representing Minnesota at the National Public Links golf tournament in 1977, and the first Black player to do so. Regional qualifying rounds for the team were played at Hiawatha, by this time universally acknowledged as TCGC’s home course.¹¹¹

The Bronze tournament was often promoted in the *Spokesman* and *Recorder*. A typical advertisement from 1977 announced the thirty-fifth annual tournament on July 30-31 and promised \$3,500 in prizes and trophies, with “Everyone Welcome!” The 36-hole event was “sponsored by Jimmy Slemmons, Mayor of Bronzeville.”¹¹²

The Bronze mourned the loss of its mayor when Slemmons passed away in 1983 at the age of seventy-one. A profile in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* the day after his funeral reported he once said he hoped to “live to see the day when I can play some of those beautiful courses that have

July 18, 1968; “Bill Bakken’s 146 Wins Bronze Golf 36 Hole Tourney,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 1, 1968; untitled caption for photograph of Slemmons with television, *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 3, 1969; untitled caption of winners and Mayor Stenvig, *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 5, 1971; “Bronze Open Draws 350 for Thirty-first Annual Meet,” *Minneapolis Star*, July 27, 1973.

¹⁰⁹ “1970 Bronze Golf Tourney Flight Scores”; “Bloomington’s Steve How Wins Twenty-ninth Bronze Tourney,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 6, 1971; “K. C. Golfer Takes Bronze in Playoff,” *Minneapolis Star*, July 24, 1972; “Bronze Open Draws 350 for Thirty-first Annual Meet,” *Minneapolis Star*, July 27, 1973.

¹¹⁰ “Mel Harris, Patty Weisbrich Win Bronze Amateur Golf Tourney,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 2, 1973; “Mel Harris Repeats, Wins Second Bronze,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 1, 1974; “Tom Woodard Wins 1975 Bronze Golf Tourney with 142,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 24, 1975; “Denver’s Tom Woodard Wins Thirty-fifth Annual Bronze Golf Tourney,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, August 4, 1977.

¹¹¹ “Local Black Golfer Scores Historic First,” *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 7, 1977; Gary Libman, “Area Golfer Breaks Barrier after Barrier,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 30, 1977.

¹¹² Advertisement for Thirty-sixth Annual Bronze Amateur Golf Tournament, *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 27, 1978.

been closed to me for so long . . . but it's sure taking a long time." In his later years, he got his wish.¹¹³

By the late twentieth century, though, the Bronze and golf in general were losing momentum. During the forty-eighth Bronze in 1990, sportswriter Patrick Reusse interviewed longtime participants who described changes to the tournament over time, including a drop in participation from a peak of 356 golfers. "Can you imagine trying to get that many players off the tee in a day?" asked Thad Nicklaus, an organizer of the 1990 event. "We had guys finishing in the dark." In 1990, registration was capped at 144.¹¹⁴

The decline was due to a number of factors including less interest in golf by youth, rising costs to play, and attrition as older golfers left the sport. It was reflected in the membership of TCGC, which dropped to about thirty by 1990, down from eighty "a few years ago," according to a member. By the early twenty-first century, a National Golf Foundation survey found that "only two percent of children age 12-17 try golf" and "only five percent of the nation's golfers are minorities."¹¹⁵

Efforts to counteract the slide began in the 1990s. The Fairway Foundation, established in 1993, collaborated with the YMCA to introduce children as young as six to golf, providing equipment and instruction. The Minneapolis park board later started the First Tee program, with its initial sites at Hiawatha and Columbia. The Minnesota Minority Junior Golf Association helped train and place aspiring golfers as caddies, giving them an opportunity for income and free golf games.¹¹⁶

The Hiawatha Golf Club finally came to its end in 1997, involuntarily dissolved by Minnesota's Secretary of State for failing to file an annual registration. The Bronze tournament, on the other hand, continues. In 2005, it became known as the Upper Midwest Bronze Amateur Memorial in honor of Jimmy Slemmons and has been run by a nonprofit, the Bronze Foundation, since 2008.¹¹⁷

Into the Twenty-first Century

The Negro Open and Bronze tournaments have played an important role in the local Black community since the event began in 1939. Ted Allen, one of its initial sponsors, recalled, "It wasn't easy for a minority person to play the public courses then. . . . They made you uncomfortable when you showed up to play. They made you wait and wait to tee off."¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Doug Grow, "Jimmy Slemmons Said His Own Nice Things in Life," *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, April 30, 1983.

¹¹⁴ Reusse, "Bronze Age Far from Over."

¹¹⁵ Reusse, "Bronze Age Far from Over"; Mark Craig, "Programmed to Succeed," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, April 26, 2002.

¹¹⁶ Craig, "Programmed to Succeed."

¹¹⁷ "Certificate of Involuntary Dissolution, Hiawatha Golf Club," December 31, 1997, Minnesota Secretary of State, Saint Paul.

¹¹⁸ Reusse, "Bronze Age Far from Over."

Hiawatha's importance to Black golfers was underscored by a 1999 visit from 23-year-old Tiger Woods and his father, Earl, as part of a five-stop Junior Golf Clinic tour for the Tiger Woods Foundation. He "gave tips to 24 lucky golfers who were selected for lessons by their youth programs," an Associated Press article explained. "Another 100 received lessons from other instructors, and 1,000 kids and parents were part of a pep rally in a makeshift amphitheater at Hiawatha Golf Course."¹¹⁹

The significance of the Hiawatha course is reinforced today by the regular Tuesday morning gathering of the ONGL—the Old Negro Golf League. This informal group started around 1990 and continues to maintain a 10:00 tee time all season. As an article on the group in 2006 explained, "They are almost all retired—a former 3M employee, a railroad worker, teacher, boy scout executive and Northwest pilot, . . . a member of a board which aims to help African-Americans and women get into law enforcement, and a member of the human rights commission in New Hope." Member Woody Fountain "likened this group to a fraternity. . . . We're very close for guys who are so different." Bob Shelton, who turned seventy-three that year and met the difficult challenge of shooting his age on the course, said "I always look forward to Tuesdays, with the friendship and camaraderie." He remains a stalwart part of the ONGL sixteen years later. In a recent interview just days from his eighty-ninth birthday, he reflected, "This is it for me – Hiawatha Golf Course. I like it here because I am treated very well – well respected – and I appreciate that very much."¹²⁰ After they finish playing on Tuesday mornings, the group gathers in a corner of the Hiawatha parking lot "to commiserate about the round over some beverages." Fountain described the scene: "We all gather in the parking lot up there, and it's just a big social gathering. We catch up, and I don't know if we could do that anywhere else."¹²¹ Fountain added that he had been a member of a private golf club in a nearby suburb where he was one of just a few Black members. He eventually left and commented how different it is to play someplace where thirty to forty Black golfers come together every week for a round. In some ways, this harkens back to the days when they were prohibited from entering the clubhouse. Now, though, it is a choice, thanks to the battles won at Hiawatha in the 1950s and 1960s.¹²²

¹¹⁹ "Woods Into the Inner-City," Associated Press article on ESPN Network, August 1, 1999, accessed August 1, 2022, <https://www.espn.com/golfonline/woodson/woodscity.html>.

¹²⁰ Robert Shelton, in discussion with Katie Randall, Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 21, 2022.

¹²¹ Woodson "Woody" Fountain, discussion with Katie Randall, Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 14, 2022.

¹²² Michael Rand, "Tuesdays Are Special for These Golfers," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, September 20, 2006.

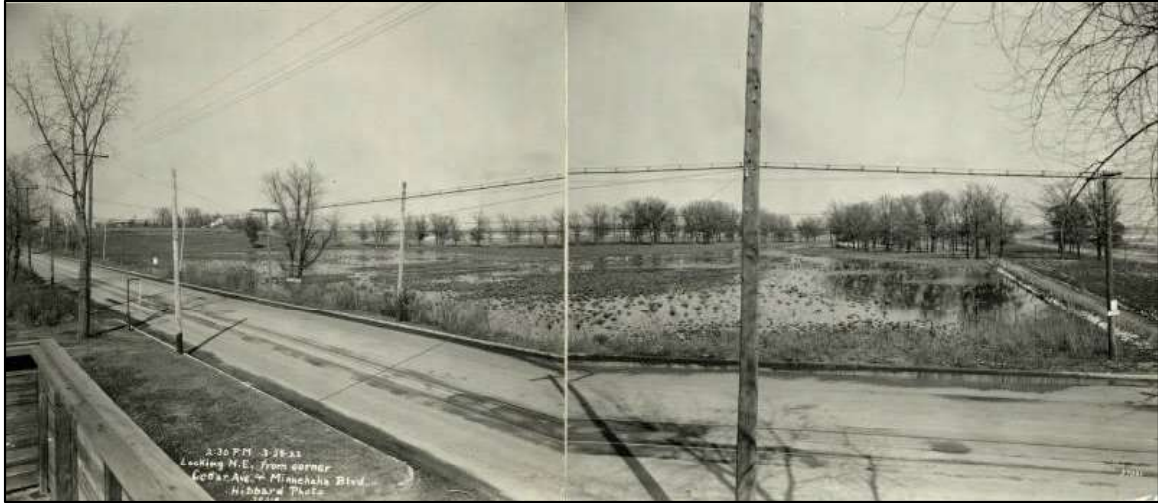


Figure 1: Rice Lake, looking northeast from Cedar Avenue and Minnehaha Parkway, March 22, 1922



Figure 3: Aerial view of Lake Hiawatha Park, c. 1920s

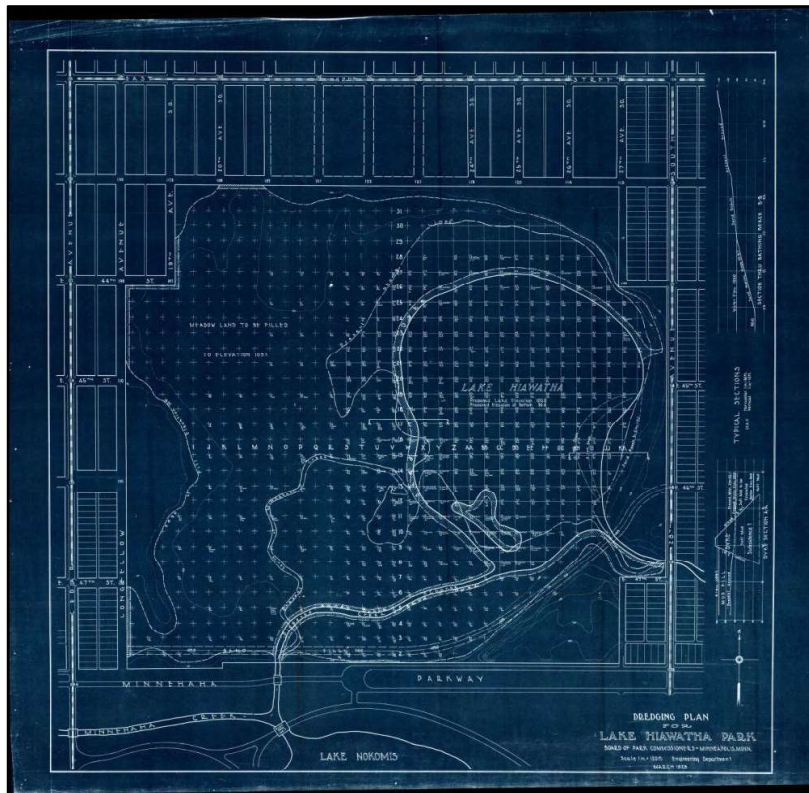


Figure 4: Dredging plan for Lake Hiawatha Park, 1925, Hennepin County Library Special Collections

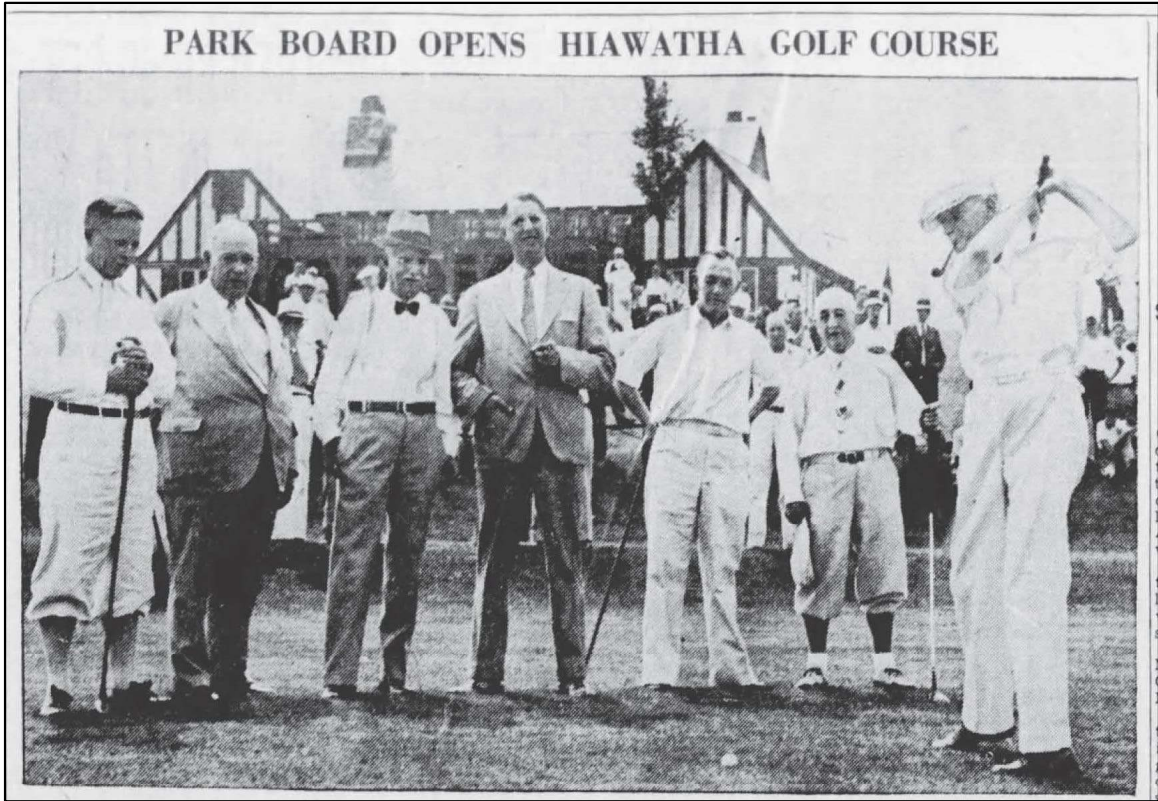


Figure 5: Park board commissioners in front of the clubhouse on opening day, *Star Tribune*, July 31, 1934

Hiawatha's first nine is 3,249 yards in length and has a par of 36. The holes shape up as follows :

No. 1—416 yards, par 4.
No. 2—521 yards, par 5.
No. 3—119 yards, par 3.
No. 4—325 yards, par 4.
No. 5—396 yards, par 4.
No. 6—331 yards, par 4.
No. 7—531 yards, par 5.
No. 8—188 yards, par 3.
No. 9—422 yards, par 4.

* * *

Figure 6: Opening yardage reveals little change to yardage since the course opened in 1934, *Minneapolis Star*, July 27, 1934



Figure 7: Hiawatha golf course in 1934, Minnesota Historical Society



Figure 8: Hiawatha clubhouse in 1934, Minnesota Historical Society

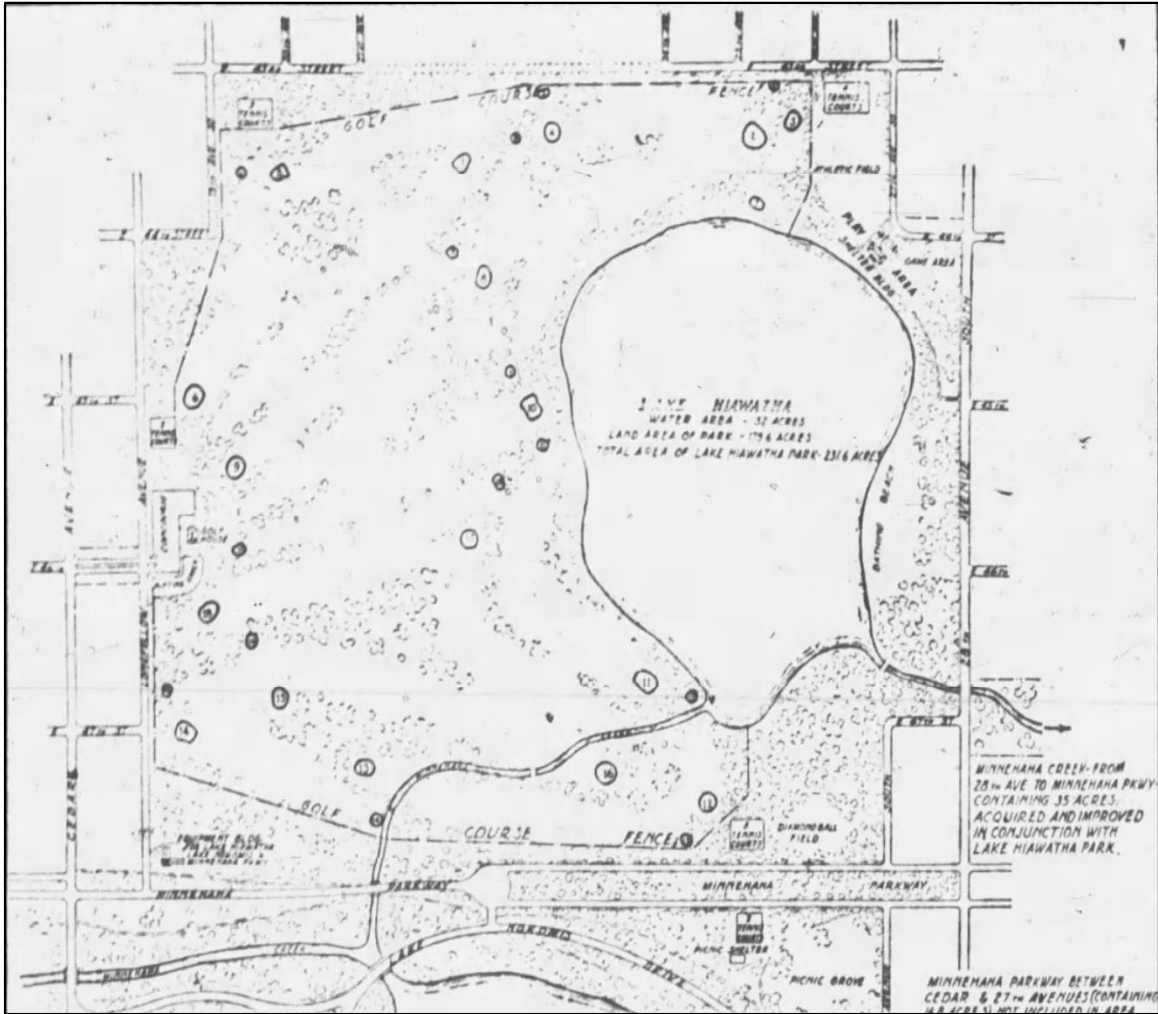


Figure 9: 1934 map of Lake Hiawatha Park displays original routing and fence location in its extant location, *Minneapolis Journal*, January 21, 1934



Figure 10: Black golfers in 1934, Rosella Ellis in the foreground and Jimmie Slemmons second from the left, Minnesota Historical Society



Figure 11: Annual Minnesota Negro Open Golf Tournament, c. 1950, Minnesota Historical Society

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36 HOLES . . . MEDAL PLAY

Everyone Welcome!

Figure 12: Advertisement for the Thirty-fifth Bronze Amateur Golf Tournament in 1977, *Minneapolis Spokesman*

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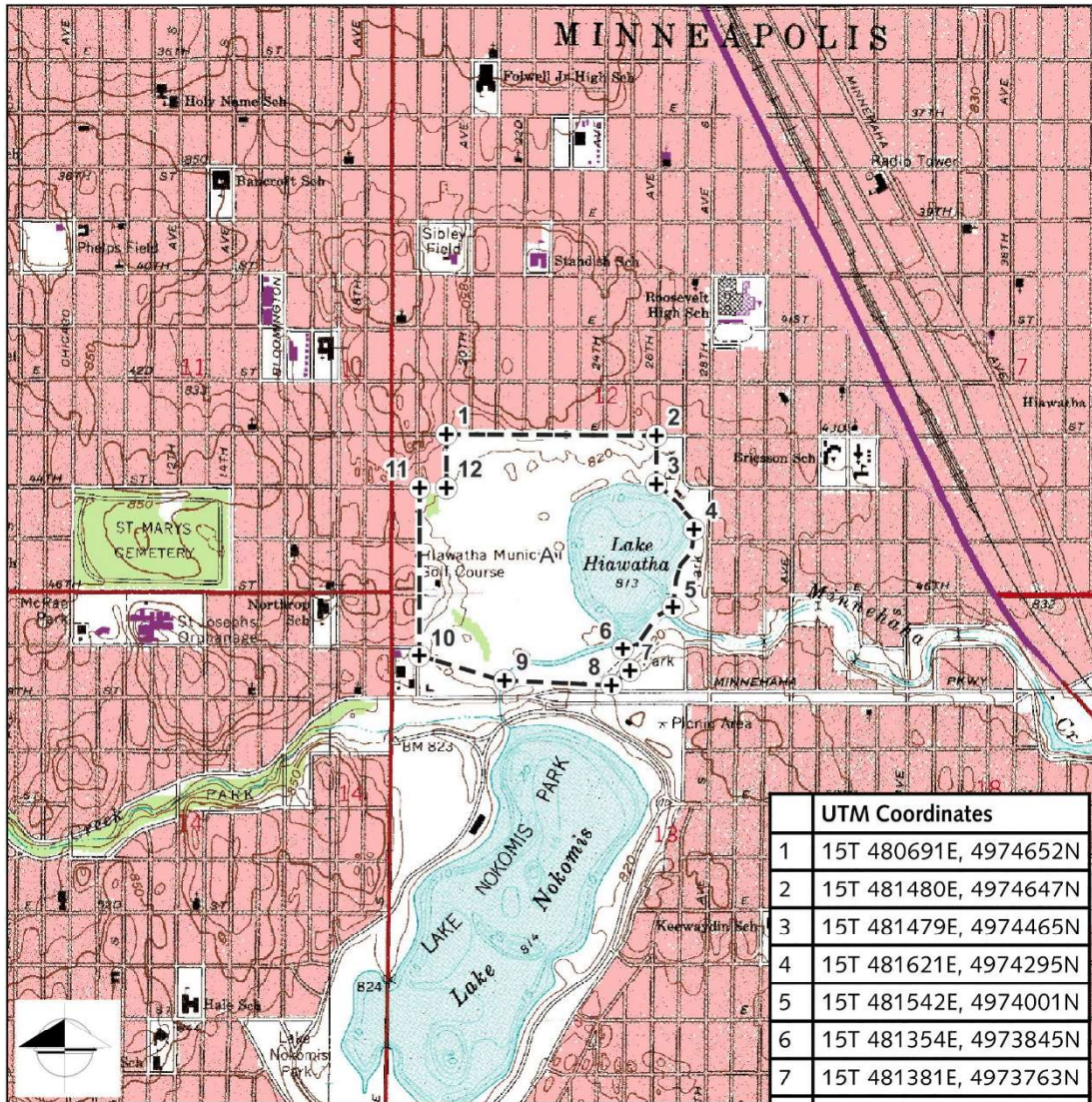
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Unpublished sources:

Interviews with the following individuals were conducted by Katie Randall, July 11-August 1, 2022, Minneapolis, Minnesota:

Bowman, James, Jr.
Brady, Levi
Davis, Harry
Fountain, Woodson “Woody”
Hughes, Solomon, Jr.
Lange, LaJune
Rowell, Alex
Shelton, Robert
Withers, Eddie



0 1,000 2,000 3,000 ft Minneapolis South USGS 7.5' Quadrangle

 Property Boundary

UTM Coordinates	
1	15T 480691E, 4974652N
2	15T 481480E, 4974647N
3	15T 481479E, 4974465N
4	15T 481621E, 4974295N
5	15T 481542E, 4974001N
6	15T 481354E, 4973845N
7	15T 481381E, 4973763N
8	15T 481311E, 4973709N
9	15T 480910E, 4973727N
10	15T 480589E, 4973819N
11	15T 480591E, 4974452N
12	15T 480691E, 4974451N

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: 15T	Easting: 480691	Northing: 4974652
2. Zone: 15T	Easting: 481480	Northing: 4974647
3. Zone: 15T	Easting: 481479	Northing: 4974465
4. Zone: 15T	Easting: 481621	Northing: 4974295
5. Zone: 15T	Easting: 481621	Northing: 4974001
6. Zone: 15T	Easting: 481354	Northing: 4973845
7. Zone: 15T	Easting: 481381	Northing: 4973763
8. Zone: 15T	Easting: 481311	Northing: 4973709
9. Zone: 15T	Easting: 480910	Northing: 4973727
10. Zone: 15T	Easting: 480589	Northing: 4973819
11. Zone: 15T	Easting: 480591	Northing: 4974452
12. Zone: 15T	Easting: 480691	Northing: 4974451

Photo Log:

Name of Property: Hiawatha Golf Course and Clubhouse

City or Vicinity: Minneapolis

County: Hennepin **State:** Minnesota

Photographer: Katie Randall

Date Photographed: June 8, 2022

Photo 1 of 28: Golf course, hole 1 green protected by an organically shaped bunker, facing south.

Photo 2 of 28: Golf course, holes 2 through 4, facing north.

Photo 3 of 28: Golf course; hole 4 reveals pipe landform, fence to the right, and park furniture to the left; facing west.

Photo 4 of 28: Golf course, hole 6 is a slight dogleg right around a pond with the clubhouse in the distance, facing southwest.

Photo 5 of 28: Golf course, drainage pipe beneath fairway 7, facing north.

Photo 6 of 28: Golf course, looking down the treelined tenth fairway, facing east.

Photo 7 of 28: Golf course, view of the Learning Center from the back nine, facing southwest.

Photo 8 of 28: Golf course, roadway next to Lake Hiawatha, facing west.

Photo 9 of 28: Golf course, view from the golf course near hole 12 of the Lake Hiawatha Recreation Center, looking northeast.

Photo 10 of 28: Golf course, hole 12 green and bridge 4 cross Minnehaha Creek, looking southeast.

Photo 11 of 28: Golf course, view of the golf course from hole 13, facing northwest.

Photo 12 of 28: Golf course, bridge 3, facing south.

Photo 13 of 28: Golf course, bridge 2, facing southeast.

Photo 14 of 28: Golf course, bridge 1, facing north.

Photo 15 of 28: Golf course, elevated tee at hole 14, facing west.

Photo 16 of 28: Golf course, discontinuous cart path and park furniture near hole 15, looking north.

Photo 17 of 28: Golf course, flat fairways overlooking Lake Hiawatha, facing northeast.

Photo 18 of 28: Clubhouse exterior, west elevation, facing east.

Photo 19 of 28: Clubhouse exterior, west elevation main entry, facing southeast.

Photo 20 of 28: Clubhouse exterior, south elevation, facing north/northeast.

Photo 21 of 28: Clubhouse exterior, east elevation, facing west.

Photo 22 of 28: Clubhouse exterior, north elevation, facing south/southwest.

Photo 23 of 28: Clubhouse exterior, northwest elevation, facing southeast.

Photo 24 of 28: Clubhouse interior; lounge features custom chandeliers, exposed trusses, and limestone fireplace; facing west.

Photo 25 of 28: Clubhouse interior, men's restroom, facing west.

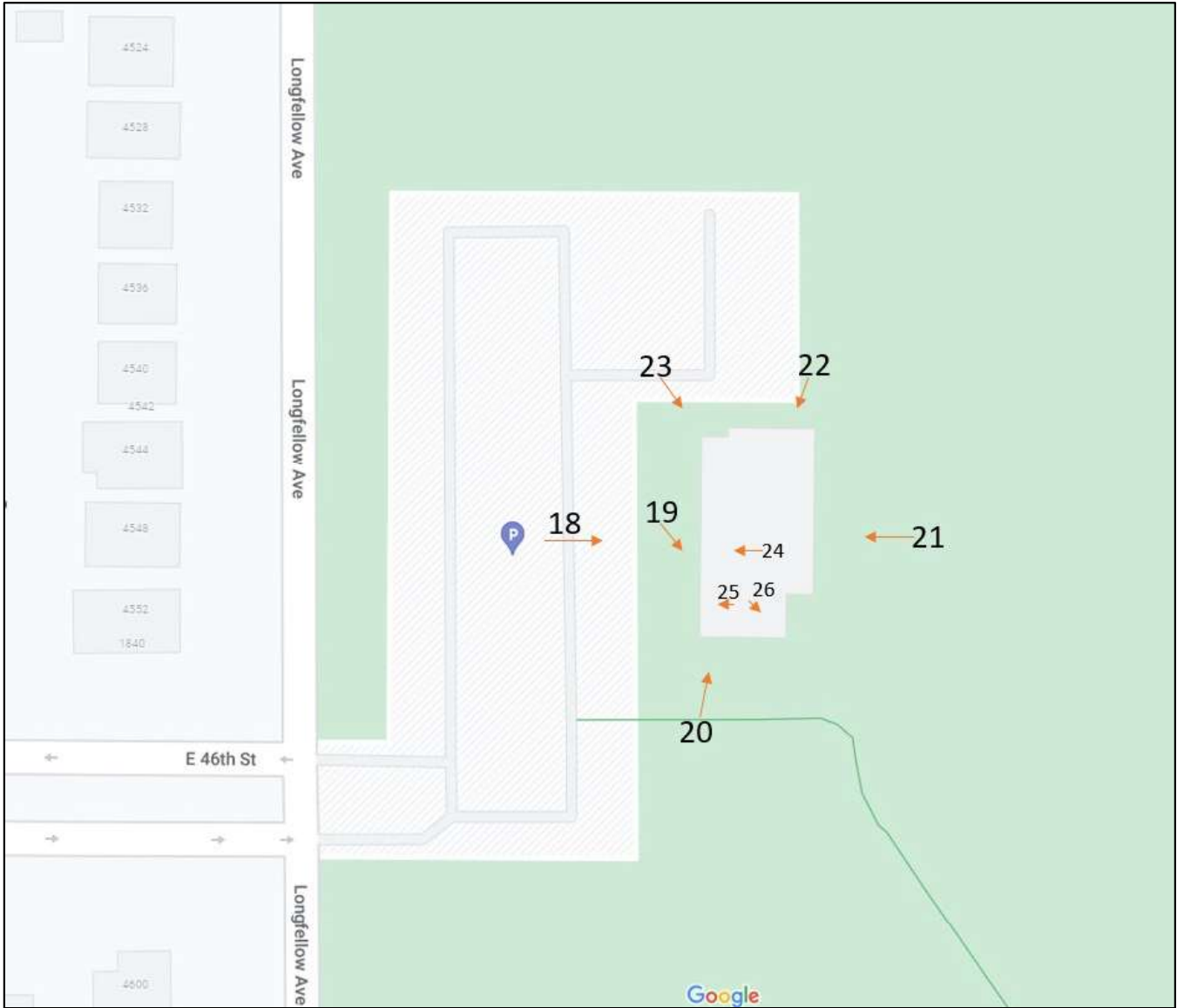
Photo 26 of 28: Clubhouse interior, men's locker room, facing southeast.

Photo 27 of 28: Learning Center, tees and driving range, facing north.

Photo 28 of 28: Learning Center, golf ball vending machine shed, facing south.



Golf course photo key



Clubhouse photo key

Appendix: Hiawatha Golf Course Memorials

This list was compiled by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and updated by SaveHiawatha18.com in 2020.

ID: 1

Name: Erling Furness

Hole#: South of entrance to the golf course

Inscription: In Memory of Erling Furness

Type of Memorial: Tree

Notes: South Minneapolis resident for his whole life. Played many courses but loved Hiawatha the best. Memorial given by friends.

ID: 2

Name: Don U Nelson

Hole #: 1 - Right side of tee box

Inscription: In Memory of Don U. Nelson

Type of Memorial: Tree

Notes: Donald U Nelson was the manager at Hiawatha Golf Course from 1934 to 1971 and the memorial was given by his wife.

ID: 3

Name: Ed Solomon

Hole #: 1 - Right side of tee box

Inscription: In Memory of Ed Solomon

Type of Memorial: Tree

Notes: Black Park Board Commissioner, possibly the first one. Solomon Park in South Minneapolis was named for him in 2004. Solomon was a park commissioner from 1996 until his death in 2002. Solomon served as president of the park board 2000-2001. Prior to his appointment to the park board to fill a vacancy (he subsequently was elected), Solomon was active for many years as a volunteer and football coach at McRae Park. He served as president of the McRae Park Athletic Council for 15 years.

ID:4

Name: Fred Wilde

Hole#: Between #2 green and #4 tee

Inscription: In Memory of Fred Wilde

Type of Memorial: Tree

Notes: Fred and his family lived on 37th Street and 19th Avenue for 46 years and played many rounds of golf at Hiawatha. The family has had many great memories playing golf at Hiawatha.

ID: 5

Name: John E. Drieman

Hole#: Between #2 green and #4 tee

Inscription: Sienna Maple in Memory of John E. Drieman Type of Memorial: Tree

Notes:

ID: 6& 7

Name: Sydney Louise Romsaas

Name: Susan Rose Romsaas

Hole #: 3 tee box

Inscription:

Type of Memorial: Tree

Notes: Given by Reid Romsaas, a lifelong resident of the Lake Hiawatha neighborhood and lifetime golfer at Hiawatha Golf Course, in memory of his 2 daughters that died young. Over the years at Hiawatha Reid has caddied, worked in the clubhouse, served as President of the Golf Club, coordinated Junior Golf in conjunction with the Minnesota Golf Association, coached High School golf, received the club's Sportsmanship Award and have won both the Open and Senior Club Championships. He tends to these memorials all year long.

ID: 8

Name: John Smith

Hole #: 4 tee box

Inscription: In Memory of John Smith, "Fairway Jack" 1916-2005, He Played His Round of Life With a Smile

Type of Memorial: Bench

Notes:

ID: 9

Name: Michael Diffley

Hole#: 4 - Right ~100 yards from tee box

Inscription: In Memory of Michael Diffley

Type of Memorial: Tree

Notes:

ID: 10

Name: Dave Swanson

Hole #: 6 tee box

Inscription: Dave Swanson - "How Swede It Is"

Type of Memorial: Bench

Notes: Dave was a long-time member of the Men's Club at Hiawatha Golf Course. He served on the Board of the Hiawatha Men's Club.

ID: 11

Name: Neighbor - ne corner 43rd and 21st

Hole#: 5 - Outside of Golf Course

Inscription:

Type of Memorial: 2 Benches

Notes: Neighbor: Although not a golfer, the man that lived on the corner so enjoyed watching the golf course and golfers from his home, he wanted to give the same opportunity to others at that location. So, he donated 2 benches for anyone to use to watch golfers on the golf course.

ID: 12

Name: Jamie Hayes

Hole#: 6, along the fairway on the left.

Inscription: In Memory of Jamie Hayes April 25th, 1962, to August 2nd, 2000, From His Golfing Buddies, with image of a golfer and golf ball.

Type of Memorial: Tree and Plaque

Notes: Jamie golfed at Hiawatha and also worked there. Jamie Hayes was a Roosevelt grad who died of Sudden Cardiac Death when he was 38 or 39. It was tragic not only because it was SCD but because it happened in front of his young children and wife. His friends and family held a charitable tournament for several years after to raise money for his kid's education.

ID: 13 & 14

Name: Vern Loken

Name: Pearl Loken

Hole#: 9, Tee box

Inscription: In Memory of Vern & Pearl Loken, They never golfed here but their loved ones do! With Love, The Soucy & Kemper Families.

Type of Memorial: Bench and Plaque

Notes:

ID: 15

Name: Harry Doc Brown

Hole #: 10 - Tee box

Inscription: Dr. Harry J. "Doc" Brown, December 4, 1923 April 10, 2014, My Irish Hockey Eyes Are Shining on You! and 2 Hiawatha Golf Course emblems and 2 Boston Bruins emblems with crossed hockey sticks.

Type of Memorial: Bench & Plaque

Notes: Doc Brown lived in the Hiawatha neighborhood and, for many years, Doc Brown went almost every morning of the week to Hiawatha for coffee (sometimes, breakfast or lunch) with the guys (including Turner, Nordy, . . .). He enjoyed sitting at the clubhouse or on the 10th tee, and watching the golfers tee off on holes #1 and #10. At one point, the golf course was putting in a new bench on the 10th tee and the family paid to have a granite memorial made by a company at 46th and Chicago in a spot on the golf course that meant so much to their father. Doc's son, Joe Brown, ran the Doc Brown Open at Hiawatha Golf Course for 25 years. During its time at Hiawatha, the tournament donated on average about \$5,000 per year to charities such as the Arthritis Foundation (Doc Brown suffered from arthritis)

and the Minnesota Veterans Home. When Hiawatha Golf Course went into disrepair around 2012, the tournament moved to Emerald Greens in Hastings, and has been played there for the past 7 years. Joe says that the memorials on Hiawatha golf course give the family a place to go back, remember and reminisce about the past 30 years. The memorial brings back many fond memories. Harry Brown's brother, Jim Brown worked for the Park Board.

ID: 16

Name: James (Bert) Adams

Hole #: Left of 10th tee.

Inscription: In Memory of James (Bert) Adams

Type of Memorial: Birch tree

Notes: Burt worked as starter and ranger at the course. Burt was known for feeding the ducks and geese in the early morning. He would give candy to kids, and dog treats to dogs that passed by on a walk. He also paid for lessons and equipment for kids who couldn't afford them.

ID: 17

Name: Bob Armstrong

Hole #: 11 - Tee box

Inscription: Remember Bob Armstrong 1949-2011, FORE!, with image of golfer
Type of Memorial: Bench

Notes: He worked as a ranger after he retired.

ID: 18

Name: Lee Riste

Hole #: 12 - Right of Green, Right of 13th tee
Inscription: In Memory of Lee Riste

Type of Memorial: Tree

Notes:

ID: 19

Name: Milt Swanson

Hole #: 13 - Tee box - back

Inscription: In Memory of Milt Swanson

Type of Memorial: Bench

Notes: From Bruce Swanson and family. The memorial was placed by me in honor of my brother. I purchased it myself. It was placed there so many years ago that I really can't remember the cost. My whole family have been golfers and my brother taught us all. He golfed from the time he was about ten years old. He loved Hiawatha and spent almost every day there whenever he could. He started teaching me to golf when I was 7. I've worked and played golf there since. My two boys have followed in his steps also; working and playing golf and they are now both adults. The memorial is a place that I see daily. It gives me peace to know he is in a place that all of us remember a great golfer, father, brother, uncle and grandfather. I hope the memorial will be a part of Hiawatha forever. Thank you for caring and trying to keep Hiawatha the 18 hole golf course it deserves to be.

ID: 20

Name: Bud Joramo

Hole#: 13 - between holes 13 and 16 (13 to right)

Inscription: In Memory of Superintendent "Bud" Joramo.

Type of Memorial: Tree

Notes: His daughter says, my Dad (Bud Joramo) loved his job at Hiawatha golf course. He was a supervisor greens keeper for 20 years. He designed a few of the holes and has a memorial tree off of the 13th hole which I believe he helped design. As a little girl I would go with him after dinner and set up the sprinklers. From David Engelsgaard, I believe the tree for Bud Joramo was a donation from the Hope Golf League. This golf league originated out of Hope Lutheran Church and has played at various courses over the years including Rich Acres, Phalen Park, and Theodore Wirth. We are currently playing Thursday nights at Hiawatha. The league is still going strong after 40 years and I believe Bud was one of the founding members.

ID: 21

Name: John Mack

Hole#: 13 - 125 yards from green - left

Inscription: In Memory of John Mack, Loved Golf Hated Trees Type of Memorial: Tree

Notes:

ID: 22

Name: Steve Anderson

Hole#: 13 - 125 yards from green - left

Inscription: In Memory of Steve Anderson, Good Friend Bad Golfer Type of Memorial: Tree

Notes:

ID: 23

Name: Jim Ragsdale

Hole#: 13 - 125 yards from green - left?

Inscription: In Memory of Jim Ragsdale, 1949-2014 - Rags Finished 6 Under, with Caricature **Type of Memorial:** Tree

Notes: Jim Ragsdale was a St. Paul Pioneer Press reporter and editorialist who had also worked for the Star Tribune since 2011. He was named Minnesota Journalist of the Year by the Society of Professional Journalists - a recognition of lifetime achievement that ranged from award-winning reporting on former Gov. Jesse Ventura to whimsical monologues on TPT's "Almanac" news show. Ragsdale, who grew up in Los Angeles, arrived in the Twin Cities in 1981 after working as a reporter in West Virginia. He was laid off in a merger shortly after joining the Minneapolis Tribune, and worked for two years at Minnesota Public Radio. In 1984 he joined the Pioneer Press, where he remained for nearly 30 years and covered several beats. But he spent the most time at the newspaper's Capitol bureau, covering three administrations.

ID: 24

Name: Carole Kilburg

Hole #: 13 - right rough before the creek

Inscription: In Memory of Carole Ki Iburg

Type of Memorial: Tree (replanted?)

Notes:

ID: 25

Name: Robert F. Turner

Hole #: 14 - By pond

Inscription: TURNER POND, In Memory of Robert F. Turner, 1924-1999, "Semper Fi"

Type of Memorial: Monument (boulder)

Notes: Bob worked as starter and ranger at the course. Bob worked in the clubhouse as well In the pro shop and selling tickets. Bob Turner was a fixture at the course and one person said that he felt like the entire south side of Minneapolis knew Bob Turner by his first name. Bob was a huge promoter of Roosevelt high school and the University of Minnesota. He was a school teacher and a coach. Pond on #14 is called Turner's Pond after Robert Turner.

ID: 26

Name: Jerry Ruona

Hole #: 15 - Tee box

Inscription: In Loving Memory of Jerry Ruona

Type of Memorial: Bench

Notes:

ID: 27

Name: Bob Langworthy

Hole #: 15, left of green

Inscription: In Memory of Bob Langworthy

Type of Memorial: Tree

Notes: Member of the Hiawatha Men's Club

ID: 28

Name: Jim Hutt

Hole #: 16 - Tee box

Inscription: In Memory of Jim Hutt, Hiawatha Golfer, 1960-2005, "Take Time To Smell The Flowers"

Type of Memorial: Bench

Notes: Member of the Hiawatha Men's Club

ID: 29

Name: Riley Gilchrist

Hole #: 18 - Tee box

Inscription: In Memory of Riley Gilchrist, 1939-2005

Type of Memorial: Bench & Plaque

Notes: Riley was a black Minneapolis police officer. After retirement, he worked at Hiawatha Golf Course.

ID: 30

Name: Vic Howe

Hole #: 18 - between 10 tee and 18 green

Inscription: In Memory of Vic Howe

Type of Memorial: Tree

Notes:

ID: 31 & 32

Name: Alice Melander

Hole #: 18 - between 10 tee and 18 green

Inscription: In Memory of Alice Melander

Type of Memorial: Tree

Notes:

Name: Lawrence (Larry) Melander

Hole#: Memorial In Storage - Tree was cut down.

Inscription:

Type of Memorial: Ash Tree

Notes: From their son, Tom Melander: Mom and Dad bought the house right across the street from Hiawatha's clubhouse when I was in 5th grade. What a wonderful place to grow up and what a treasure for the Minneapolis Park system. My brother, father, and I were all longtime members of the Men's Club there and have countless great memories. It was unusual to walk through those doors and not know everybody in the place. For many years, Hiawatha logged more rounds of play than any other Minneapolis course. Despite its contribution, it has historically been neglected when it comes to money flowing back for maintenance or improvements. Anyone stopping at Hiawatha can see ample evidence of the neglect. In spite of that, it is still loved by many of us. Hiawatha has always had water issues, being pretty close to the water table. The rerouting of Minneapolis storm water onto the course exacerbated this existing problem to the point that the folks that have made the problem worse, now want to solve what they caused by closing part or all of the course. Dad and his many buddies would roll over in their graves. Dad, along with many of the old timers I have known and loved over the years, chose to donate trees to the course in their memories. This tradition started almost accidentally and immediately became widespread. Mom has a tree there too. Where else would an ordinary citizen make a donation to improve a City park? It's a small example of what Hiawatha has meant to so many for so long. Every time I play there I stroll over to the trees commemorating my old friends. It cost about \$500/tree at the time we did it for them, probably more these days. There is no other public course anywhere close. I still see neighbors walking over to play, pulling their carts behind them.

ID: 33

Name: Ken Knickerbocker
Hole #: 18 - between 10 tee and 18 green
Inscription: In Memory of Ken Knickerbocker
Type of Memorial: Tree
Notes:

ID: 34

Name: Johnny Meyer
Hole#: Practice area building.
Inscription: In Memory of Johnny Meyer, 1936-2010, "He Did Not Know A Stranger", with an engraving of a dove carrying an olive branch and a golfer.
Type of Memorial: Bench & Plaque
Notes: John volunteered at the VA and Risen Christ School. He did not know a stranger and had a real love of life. John was an avid golfer with five Holes-In-One. Employed at Lennox Industries in sales for 29 years. John was President of the Hiawatha Men's Club.

ID: 35 & 36

Name: Betty Krakowski
Name: Robert Krakowski
Hole#: Memorials In Storage - Were on #1 Tee Inscription:
Type of Memorial: Tree & Plaque
Notes:

ID: 37

Name: Larry Niznick
Hole#: Memorial In Storage - Was on #1 Tee Inscription:
Type of Memorial: Tree & Plaque
Notes:

ID: 38

Name: Paul Strande
Hole #: 10 tee – medallion on tree
Inscription: Beloved Husband, Father, Brother & Friend, Proud PGA Member, 1954-2020, God put the crease in your palm to hold a golf club, SCRAMBLING IN ETERNITY
Type of Memorial: Medallion on tree
Notes: Paul Strande was a Norwegian immigrant who lived near the golf course, was a decorated World War II veteran, who won golf tournaments as a junior. He went to U of MN on a full golf scholarship.

ID: 39

Name: Robert "Bob" "Nurdy" Nordstrom
Hole #: On the hill by the 10 tee
Inscription: none yet

Type of memorial: Double bench overlooking the tee and driving range

Notes: Bob was born in 1931 in Minneapolis and was a caddy at Hiawatha, lettered in golf at Roosevelt High School, the University of Minnesota, and golfed with the 6th Army team. He was Pro-Manager at Hiawatha from 1971 until her retired in 1996. Everyone knew and loved Nordy. He died in 2020.