

In Historic Irish Hills

New Recreation Area for Michigan

(Recreation is big business in Michigan. Millions of dollars have been spent or are being spent on state ski, golf, and other outdoor sports areas. One of the new areas under which such development is located in Michigan's historic Irish Hills.)

JACKSON (AP)—Recreational facilities of a new half-million dollar year-round sports area were introduced to Michigan outdoors enthusiasts last weekend.

Located in Michigan's historic Irish Hills, the project when fully developed, may make this area one of Michigan's and perhaps one of the nation's best known recreational centers.

At least that's the dream of Gene Sell and Bob Jackson, developers of the Irish Hills Sports Park.

The Irish Hills Sports Park adds to the already vast recreational facilities available, such as the multitude of lakes available for boating and fishing, and campsites.

Now the sports park offers a ski resort in the winter and day-and-night golfing in the summer.

Sell, of Blissfield, is the owner of the property. He long has operated a nine-hole golf course there. Earlier this year he began developing the golf course as a ski area for the winter months. To aid in the development, he hired Jackson, former manager of the Mt. Christie Ski Resort at Oxford.

"We believe we will have skiing that will be as good or better than any other in Michigan south

of a line from Muskegon to Saginaw Bay," Jackson said. "In fact, we believe that, with the exception of a few especially fine slopes in the upper part of the state, that our resort will compare favorably with any in the state."

DEVELOPING SKI AREA

Sell is sinking approximately a half million dollars into the new project. It won't all be finished this year, however.

The ski area is being developed first.

The lodge includes a protected sun deck capable of seating 100 persons, two kitchen areas and each of the two floors will have an 8-foot circular fireplace in the center.

The building has large front picture windows which will permit a view of the entire ski area. It is of modern post and beam construction with a facade of ledge rock and wood paneling.

"We'll have 12 ski slopes, including those for beginners, intermediate and advanced skiers, and two trails," Jackson said. "We'll have three high capacity T bar lifts and four rope tows."

"The beginning slopes will have both T bar and rope lifts," he said. "We're doing this because beginners often have trouble with rope lifts; so they can use the T bar lifts while learning to use the rope tows, too."

ARTIFICIAL SNOW

To ensure adequate snow, the

largest single air compressor in the state for making snow has been installed. All the slopes are being prepared for artificial snow.

"However, we will have more natural snow than any other ski area in southeastern Michigan," Jackson said.

The entire ski area has been engineered for lighting for both night skiing in the winter and night golfing in the summer.

"The beginners slopes will be on the golf course which will give them well-groomed slopes on which to learn," Jackson said.

Development of the 200-acre site will be continued next summer with the preparation of nine more holes for the golf course.

Also in the future plans are a swimming pool, overnight lodging and development of tennis and badminton courts.

"Our long term plan is to provide a country club atmosphere for the public at reasonable rates," Sell said.

"We will have facilities for about 2,000 skiers and 1,500 cars," Jackson said.

"We believe," Sell said, "that with the facilities we are providing, added to the already abundant natural facilities for swimming, boating, riding and other recreational activities, the Irish Hills may well become a nationally-known center for all types of tourist, recreation and vacation activities."