

Does your course cheat?

Is faulty design costing your players 2 or 3 strokes a round?

by Stan Sousa

Golf is tough enough without having your course cheat your members out of two-to-three strokes every round. And, you don't have to be a professional designer to find defects that increase a members' scores.

See if some of the following examples of holes that create extra hardships for the golfer exist at your course.

A perfectly outlined tee, with sharp borders, may look beautiful but it also causes a golfer to line up with its edge. The result is a shot that may be straight but far from the intended line of flight. Faulty design, unwise mowing, or poor maintenance practices create these bordered tee areas.

"Any tee with sharp lines has a subconscious effect on the golfer," agrees William F. Mitchell, golf course architect of Huntington Station, N.Y. "The average player knows where he wants to hit the ball, but once he's on an outlined tee, he ruins his shot by moving his body parallel to the boundary." The result may be a well hit ball but it will be away from the hole, perhaps in the woods or in the rough.

Mitchell was a pioneer of "non-symmetrical" tees—tees that point nowhere. The idea was first used at the Atlantis Country Club in Florida. Rounded tees, instead of the rigid, rectangular types greeted golfers.

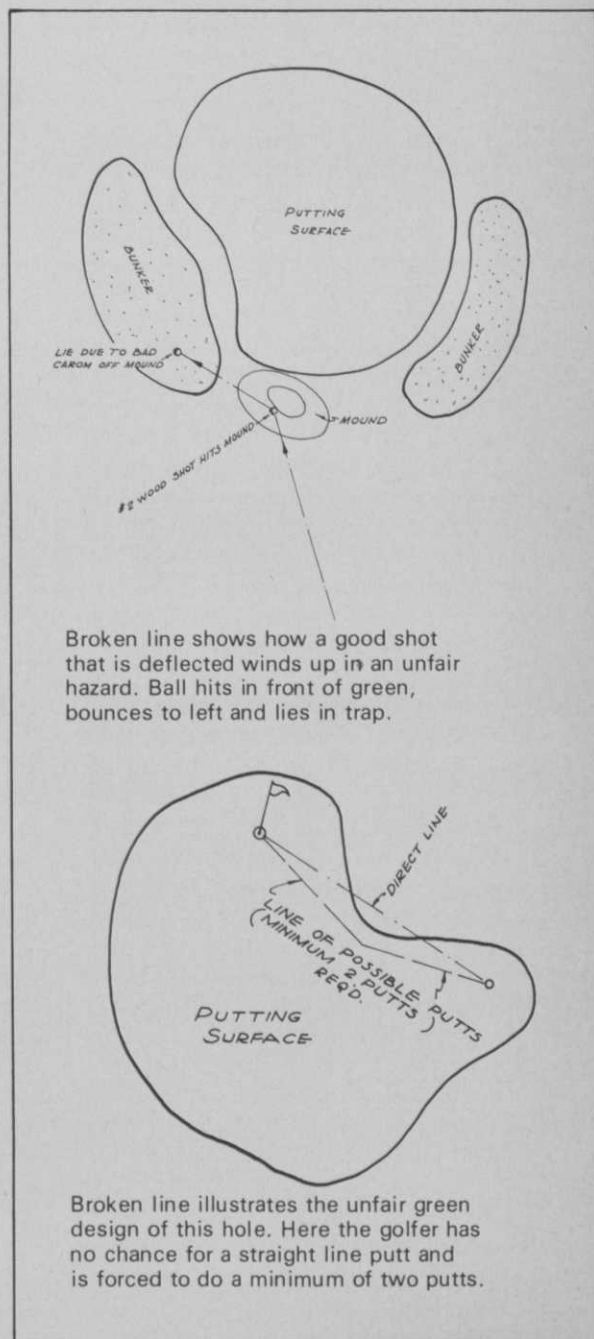
Today's modern tee areas now average about 6,000 square feet. In the long run, they are more economical to maintain and add beauty to the course. And, golfers should not be scowled at for taking divots on short hole iron shots. The higher the iron, the bigger the divot. It's the way golf was meant to be played.

A lot of trouble also turns up on approaches to the green where "gimmick" contours appear. (See illustration).

These ill-conceived obstructions actually aid a poorly played shot and guard against a proper approach to the green. Since a lucky shot now and then is always appreciated, the golfer becomes furious, and rightfully so, when luck destroys a well-played shot.

Once a golfer is on the green, he should be able to line up his putt directly with the cup. If he has to "detour" because of a ravine, the game becomes luck rather than skill. (See illustration).

Your course is also costing players strokes if greens





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Continued from page 55

require putts longer than 20 yards in any direction. If they're larger, a player should rightfully use a pitching wedge to get to the cup.

Take a long, hard look at your traps. Are they doing the job golf meant them to do? A fairway trap so deep that it requires a sand wedge to get free is "gimmicky golf." These belong alongside greens and, here again, if a well-played shot doesn't get you on the green, something else is wrong that should be corrected.

"It takes more skill and imagination to design a course that's different, but in accordance with the rules, than it does to throw a palm tree in the middle of a trap," Mitchell points out.

Your course should always give a player a chance and a decision to make. A well-designed par-5 should employ a driver, a wood, and a short iron to the green. A player who flubs his drive should be able to make the green with two well-played woods. On "gimmicky" courses, a bad tee shot often leaves a golfer in a hopeless position. He might just as well pick up and forget the hole.

Are your par-5's designed fairly? Does your course have sharply bordered tees or other "gimmicky" situations? Golfing injustices such as these can be easily corrected. And, you can bet that your golfers will not only be aware of the improvements, they will also appreciate an "honest" course. □

Is this any way?

Continued from page 43

or look at, and also ask them sometimes where they've been traveling and if they know about any new styles.

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