

STRETCH COURSES

Owners and Promoters, and not the architect, insist on getting everything possible out of the land

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The charge that perhaps half of the nearly 300 standard courses that are constructed in the U.S. each year are overlong probably is true. Most people connected with the game seem to be thinking in terms of length these days. When you read a newspaper account of a course that is being planned for your community, or is being constructed, the emphasis invariably is on how long the layout is going to be. There is an obsession with measurement from the back tees. Everything else is played down or ignored — the artistry of design, potential beauty of the course, trapping, the way in which the greens are to be laid out, provisions for keeping play moving, etc., etc. If the yardage is to extend to that magic figure — 7,200 or more — everyone is assured that the course has to be of championship caliber.

Then, six months or a year later the course is completed. Everything about it has that new, green look. The club members proudly show it off to friends and visitors; or, if the course is a semi-private, the owners proclaim that "you won't find a golf layout between here and the Atlantic that matches this one."

Grumbling Begins

Within a few months after opening day, the novelty of a new course wears off and the grumbling begins. Everyone except that small minority of long hitters, who can reach the greens in prescribed figures, voices the same complaint: "This course is too long! Why did they have to build it for the professionals?"

As often as not, the architect is singled out as the culprit who stretched the course to the extremes of the property. The club promoters or owners, who insisted on getting everything possible out of their

land, are held blameless on the theory that the architect probably sold them on bigness.

Give Them What They Ask For

What isn't taken into account is that the architect has given the people behind the course exactly what they insisted on. If it is bigness and the land is there, he obliges them; if they desire a tight, tough course, that is what he designs for them. If he is conscientious, and most qualified architects are, he warns the promoters or builders of the pitfalls of overlength. If they still insist their course has to be the longest in the area or the state, he makes provisions in the blueprints for later tightening up the course at a cost that is not prohibitive.

The point is that the architect builds to specifications — not his own, but basically those of the people for whom he is working. I feel that most architects would rather build a course that is 6,500 or 6,600 yards than one that is 600 or 700 yards longer. This is because the architect is the last person in the world who thinks that length adds flexibility.

Here is a suggested design for a course where the average golfer is going to play. It is not necessarily intended for a club that is looking forward to staging very many tournaments for professionals or top amateurs, although I know of quite a few pros and good amateur players who probably wouldn't object to its approximate 6,600 yard length:

Hole 1

This hole should start at the club house, an easy par four of about 350 yards. The fairway should be fairly level and visible all the way to the green. There should be a minimum of hazards to get the play away from the first tee as fast as possible.

Hole 2

This hole is slightly more challenging than the first, but is still considered a warmup hole. It's an easy par four run-

ning about 400 yards, and following the natural terrain. The majority of the fairways should run north and south so the golfer is not hitting into the sun. The landing area should be clearly visible from the hitting area, and trapping should not be too close to the green. It's discouraging to land in a trap after only 15 minutes on the course.

Hole 3

This hole is everyone's favorite — a par three of about 150 yards. It's straight away and gives the golfer a chance to use his favorite club. Trapping is very light.

Hole 4

Interest is injected into the game by making this hole a three-wood approach. The golfer starts using a wider variety of clubs on this par four, 410-yard hole. The green is large, with a 40-foot clearance at the mouth. The 7,000 square foot green gives the golfer a large target to aim for on his second wood shot.

Hole 5

The golfer has to start thinking on this hole because it stresses placement of shots. Trapping is placed at each landing area on its 500-yard length. This par five hole has a large green so the golfer has a chance to test his putting skill.

Hole 6

A par four, 420 yards, with trapping set to catch hooks and slices gives the golfer more opportunity to place his drives. The fairway is straight away, and strategic placement of traps makes playing the hole difficult.

Hole 7

This is the place for a "change of pace" hole. Running 340 yards and being a par four, it gives the golfer a breather because it's an easy hole with the possibility of getting a birdie. Trapping is wide and there is a large green.

Hole 8

Here's where many golfers meet their downfall — the waterhole. About 100 yards down this 200-yard hole is a large pond. The par three hole forces the golfer to get off a good tee shot or suffer a penalty.

Hole 9

The golfer heads back to the club house on this 525-yard, par five hole. Sheer distance makes this hole interesting.

The back nine holes are a slightly longer version of the front nine. The theory behind the design of each hole follows that of the front nine, with the sequence being changed so that repetition is avoided.

Bob Russell Named Director of United Voluntary Services

Robert L. (Bob) Russell, former assistant executive director of the PGA and an 18-year veteran of the newspaper business, has been named executive director of the United

Voluntary Services, which has its headquarters in San Mateo, Calif. The UVS is a non-profit organization that carries on a wide variety of charitable programs, including several in the golf field. It has more than 20,000 volunteer workers who serve at Veterans Hospitals, Armed Forces installations and in community charity undertakings. Mrs. Helen F. Lengfield is president of UVS.



Russell

In addition to sponsoring Swing Clubs, which bring golf to hospitalized war veterans, UVS publishes a monthly magazine, the National Golfer.

Russell was connected with the PGA for about seven years. He resigned last March when the pro organization moved its national headquarters from Dunedin to Lake Park, Fla. Prior to going with the PGA, Russell worked for 12 years for the Chicago Daily News as a reporter and rewrite man. He broke into the newspaper business with the Peoria (Ill.) Journal-Transcript.

In addition to serving as executive director of UVS, Russell is the editor and publisher of the organization's magazine.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture Turfgrass Field Day will be held Aug. 3 at the plant industry station, Beltsville, Md. Persons interested in attending may contact Felix V. Juska, turf-research agronomist, in Beltsville at the crop research division.