



CONVERSATIONS AMONG ARCHITECTS

Although it isn't much publicized, the annual meeting of the *American Society of Golf Course Architects* has a deep and far-reaching influence on golf.

Discussion among the architects would have been interesting, probably helpful, to the United States Golf Assn. and Royal & Ancient committees considering a change in golf ball specifications.

Architects admitted that rarely is there a par-five hole that can be built on a golf course for which amateur golfers pay. There are a few par-five holes for "strong backs and weak minds," but none of them are really noteworthy. With the present ball, most of those who can get sponsors for circuit work can reach the par fives in two big shots. Those who can't are close enough to chip or pitch for one putt.

The par-three holes or the short par fours are the ones that now separate the men from the boys and give the smart sharpshooters, who pay for the place, a chance to get a par with a four- or five-wood tee shot when the pro was using a medium iron.

In their casual talks, the architects searched, without much luck, for good, interesting, testing holes on courses where the design talent of expert playing professionals had been exercised. "They are good advertising, but are not by temperament or ability highly competent to design holes for the entertainment and testing of 99 per cent of golf players," was the architects' consensus on the collaboration of big name pros with experienced architects. It was suggested that there's big difference between golfers who play golf for

fun and those who play for money.

The talk recalled Tommy Armour's comment, "I know we've got a lot of great golf architects, but where are our great golf courses?"

The architects have answers in the sites they were given on which to design golf courses. The Almighty Himself couldn't have put a decent golf course on those areas.

The architects tried to define a first-class architect. That's a problem that club managers, superintendents and professionals have been trying to solve with their membership qualifications and certification programs.

Some genuinely great courses that have stood the test of years have been designed by amateurs. Among them is Merion, which Hugh Wilson designed after studying British golf courses for six months. He got a famed quarry hole on the order of the one at Harry Vardon's course, Ganton. Maybe the big achievement was in not having succeeding green committees change it.

The architects continued to debate about the relationship between the architect and the building contractor. Some architects maintained that the development and use of competent golf course contractors provide the best protection first-class golf course designers have. They asserted that the golf architect represents the client, as other architects do in other fields.

The reverse argument was that an architect with a fully-qualified construction superintendent and sound advice from an agronomist and watering and drainage experts did more for the client than fellows who were primarily experts in earth moving.

After years of trial and error and

success it was generally agreed that the United States Golf Assn. green construction specifications stood up well.

How to get a first-class construction foreman to represent the architect and think for him in emergencies was agreed to be one of the architect's toughest jobs after the course left the drawing board. Getting a genuinely first-class man to work with the course building crew and stay on as superintendent after the course is completed is one of the most difficult jobs in golf business, architects said. When such a man is secured, he is worth more than he is paid.

That kind of man saves the architect money, time and headaches plus the criticism architects get for not staying on the job. This man's advice in the choice of maintenance equipment is valuable, architects noted, because some equipment work very satisfactorily on some courses but don't work well on others.

Design and engineering to control the heavy and rising maintenance costs and difficulty in getting dependable labor accounted for considerable exchange of observations among architects.

Problems of coordinating golf course design and building sites, roads, landscaping and so on, in the golf-real estate developments, which are a large part of golf projects these days, were related. Too often the golf architect is called in too late in this planning and the right answer never can be found.

Most golfers seem to think they are golf architects. A few hours listening to validly competent, experienced architects talk about their responsibilities would be bright education for those who

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don't really know what a golf architect has to do.

George Chane, prominent financier, is chairman of the PGA advisory committee and president, National Golf Fund. He is an alumnus of the caddie prep schools in Massachusetts. Chane was a bright kid carrying bags at the Essex CC, Manchester, Mass. He attracted the attention of professional Eugene (Skip) Wogan, who promoted him into the shop as an assistant. There he and Joe Capello, another alert, ambitious youngster learned to make clubs with Wogan and Matt and Alex Campbell.

Ray Gerber, retired superintendent, Glen Oak CC, Glen Ellyn, Ill., adds another job to his busy retirement schedules. He's now editor of the Midwest Assn. of Golf Course Superintendents' monthly Bull Sheet. Gerber is a past president of the GCSAA and received the Charles Bartlett memorial award for the public relations work he did for superintendents around Chicago.

More golf directors named: *Chuck*

Matlack for Sea Island Resorts, building Oristo GC at Edisto Beach, S.C., and *Brien Charter* for the three courses of the Country Club of Miami, Fla. Bears out what we've been saying for four years, that the top jobs in pro golf go to professionals who have executive temperament and knowledge and know what's going on in course and clubhouse management.

Joe Lee, once the late Dick Wilson's aide and now a top architect on his own designed Errol Estate G & TC, which opened recently at Apopka, Fla. *William H. Blakely* finished 18 for Sam Volpe's Round Hill CC as part of a \$5 million, 300-acre near East Sandwich, Cape Cod Bay, Mass. Course opens in May. Owen Griffith, retired golf writer whose "been around" says that Blakely has added a great picture to scenic country.

David H. Fritz, secretary and superintendent, Highland Park (Ill.) Park District, recently discovered a list of players and visitors to the greenkeepers tournament, August 26, 1929, at A.D. Lasker's Mill

Road Farm course, southwest of Lake Forrest, Ill., where the USGA Green Section had established turf experimental plots highly valuable to the area. About 230 registered.

Henry Williams Jr. and *John Inglis* both 85 and still playing pretty good golf, were recalling at the PGA Seniors championship, 60 years prior, winter pro jobs. Inglis built a course at Fort Myers Beach and Henry was at Ormond Beach in 1904. He went north to build courses.

No other sport comes remotely close to golf in university scholarships awarded caddies for intellectual and character qualifications. The Western Golf Assn. alone this year has 850 at 29 universities. The Western's Evans Caddie Scholars held awards in excess of \$2,700,000. More than 85,000 golfers contributed over \$1,200,000 to WGA scholarships last year. There are 27 other golf associations awarding caddie scholarships. Most sponsoring associations check up on the performances of their proteges by a plan devised by the WGA. □



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