

The "Golden Anniversary Challenge" presented by the American Society of Golf Course Architects for GCSAA members immediately got my attention.

Having been with the PGA Tour for seven years as both a construction and golf course superintendent, I had worked with some of the best tour players in the country as well as some of the best people in the golf industry.

I was fortunate to learn from these people what makes a challenging, but fair, golf course.

The property selected for the contest consisted of a 327-acre site, mostly wooded, with three meadow sites, a large pond and a creek that

presumably had adequate flow for irrigation purposes. The topography was moderately sloping with an overall elevation change of about 180 feet.

I studied the "topo" for about three days, and then started to draw in corridors for holes, based on natural features, orientation to prevailing winds, the sun and topography.

I looked for natural areas to incorporate water features such as ponds. Finally, I chose sites for the clubhouse, cartbarn, parking lot, practice facility and maintenance facility.

I designed number 13 first. It was a natural, along the existing creek, with no significant amount of disturbance to the creek or the surrounding area. The second holes created, numbers 3 and 4, were worked around the new ponds on the south side of the property. I wanted the 1st and 10th tee as well and the 9th and 18th green, to be near the clubhouse, for operational purposes.

I used the topography and the remainder of the natural features to route the remainder of the holes to make a continuous loop. The side hill, par 3, 12th was the only "forced" hole in the design, due primarily to the fact that at one time during the drawing, I only had 17 holes and needed a return to number 13.

Design test builds respect for the game



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Liability concerns merit attention

Yardage is fairly well-balanced, with some long, tough 4 pars as well as a moderately short par 5. Fairway bunkers on longer 4 and 5 pars is set up more for target/definition or collection more so than penalty, while on the shorter 4 pars, the bunkers are more penal.

I tried to incorporate "bail outs" around the greens so that there was a safe area to recover from with either a putter or a wedge. Landing areas are generous, with no blind shots. Each par 3 has a special feature that stands out--bunkering, water, length or severity of green contour.

Even if I hadn't been one of the three finalists in the ASGCA's contest, the exercise made me more aware of how a good golf course design compliments the game and preserves the environment. A superintendent's responsibilities include maintaining and fostering the integrity of the architect's original design, and having a thorough understanding of the game of golf and how design leads to success. **LM**

Guest columnist David Anderson, Evergreen Country Club, Haymarket, Va., was a winner in the ASGCA's "Golden Anniversary Challenge," held to mark the Association's 50th year.