

Golf under a dome ready to debut

By W.W. Edgar
staff writer

Golfers take heart. During these cold winter days when the courses are covered with snow and you have been concerned about your grip and whether your swing has lost some of its smoothness, you need worry no longer.

Through the ingenuity of man there now is a golf dome right in the area — at the intersection of Five Mile and Saginaw roads that provides the facilities for you to test your grip and swing.

It is a large vinyl dome (70-feet high, 250-feet long, 305-feet wide) and is only the second facility of its kind in Michigan.

The enclosed dome is the nearest thing to being outdoors. The dome, which at first glance reminds one of a huge pile of snow or on second glance of a large balloon about to take to the air, provides all the room one needs to practice drives.

What's more, according to the pros who have seen it, there is no wind to battle inside the dome, and you get a true test of your swing and the length of your drives.

The dome has come to Plymouth through an odd route. It so happens that the designer of the latest golf facility is a client of Ronald Pierce, a lawyer with headquarters in Troy. And, to make the case more interesting, Pierce is one of the partners in the Oasis Golf Center that has been in business on the site for 40 years.

The client built the first dome in Madison Heights. When Pierce saw it, he immediately thought of Oasis and what a help that would be as a business venture during the cold winter months.

The deal was made and now the area will be the focus of all golf-minded persons who can't stand the doldrums of the off season and yearn for a place to try their swing.

THE DOME will have 38 driving ranges and with the natural turf the site is the nearest thing possible to the golfer's own club.

No longer will there be any need to carry a bucket of balls from the clubhouse to the range. There will be huge buckets with a bushel of balls which will be refilled on demand without moving from the range.

To make the dome even more attractive, it is large enough for softball games and already 40 teams have been signed for play when the dome officially opens.

Under the present plan, the range will be open until 8 p.m. with six pros on hand. When the driving range is finished for the day the softball teams will play until midnight.

The Oasis site was chosen for this innovation because it is in the heart of an area that is the home of golfers. Along with that the Oasis is located on the highway intersection and can be reached in a half-hour from places as far distant as Ann Arbor.

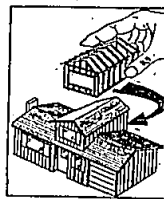
While the dome is only the second in Michigan there are two others in the country — in New York and in Minneapolis.



Dorothy Johnston manages the driving range at the Oasis Golf dome on Five Mile near I-275. The dome is 70 feet high and supported by giant air blowers.

BILL BREGLER/staff photographer

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10 percent if the facility makes the proposed changes.

Residents have already spent about \$1,000 for legal fees, including a letter written by attorney E. Michael Morris to the Planning Commission.

He also questioned why Blumberg hasn't been in compliance with the state code.

"There are no legitimate reasons for the residents to sacrifice their property rights, values and standards of living to solve problems that Oak Hill created and fostered," Morris said.

Michelle Potts, who lives in a historical landmark at 34029 Grand River, said the proposed parking lot will be adjacent to her home, and she fears that the historic recognition is in jeopardy.

Residents fear that the new parking lots will empty traffic on Pickett.

"We need places (nursing homes) like that, and I don't have anything against it," Potts said. "But if I want to spend any time in my backyard, I'll be looking at a parking lot."

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