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Practice Courses On Small Areas

By PETER HENDERSON

I FEEL somewhat embarrassed over the manner in which many people have been crediting me with having originated the Pitch and Putt courses that have created so much interest during the last few months. This is not fully merited—for all that I have done has been to take a thought which has been in the minds of many of us and redress it and revamp it more or less attractively and publish it as a part of the general service of our firm.

From time to time, I have had occasion in the past to send out the results of our experiences and special experiments in golf construction and maintenance but nothing that we have distributed has provoked the comment and correspondence, as has this suggestion of Pitch and Putt golf courses. Two or three years ago, when we placed ourselves on record as to over-fertilization and over-medication, we felt that the hundreds of letters that came to us would be a record for all time but great as the interest was in that subject, I think that this is going to be very much larger.

As some who will read this may not have seen the original pamphlet, I would like to explain that it is

a suggestion for the building of nine and eighteen hole Pitch and Putt courses upon from two to six acres; courses that will in effect reproduce the last thirty to fifty yards on each hole by eliminating the drives and the brassie and full iron shots.



PETER HENDERSON

Mr. Henderson is the President of Peter Henderson & Co., New York City. He comes from a long line of seedsmen and is looked upon as one of the leaders of the seed trade of the world. The readers of the Greenkeeper, however, probably know him best for his contributions to Golf. He has had a varied but very complete experience and is competent to write upon any phase of golf course construction or maintenance.

In the short space of the original article, it was not possible to include all of the many things that were really a part of the story but I felt that the men to whom it was going—were a class of men who could put two and two together and make five by supplying the other one out of their own minds; in fact, there have been a number of valuable suggestions that have come to us from chairmen or greenkeepers.

One greenkeeper in telling me that he had already started clearing the ground, made the comment that it was going to be a wonderful thing for him in that he could keep the professional and his pupils from using the eighteenth approach fairway and green for practice. Another—and in this instance it was the professional—said that to him it would be almost invaluable in that his greatest difficulty with his pupils was the difference between practice and competition. He felt sure that one round of an

eighteen hole Pitch and Putt course would give more benefit than several hours with an approach iron and putter on the practice ground.

A chairman wrote me that his particular burden was the ladies and the junior members of the club. The ladies were somewhat militant and they insisted upon the right to play on Saturdays and Sundays. He felt that by turning the short course over to the ladies and the juniors on Saturdays and Sundays, he would solve a problem which has been one of the worries of his term of office. "I rather feel," he writes, "that I am going to have to reverse the situation and that I shall be obliged to make a new rule to keep the men off the short course during the days that it is turned over to the others."

PRACTICAL MEN READ THE GREENKEEPER

THERE is hardly a reader of the GREENKEEPER who is not a practical man. All of you have your own opinions as to the possibilities of these courses and I have no doubt that during the next few months, there will be a number of new angles to the thought that will have developed out of the actual experiences of so many men who are thoroughly conversant with their subject. As I look back over my years of active business, I think that I have really gotten more new ideas and new variations of old ideas from my contacts from time to time with the men who have done so much to make golf the great sport that it has become in this country than from any other source.

Another angle to these courses and one which I think eventually is going to be a very important one, is the building of short courses upon the smaller private estates. It is a very pleasant thing to have a private golf course but, unfortunately, the acreage required and the original and the maintenance cost of a full-sized course is so large as to make it practically prohibitive except on the very large estate of the wealthy owner.

On the other hand, a Pitch and Putt course occupying from three to six acres and costing from four to five thousand dollars, presents a possibility that will be welcomed by many men. There is hardly a club but that has several or more men who have the ground available and are in a position to have a course such as this. I can see no good reason why the greenkeeper of a club could not in addition to his other duties, take care of the building

of one or two of these courses under the supervision of a competent architect.

Then again, I know of a number of instances in the vicinity of New York, where courses of this type will be built this spring for use by the general public and several of these will be built by men who are successful miniature golf course operators. They realize fully that there is little in common between miniature golf and the Pitch and Putt Golf Course idea but nevertheless there has been a desire growing in the minds of hundreds of thousands of people to play something that is nearer actual golf than what they have been doing.

In every instance, we have tried to emphasize that the Pitch and Putt course must be in every respect real golf and that none of the novelties and gadgets of the miniature course can be permitted upon the Pitch and Putt course. As a matter of fact, the only change from the long course is that the greens are smaller and that we have eliminated the drives from the tee and the brassie and full iron shots of the regular course and started the play on each hole at that point.

Bobby Jones is much the same as many other golf players in those shots. There are a number of men who can equal or even better him in that part of each hole but the thing that makes him the golfer par excellence of all time is his uncanny deadliness up to and on the green. That is where most players both amateur and professional are the weakest and we give them an opportunity to concentrate upon that part of their game.

Then again, there are many men of advancing years who enjoy golf but to whom the three or four miles of an average eighteen holes are more than their years and condition permits. An eighteen hole Pitch and Putt course will appeal to them because they can get all of the pleasure and thrill with less than a mile to go.

TIME ELEMENT IS IMPORTANT

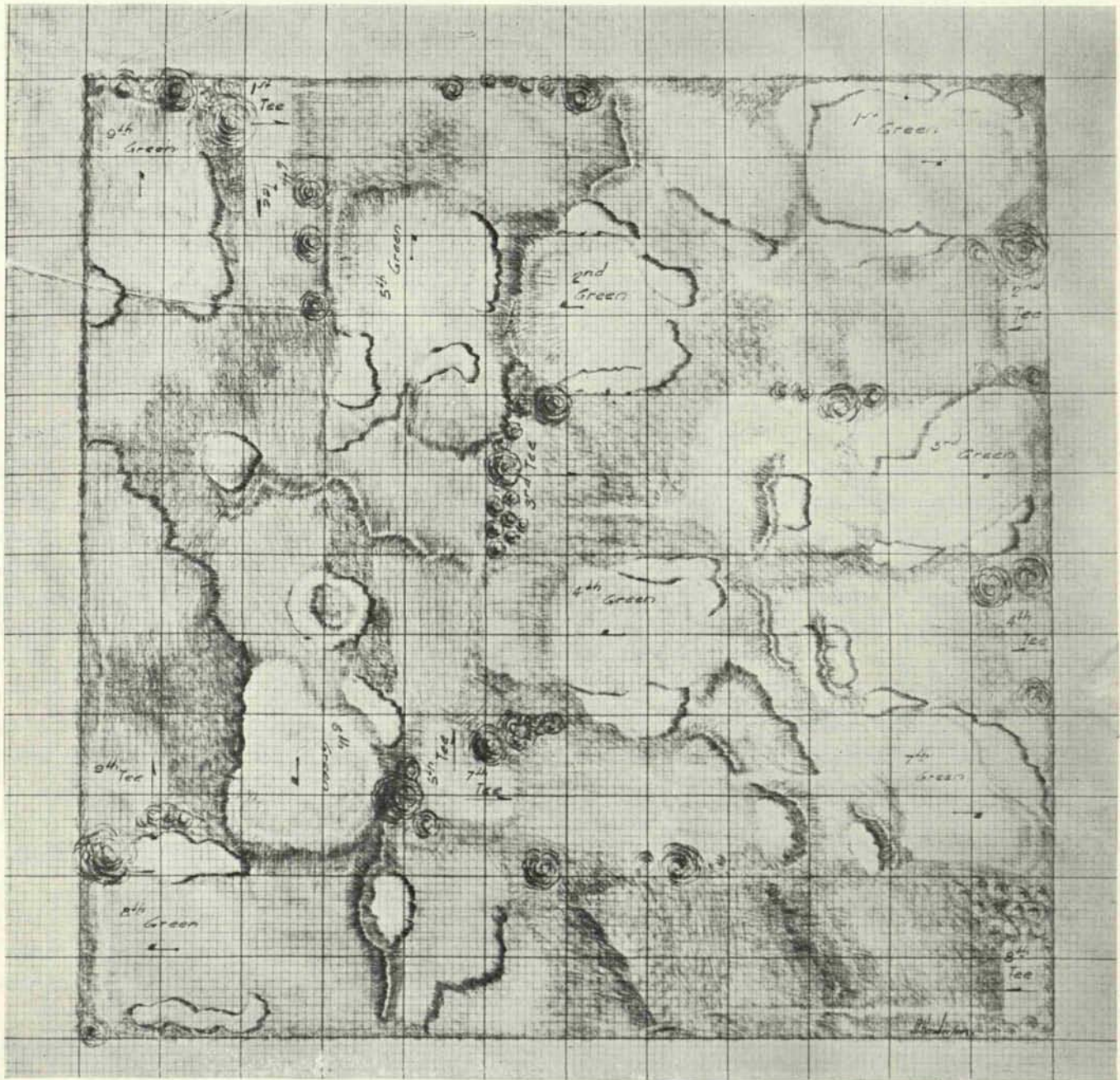
THE time element is also an important item. A par of 72 on the full course will take three hours to play while a par of 48 on the short one, means about an hour to play. One-third of the time and two-thirds of the strokes and the most interesting also.

But these things are all so obvious to the trained mind that I feel sure now that we have got started,

that we will see a large number built next year and from my knowledge of them, they are going to be very popular indeed.

I would urge that the short course be designed by

an architect and preferably one who is enthusiastic over these courses. If my own experience might make my suggestions of value, I should be glad to have you write me.



Suggested Layout for
 Nine Hole
 PITCH & PUTT GOLF COURSE
 Maurice J. McCarthy, Golf. Arch't.
 For
 Mr. Peter Henderson

10-5-30

Hole	Length	Par	Handicap
1	82	3	2
2	56	3	7
3	55	3	8
4	50	3	9
5	60	3	5
6	75	3	3
7	65	3	6
8	105	3	1
9	75	3	4

Total Length, 628 Yards.
 Par—27.