

Putting Cup Placement Calls for More Study

AMERICAN greenkeepers will be especially interested in the recent expressions concerning placement of putting cups and tee markers as the matter is an important one that has been left far too much to chance. A few years ago some of the visiting Scotch and English professionals put part of the blame for their poor putting on the cup placement with which they were compelled to contend abroad. Greenkeepers, they maintained, put cups in such difficult positions for tournaments that the players were afraid to putt for the cup. There is plenty of evidence that the same mistake is being made in the United States due to the greenkeepers' and chairmen's desire to make tournament scoring high on their occasions.

George C. Thomas, Jr., in a recent issue of *The Country Club Magazine*, makes the following comment on cup placement:

"For general play the cups should be in easier positions than for tournament competition and the type and character of the players must be taken into account for all occasions.

"The arrangement of the markers on the tees affects the situation of the pins on the greens, and wind direction and force are fundamentals which help to determine both locations.

"Everyone agrees that the marker should be well back with a following wind, forward with a headwind and the pins should conform to the same rule. Side winds determine which part of the tee should be used and the carrying of a hazard on the drive usually means that the flag is more open to a second shot from that section of the fairway.

"Speed of fairway and of green are vitally important to both markers and cups. A fast course controls driving distance. A fast green requiring a pitch is more difficult to hold than a slow surface, but should the greens be open for a running shot, such an effort is easier on fast ground.

"Watering of fairways and greens control this speed situation to a great extent and should be done in conjunction with placements on tees and greens. Traps guarding greens regulate the play and therefore help to specify the position of cups and markers.

"Long shots to a green must not be

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penalized by a pin too near a trap while on short seconds after good drives the flag may wave closer to hazards.

"Pin position must be judged by the putting surface as exemplified by grass perfection and by slopes or rolls near the cup, and by both such considerations as affecting approach shots to the flag. This includes any irregularities or change of grass growth or texture, as well as old cup holes with replaced earth and grass, the latter sometimes having edges which do not give a smooth joint and which therefore interfere with the ball's roll as it approaches the hole. Cups should never be on ridges or inclines, but if possible situated in low ground rather than on hog backs.

"In medal tournaments or qualifying rounds there is a general feeling among players that the placements of cups should be in the center or easy parts of each green, although long distances from back tees are not objected to.

"In match play rounds of tournaments the pins may be in more difficult positions, although it is the custom to increase the severity of the placement each day until in the final the greatest skill is required in holding the ball near the pin in a shot

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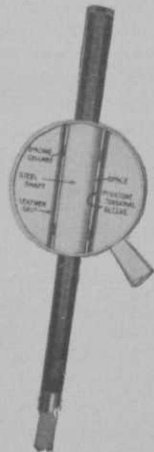
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to the green. It will be realized that in an event where there will be several medal rounds on different days or where there will be first a medal round possibly by 36 holes and then match play rounds, a committee in charge of placements must map in advance the several spots on a green needed for the different pin locations and adjust the tee markers to synchronize with them.

"There is little chance for appreciation and lots of room for criticism in the placement of markers and cups. No one man should undertake this duty and assume the entire responsibility unless he has full charge and authority without interference. It would seem a better plan to have a committee do this work, and such body must meet in advance and studiously weigh the entire question and all go together and personally stake the locations the day before or very early on the morning of the play. They must meet before the tournament starts, to reset any placements affected by change and check the work on the course to see that their arrangements are being carried out to the letter."

S AID one of the successful young pros who dropped into the office recently: "What I want is an assistant who knows less about golf and more about selling. I can teach him enough to polish off his rough spots in the game and if he isn't crazy to go out and play all the time, he can get enough time for his own practice to make him a good instructor and player.

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