

# THE GOLF COURSE

A MONTHLY BULLETIN DEVOTED TO THE DISCUSSION OF MODERN METHODS AS APPLIED TO GOLF COURSE CONSTRUCTION AND UPKEEP

## Modern Golf Chats

By A. W. TILLINGHAST

### FEATURING PUTTING GREENS

**T**HERE are people whom we may meet casually whom we forget after going our respective ways, for there has been nothing about them which leaves even the faintest impression behind. We may look into their faces and vaguely recognize a general type; then we promptly forget the face and the man.

Sometimes in the passing crowd our eyes rest for a moment on a strange face, so strong, finely chiseled and so filled with character that although it is gone in a second our fleeting glance has indelibly stamped the features upon our memory.

Now, we are chatting on golf and not faces, but there is a parallel. A putting green has features just like a human, or, at least, it should have to be worthy of the name. Of course, there are many which are no more impressive than the vacant, cow-like expression of some people, but then again there are some with rugged profiles which loom head and shoulders above the common herd, and the moment we clap eyes on one of these, impulsively we murmur, "Ah! there's a green for you!"

The character of the putting greens and their approaches mark the quality of a course to a far greater extent than

anything else. No matter how excellent may be the distances; how cunningly placed the hazards, or how carefully considered has been the distribution of shots,—if the greens themselves do not stand forth impressively the course itself can never be notable.

The best players will tell you that they like to play to a green that stands well up in the back. This is not a new observation, and yet the country is fairly cluttered with symmetrical, "pancakey" greens, which slope away from the line of play in a most brazen manner. They are utterly worthless and heartily cursed by every true golfer, and yet, strange to say, a great many similar putting greens are being built to-day. Such ignorance is inexcusable.

Naturally, those greens which are to be gained by lofted shots from iron clubs should slope more into the shots than those which, under ordinary conditions, are reached by the finish of balls running from wood. The irons are designed to impart underspin or "stop," and unless the green faces properly this spin cannot become effective. No matter how crisply played by master hands, a ball falling upon a receding green can get no bite. So our first step toward supplying our putting greens with character is the considera-

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tion of the type of shot which is to find that green and construct with that thought ever uppermost.

Nothing can supply a green with more character than bold undulations, and nothing can make a green more ridiculous-looking than puny little kinks which some will insist are undulations. The long, gentle slopes make putting a fine art, and as the cups are changed from day to day, variety is introduced and the rounds are never monotonous. But in introducing undulations the builder of courses must consider the shot which is to find the green. What could be more unfair than the introduction of pronounced undulations in a green upon which the player is supposed to pitch? It is obvious that two balls, each receiving the same amount of under-cut, might strike within a foot of each other, one on the ascending slope and the other just beyond, where the ground falls away. Every golfer knows the action of these two balls and appreciates how much the element of luck has figured. Consequently, undulations should be reserved for greens other than those upon which we are to pitch.

The manner in which the guarding pits are built into the sides of the putting greens is most important. Shallow traps are of little value either as

hazards or impressive features. Generally, we depend upon the earth from nearby pits for the fill with which our greens are built up, and if the greens are conceived boldly the traps will take care of themselves. In my opinion, there is little excuse for digging pits less than two feet six inches deep and up to five feet. Naturally, the deeper pits must be of greater area.

Sometimes water will not permit the digging of pits to any considerable depth. Then it is necessary to build the pits from the ground up, as it were. But if our hazards are to provide character for the greens, they must be something more than holes in the ground. Their shapes should be irregular, and the mound work, ruggedly natural.

In building greens in flat country, the use of scoops will be found to be very valuable. With them, grass hollows of considerable extent may be formed, pulling the earth to the green site and thus creating a plateau, which will appear even higher than reality because of the break of the hollow in front.

In our limited space it is possible to touch but lightly upon this topic of green character, but the main thought is here: Construct your greens boldly and naturally, remembering at all times from which side of the fairway the approach is to come and the character of the club with which the approach is to be made.

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