

Planning Holes to Necessitate Special Kinds of Shots

By Maynard M. Metcalf

Is it not good golf architecture to provide in an eighteen-hole golf course not only such a variety of holes as to call for the use of all the major clubs, but also holes so planned as to compel a variety of shots with at least such of these clubs as are used in approaching, while allowing on other holes a choice of several sorts of shots? Most "natural" holes allow too much latitude in choice of club and kind of shot in coming to the putting green. On many otherwise good courses one finds a strange sameness in the greens and their trapping. On other courses, however well the holes may be planned, poor care of the fairways just short of the greens makes nearly all the greens in effect "island greens," compelling a dead-stop approach, since predictable result can not be gotten with a ball which strikes short of the green and runs up.

This is one of the commonest defects in otherwise good courses (witness one really fine course in Massachusetts, to most of whose greens a dead-stop approach is necessary if one does not wish to trust to Providence for a normal bound).

I believe a good course should provide some holes best reached by a run-up midiron shot, others playable only with a dead-stop ball, and others calling for a pitch and run. This last can be compelled by making a green so heavily contoured with slopes in different directions as to preclude a high back-spin approach.

For all holes, except a proper number designed to compel a back-spin approach, the fairway just short of the green should be true-surfaced and so well turfed and well cared for as to allow reliable calculation of the behavior of a ball lighting upon it. This does not mean at all that the approach fairway must be leveled. It may to advantage have broad even slopes, but on these slopes there should be no minor irregularities and the turf should be true. Cuppy turf on the fairways just short of the greens is one of the most serious of defects and by no means an uncommon one.

Should not every good course have not less than two one-shot holes and a couple of two-shot holes which compel a high back-spin approach? Should not one of the four call for this shot at not less than 145 yards? Should not every good course have at least a couple of holes necessitating approaching by pitch and run, there being no open access for a run-up shot and too irregular contouring at the green to permit a high approach to the green itself? Such holes are very rare on North American courses. Ituzamgo at Buenos Aires, Argentina, has one fine hole of this sort; 140 yards, a beautiful smooth saucer for the front half of the green, the far half of the green elevated about three feet and so contoured with slopes in all directions that the bound of a high ball can not be calculated from the tee. Of the rest of the holes on a course, should not a number allow choice between a run-up, a pitch-and-run and a back-spin approach, weather and other conditions and even the player's whim influencing the choice? It seems that a good course should train its golfers to versatility as well as to good distance and to accuracy both in direction and distance.