

EIGHTEEN HOLES WITH HAWTREE

NO 5 — THE DOG-LEG

by FRED HAWTREE

AT the 2nd hole we touched on the notion that the design of a hole undistinguished by special features will generally contain an element of "dog-leggedness" if the isolated shots required in playing it are to become related to each other and involve forward thinking. This forward thinking is fundamental to the highest skill in any sport and to human nature itself. It demands understanding of oneself, of one's abilities, of the problem to be met, and of the probable response by opposition. The best results then come from a compromise between brain and force and give twice the satisfaction gained from either element alone.

In the simplest form of dog-leg, this problem is put to the golfer without guile and if it has the advantage of being set by a strong natural feature we are on the way to a very good hole. This is the hole where, on the tee, you are invited to "bite off what you can chew". This can be done on flat ground if the extent of the danger to be carried is defined in three dimensions and there is prior knowledge or some indication of the outline of the hole. But it is more attractive when the tee looks down on the hole, as on a plan, so that the full trajectory and ultimate fate of the ball can be observed with pride or horror.

Angles?

The degree to which the hole is dog-legged round the obstacle will clearly vary the extent of carry feasible for any individual golfer. It will be at its maximum when the hole turns a right angle. But that angle can be used, if at all, only with great discretion. Unless the obstacle can be carried, there can be an element of potential silliness in a 90-degree turn. A good drive up the first part of the leg can be going farther from the green after it reaches the turning point—a bad one may have to be

followed by a chip shot up to the corner before tackling the rest of the hole. If the triangle between tee, green and turning point contains "out of bounds", there is the further risk of housing development or some other change of use involving danger to people outside the course. Then, however good the hole may be and however long it was there before your neighbours, the law will require you to change it.

Freak

Even when the contained triangle is open and free of all obstructions or legal tangles, the maximum dog-leg is still to be resisted; it risks becoming a freak unless it contains lake, beach, river or some obvious impediment to planning it any other way.

These comments apply in some measure to greater angles. But if the dog-leg principle is applicable in bunkering at straight holes, it is difficult to determine how big the angle can be and the hole remain a dog-leg. For practical purposes it can be set at about 150 degrees—at twenty-five past or to the hour when the green is at 12 o'clock. Even then a lateral shift of the fairway could virtually straighten it up.

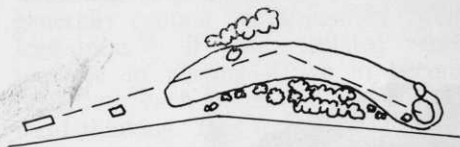
Longest Way

These bigger angles are more appropriate where trees or sand hills block the direct route and obscure the line of sight to the target. They often fall into the second main group of dog-legs where the longest way round is obligatory if the second shot is to have the maximum advantage. The design of holes in this category is more complicated by variation in individual ability than in the first group. If you will imagine a davit like those used to hoist a ship's lifeboat, the curve at the top which represents the limit of the feature to be negotiated has to describe an arc which will obscure the

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green from one side or even the centre of the fairway up to a given distance. The sharper the curve, the longer must be the drive to open up the green on a given line. Those unable to hit the ball so far must play farther and farther to one side the shorter their drive. It is



THE PERFECT HOLE?

No. 14 Royal Salisbury, Rhodesia

possible, therefore, that this type of hole may be better reserved for the longer lengths where the player unable to open up the green would, for the same reason, have been unable to reach it in two shots. If the theme is used at short par-4 dog-legs, the obstacle should not obscure the green but present the type of problem set on the tee in the first group of dog-legs—in other words, the optional carry.

The dog-leg formula is therefore very flexible, though mistakes are sometimes made where no proper basis for the dog-leg exists naturally. Sharp turns on flat featureless land are to be avoided, though some degree of angling holes will relieve layout monotony. It will also enable the ground to be more fully used, thus gaining length on small sites.

Danger

The general feeling is probably that a carry or sailing close to danger on the inside of the angle is the more agreeable. This is the side where forethought and ability, as we saw earlier, are likely to produce the richest satisfaction—where the penalty for over-reaching ability will lead to self criticism rather than condemnation of the design of the hole.

There is a right-to-left dog-leg at Mougins which if I remember aright comes about No. 16 where a spoon from the tee (for my type of golf at

least) sends the ball over a tall pine tree in the angle to reach a point considerably beyond that to which a drive with a lower trajectory could safely be aimed. This refinement, the choice of a shorter club to get farther, offers further subtle variations on the straightforward theme.

On the other hand, Mr Bobby Locke puts the 4th at Royal Salisbury Golf Club in his list of the best 18 holes in the world. Here the best line is round the outside of the curve. The hole is 495 yards long and its quality seems to reside only in the fact that its curve is exactly right. My own first impression of it was one of excitement and I have tried twice to work out the reason. It can only be that the trees along the right of the fairway follow a curve with a radius of approximately 365 yards. As there is no special contour interest, I can only conclude that here at last we have a simple formula for making a great hole. If only it were always as easy at that.

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