



Alternate pin positions are properly placed in relatively level areas off the slopes. Pins should be alternated front to back and behind or away from the hazards, according to climatic conditions, the purpose of the day's play and for variety.

PIN PLACEMENTS

There are no hard and set rules for spotting the cups. The USGA recommends fairness and variety, as reliable a guide as there is

By **ROBERT TRENT JONES, JR.**

The placing of pins is of great concern to the average golfer as well as the tournament player. Yet, rarely is much thought given by supts. and green chairmen to the location of the holes or of the tee markers. Wear of tees and condition of cup areas rather than playing factors usually determine pin placement. In many cases cups are placed by course workmen who don't play golf and don't know golf strategy.

When I was learning to play and had much more time to play on weekdays, I noticed that the pins invariably were in the front of the greens and in the openings, making the Montclair (N.J.) GC my

home club, a relatively easy course. On the weekends, however, the pins were set in much more difficult positions behind bunkers and the tees were set back. This seemed incongruous as it was the weekend players who had the least time to practice and were forced to play the most difficult course. This tendency is still prevalent. It would be better at all times to have a balance of difficult, easy and moderate pin placements.

Each hole should be considered in the early morning in the best judgment of the supt. as to climatic conditions as well as a sequence of holes which affords different degrees of difficulty in an enjoyable and varied pattern. The problems of

traffic on weekends certainly should not be overlooked.

From the point of view of a shot into a green, the pin should not be placed directly on the downslope or the back slope of a mound. An excellently hit shot with good spin may land on the downslope a few feet from the hole and kick off to the back. Had the shot landed a few feet further, it would have stuck at that point. The unfairness of this type of pin placement is evident in gripes heard at the 19th hole.

12 Feet from Fringe

In general, pins should be placed as the USGA recommends — at a relatively level area minimum of 12 feet from the fringe of the green and in accordance with the conditions of the day, but not in an unfair position to receive a well executed shot. Fairness and variety are the best guides to proper pin placement. There are no hard and fast rules for establishing pin placements. Yet, when the tenets of fairness, variety and observation aren't followed, many players, pro and duffer alike, voice dissatisfaction.

I recently attended two well publicized tournaments, the Canada Cup at Royal Kaanapali in Maui, Hawaii and the Crosby National Pro-Am. The courses on which these tournaments were played provided vividly contrasting examples of the proper and improper placement of holes.

Let me emphasize that my remarks are not made to be critical, *but to be constructive*. My observations have indicated that mistakes in pin placement are so general as to be a blind spot in the course management program.

Design Directs Pin Location

The Royal Kaanapali course typifies the philosophy of flexibility of a Robert Trent Jones design. This is particularly so with the greens. The greens are large and undulating. Though natural in appearance, the greens were designed with a definite purpose in mind. In general, the rolls and mounds on the greens guard pin positions. A trap may be placed in conjunction with a slope on the green so that a shot into the green will have to be accurate in distance and latitude to end up near the hole. The mounds and rolls

USGA to Hold Regional Green Section Conferences

The green section of the USGA will conduct a series of three regional conferences in Pittsburgh, Mar. 22, St. Louis, Mar. 24, and in San Francisco, Mar. 26. Each meeting will deal with the subject Fairways and the Rough. Among the categories to be discussed in speeches and by panels are: fairway conditions the good player wants and expects; Techniques for efficient maintenance of rough grasses; Trees and shrubs in the rough; and Renovation and Irrigation of fairways. Sessions are scheduled in each of the three cities from 10 am to 1 pm and from 2 pm to 4 pm. Chairmen will be: Pittsburgh, Fred Brand, Jr., St. Louis, Joel Loveridge; San Francisco, Lynn A. Smith.

of the green prevent most of the poorly played shots from ending up near the hole.

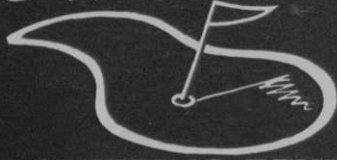
The first day of the competition of the Canada Cup was the first annual world Pro-Am in which I participated. The greens had just been brought into shape under the direction of my father, O. J. Noer and J. D. Kilpatrick, supt. It became obvious as we played the first few holes that the pins had been set in extremely difficult and, in some cases, unfair places.

Keep Off of Slopes

It is not the intention of the designer to have the pins set on the slopes leading up to a pin position, but this was the case on many of the greens that day. These slopes, which exist on a large contoured green, are similar in purpose to the small slopes approaching the smaller greens of a former era. A shot landing on them simply doesn't roll much further uphill. But to set a pin in these slopes is similar to setting it on the front of the approach of a green. It is unfair and is not intended by the designer. Putts will break so severely on these slopes that even the shortest putt will give the world's best pros the jitters.

There were many complaints among the
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Pin Placements

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pros and amateurs about the pin placements during the Pro-Am. Even so, the best putters had few problems, as evidenced by Arnold Palmer's course record round of 65. However, the tournament committee then delegated my father to set the pins. Since he had planned the course, it was felt that he should decide the pin positions in conformity with what was intended in the design. The next four days the pins were set in different locations each day. The scores were quite good, even on this long, difficult layout.

At Pebble Beach in late January, the pins were placed from a different point of view. Both Pebble Beach and Cypress Point courses, which were designed in the early golf period in this country, have noticeably smaller greens than modern courses. Although the pins are moved from day to day, it is very difficult to find pin positions of great variation.

When we recently remodeled the 8th green at Cypress Point we found a putting surface of only 3500 sq. ft. Modern putting surfaces average 7500 sq. ft. or more per green. On many greens on the older courses the player rarely has a putt of more than 20 to 25 feet from anywhere on the green. On many of the greens on these courses, the player feels that if he hits the green, he has a good chance for one putt. This does not afford great flexibility and causes traffic problems. During a tournament in wet weather, such as the Crosby, spike marks and scuff marks are a real problem on small greens.

On the third day of the Crosby, the 17th green of Pebble Beach had the pin in the back left corner. The tee was also all the way back making a minimum 220 yd. carry. That day the wind blew as much as 45 miles an hour and even Jack Nicklaus with a full driver was short of the green, let alone the pin area. Although the pin setter may not have been aware that the wind would blow that strong, it was clear early in the morning that the wind was going to be blowing all day. Pin placement should be consistent with tee placement in such circumstances.



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The original concepts of the game, so notably preserved at St. Andrews, indicate how the course is to be set up on a given day.

Adjusted to the Winds

There, the enormous, severely contoured greens, serving both the outgoing and incoming players, are adjusted with the tee markers for the winds of the day. At St. Andrews the tee markers are to be placed on the back of the tee when the shot is downwind, and on the front when upwind to equalize the relative qualities of each hole. Pin placement is also adjusted to even the quality and difficulties of the outgoing and incoming nines. Downwind, the pin is likely to be in the back of the green giving more room for the shot to land on the hard greens and roll to the back, also making a somewhat longer shot. Pins are in the front upwind to give a golfer a chance to reach the general area of the pin.

The intent of modern architecture is to re-establish these ancient and honored principles. Pins and tees should be adjusted according to climatic conditions of the day as well as the purpose of the day's play.

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Kennedy Club to Golf Museum

A 4-iron, with which the late President John F. Kennedy almost made a hole-in-one, has been presented by Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy to the golf museum of the USGA. The late President used the 4-iron while playing the 130-yard, 17th hole at the Hyannisport Club, Hyannis Port, Mass. His ball came to rest a few inches from the hole. The shot is said to have given him his greatest thrill in golf.

Athletic Institute Report

The Athletic Institute, Chicago, Ill., claims that the total number of golfers increased from 6.5 millions to 7 million between 1963 and 1964. The Institute's survey of participant sports ranks golf No. 15, behind volley ball, table tennis, shuffle board, water skiing and others. About 60,000,000 people are said to play volleyball.