

# **Penmar Golf Course, part 1, early history**

by john jones

In 1954 the Recreation and Parks Department of the City of Los Angeles were planning to build a nine hole golf course on the west side of Los Angeles, to help ease the congestion on the Griffith Park and the new Rancho courses. The funding would come from a \$40 million dollar Recreation & Parks bond proposal that wouldn't pass until 1957, allocating \$300,000 for the new Penmar Golf Course.

The land between Rose on the south, and Dewey, the Santa Monica border with Venice on the north, was then a swampy dump known as Bixby Slough. According to long time resident Vincent Heid, "a waste water stream ran down from the Douglas plant on ocean Park Blvd. splitting the course diagonally, and I believe there was a swamp across the eastern end", he said. "It was supposed to be a contractor's soil dump, but they used to bring in concrete as well."

Originally the City owned land was about 26 acres, and additional land was needed for the golf course. The Rec & Parks department began acquiring the extra land through purchase and condemnation after the bond passed in 1957.

Then course building was delayed by the construction of the North Venice Storm Drain, which ran across the golf property and also through the Penmar playground. Dirt from the drain ditches was later used to smooth the land for the golf course.

The last hurdle to overcome was getting the City Planning Commission to delete 800 feet of Penmar Ave. between Rose Ave. and the City's northern boundary from the highway master plan. By October of 1960 the land total had increased to 53 acres, and with all of the pieces finally in order, a contract for \$252,350 was awarded by the Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Commission to Irving C. Hoffman for the construction of a nine-hole golf course, designed by David W. Kent, with construction beginning before the end of the year.

David Kent would also design the new bond funded Hanson Dam, and other courses in California during the 1960's.

Ground was broken by legendary Parks manager George Hjelte in November of 1960. Expected to open in the fall of 1961, construction was again delayed by the discovery of very hard ground and rocks (cement?) that made the land difficult to shape. A second opening was planned for New years Day of 1962, but again the opening was delayed by heavy rains that lasted through February.

Finally completed and dry enough to open, the new course was dedicated by city golf supervisor Americ Hadley on Tuesday March 27, 1962, nearly 8 years after the initial proposal. Penmar was Los Angeles' 12th golf course since the 1914 opening of the Griffith Park municipal links.

The 2612-yard par 33 course with it's 105 car parking lot, a golf service yard, and a sprinkler system, opened to the public on Wednesday the 28 of March 1962.

The opening yardages

- 1 - 307 - par 4
- 2 - 380 - par 4
- 3 - 136 - par 3
- 4 - 288 - par 4
- 5 - 220 - par 3
- 6 - 427 - par 4
- 7 - 364 - par 4
- 8 - 145 - par 3
- 9 - 345 - par 4