



# SPALDING PARK

## GOLF CLUB



# HONORING THE PAST

## COURSE TRANSFORMED BY GRASS GREENS

No history, however brief, should overlook the introduction of grass greens.

Until 1975 it was a widely held belief that, because of the torrid summers, high winds, and poor quality water, players in the Geraldton area were forever to be denied the pleasure of putting on grass. For some time, however, Bill Barnes had been nursing a trial plot of "salt water couch" (*Paspalum vaginata*) taken from Newmarcararra, just east of the town, where it was growing profusely as cattle fodder, and liked what he saw.

The matter came to a head at the close of the second Pro-Am, September 1975, when professionals met with the committee to discuss the likely future for grass greens. Enthusiasm for the prospect mounted from that time. Further discussion took place at the A.G.M. 24.9.75. Maurie Drennan became President that night, and from that time left no doubt about his intention to devote time and effort to bring the vision to reality.

Professionals Gary Duncan and Graham Johnson set about designing the future greens, and Kevin Marsden costed the

works which included complete removal of the sand greens, replacement with fresh soil, and contouring the plan. The meeting on 27.10.75 gave the go-ahead for 9 holes in 1975 and nine in 1976. Costs were given as \$20,000 first year; \$16,000 second year; and \$8,000 in the third year.

The gamble was on! Bill Barnes' faith was shown by his loan offer of \$2,250 free of interest; at first deferred, and lat-



er not needed. A levy of \$20 per member brought in \$10,320. Earthworks proceeded apace under the keen eyes of Maurie and his lieutenant, Chris Clarkson, and reticulation was installed. Then all bucked in, up to 70 at a time, to insert thousands of small pieces of the truckloads of grass kindly donated by the Clune family.

Many Pairs of eyes, some

hopeful, some anxious, many confident, watched the growth and spread over the following months. Members were delighted, and the cynics confounded, when the nine greens were ready for play in April 1976. That year the 3rd Pro-Am was played over 9 grass and 9 sand greens and was won by Ross Metherell(210). Amateur Phil Johnson shot 229.

Immediately following the event, the second nine was converted so that in 1977 all were grassed, and today draw unstinted praise from members and visitors alike for their excellence.

