

Official Organ of The National Association of Greenkeepers of America

Selecting the Right Site

Golf club officials seldom realize how closely the choice of site and cost of maintenance are related

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A GOLF course is a permanent or at least a long time investment. The first thing therefore to engage the attention of any club should be the importance of obtaining the right site and sufficient acreage with the proper soil. One cannot overestimate these factors. Many clubs selecting sites in haste have never been able to correct their initial errors.

Vast sums of money have been wasted in an effort to control unconquerable conditions by re-arranging the course from time to time so as to attempt to satisfy the members and constantly trying to modify the texture of the soil to provide the proper fertility for the greens. One hears tragic reports of the cost of maintaining such courses from year to year.

There is a tendency to regard the selection of a site and the maintenance of a course thereon as two distinct problems, whereas in reality they are part of the same general problem. Club organizers are very often overly impressed with scenic beauties and disregard other aspects of the problem—which is the creation of a practical and attractive golf course.

Factors in Selecting Site

IN SELECTING a site for a golf course attention should be given to topography, soil resources, drainage and water supply. Opinions differ as to the relative importance of these factors but each of them is of great importance.

One has only to work in this field in various parts of the country to realize the importance of fundamentals. Many so-called golf courses have been laid out and constructed by laymen and amateur golfers, landscape gardeners and self-styled golf course architects which are impractical.

In some cases men interested in golf course promotion have done the best they knew how to build a course at a cost fixed by the amount of money available. We have in this country a great many golf courses which are as they are—deplorable examples of waste and violations of the sound principles of construction. Such courses are costly to maintain and quite impossible to understand.

Mistakes Made Every Day

NOT only have mistakes been made in the past but they are still being made today, even in the face of the advanced information which we have before us. For some strange reason it is often thought that almost anyone can choose a golf site or lay-out and build a golf course. Such stupidity more than anything else has been responsible for the incredible waste and difficulty that greenkeepers have to encounter from time to time. It is doubtful if greenkeepers ever will succeed in conditioning poorly chosen courses except at enormous expense.

Many newly organized clubs ignore the basic fact that, in order to have a satisfactory golf course, they must secure a suitable tract of land on which to lay it out and grow turf.

“Haste makes waste” is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in this field. Patience is still a virtue in these times when all else seems to be sacrificed to the desire for speed. The attempt to build golf courses on poorly chosen

sites is unfortunate. Many locations have not been well chosen with a view to satisfactory maintenance. It is folly not to exercise the greatest care and discrimination to secure fundamentals that will affect for all time the cost of maintaining the finished course.

Choice of Architect Important

LET'S survey a little more closely the considerations which should rule when golf courses are being planned. Unquestionably it should be the work of a golf course architect to advise in the selection of a site. The choice, therefore, of a golf course architect should be given very careful consideration. He should be a man of wide experience and demonstrated capability in this field. Do not put too much stress on his promises but rather pay more attention to his past performances.

The type of course, whether public or private, and the amount of money available for construction are the two paramount considerations. Economical construction and maintenance are also points of great importance in the selection of a site.

Wise is the club which can secure several tracts of land on option and then have the architect go over each one carefully and report to the club which he considers the best, giving his reasons for regarding it as a site for a practical course. Special attention should be given

to economical construction, avoiding waste without sacrificing attractiveness.

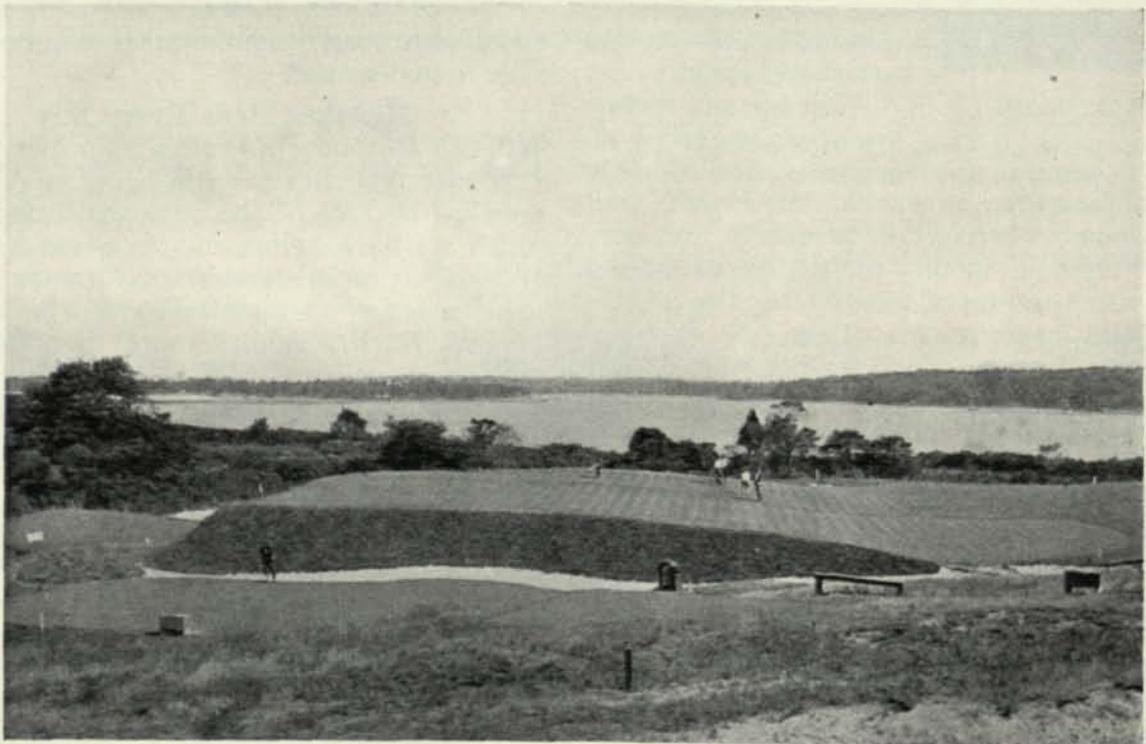
Nowhere else is the architect more necessary than before the selection of a site and nowhere else will more be required of him. He must be a man of parts with considerable experience to be able to pass judgment on the location, its topography, soil and cost of construction as they are vital to the planning of a new course.

Experience has shown that the services of a capable architect, who understands the fundamental principles of course construction and maintenance, will save the club thousands of dollars in upkeep.

Designing Course Is An Art

THE designing of a golf course is an art in itself and it is manifestly impossible to give in a short article all the ramifications of this highly developed work such as topographical surveys, soil charts, drainage plans, principles of hydraulics necessary to irrigation and problems of engineering.

Moulding a large acreage into a first class golf course is an expensive matter and once done is not easily altered. It is much cheaper and more economical to secure a suitable site in an unfavorable location. Many of our largest club treasuries bear mute testimony to this fact.



15TH GREEN, NATIONAL GOLF LINKS OF AMERICA, SOUTHAMPTON, L. I.
This famous course in the Shinnecock Hills, overlooking Long Island Sound, is considered by many the best kept and most beautiful in America—Photo by Edwin Levick