



History

Our park system began with the creation of The Milwaukee County Park Commission in 1907. Although parks had already been established within the limits of the City of Milwaukee by the City Park Commission, the visionary new County Park Commission had a much broader goal for the park system. Early Commissioners conceived of a park system that would form a "green belt" or series of scenic drives and parks encircling the county. Parks were located in outlying areas to allow for population expansion. Commissioners selected land not only for its natural beauty and interest, but also for its fitness for various forms of active and passive recreation.

Whitnall Park, the jewel of Milwaukee County's park system, was created by the vision and skills of Charles B. Whitnall, the man known as the father of the Milwaukee County park system. Its 660 acres feature formal gardens, arboretum, 18-hole golf course, archery range, trails for hiking and cross-country skiing, toboggan slide, and ice skating pond as well as children's play areas and picnicking facilities. About one-third of the park lays in Hales Corners.

Whitnall Park Golf Course founded in 1932 by Architect-George Hansen was added to Milwaukee County Parks System as part of the Civilian Conservation Corps, WPA, depression project in 1931-32. In April 1934, a small group of dedicated golfers from Brown Deer, Currie, Grant and Greenfield Parks met to form an alliance that would eventually become the "Milwaukee County Public Links Association". This alliance formed the nucleus of inter-club competitive golf in the County.

Whitnall Park joined this association in 1935 and participated in many club and inter-club matches until 1939, when Whitnall dropped out of the alliance and didn't rejoin until 1953 when Ray Fischer fully organized the Men's Club (39 members) at Whitnall Park. Ray and other dedicated individuals, especially Gene Haas and Bud Jonas, got the ball rolling to promote Public Links Golf in Milwaukee County through inter-club competition, which led to improving golf skills along with interest and enthusiasm in the arena of Public Links Golf.

Even in the early days, the association was open to players of all skill levels. The 1934 Brown Deer Club President, John Drake was quoted saying, "Whether a man shoots 75 or 125 makes no difference. Every one not only is welcome, but has an equal opportunity for enjoyment and sharing in the prize awards."

That continues today with all events contested. 'The Handicap System' gives all who participate, an equal opportunity of winning - if they have their 'A' game on that day.