

Why Not Six-Hole Courses?

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While 18 holes constitute a standard golf course, there is nothing in the Rules which gives any official standing to nine holes as a unit.

Limitations of population, resources or ground frequently preclude the construction of an 18-hole course, and there is a general feeling that in such a case the course built must consist of nine holes. Tradition does not support this feeling.

In days of old, golf courses were of widely varying hole numbers. In Scotland, Bruntsfield Links, the oldest course in the world where golf is still played, had only six holes; North Berwick, seven; Gullane, 13, and later 15; Musselburgh, five, and later eight; and Montrose, 25.

Wimbledon had only seven holes until 1870, when Tom Dunn extended it to 19. At Blackheath, three rounds of the seven-hole layout constituted an official match. The first British Open Championship was played at Prestwick in 1860. The course had 12 holes and the championship test was three rounds, totaling 36 holes.

St. Andrews Influence

At St. Andrews they played out from the clubhouse to a series of nine greens, and then back to the same greens to complete an eighteen-hole round. The gradually established pre-eminence of St. Andrews in the world of golf thus set the accidental number of 18 as the standard for a round of golf, and nine holes as an unofficial unit of such round.

The sub-unit of nine holes is mainly used to permit Nassau scoring in team competitions and friendly wagers. How much more interesting six-hole units would be, where one point could be scored for each six holes and two for the match — four games instead of three. When the layout brings the ninth hole to the clubhouse, it permits short rounds



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and an additional starting point at crowded hours. Were the sixth and the twelfth greens at the clubhouse, these advantages would be greatly enhanced.

The principal gain, however, in the recognition of six holes as a standard sub-unit of a complete course is that it would encourage small communities to build six-hole layouts and feel they had a real golf course. In building a six-hole course as compared with the development of nine holes, costs are materially slashed, 25 per cent less land is required (the same clubhouse, parking, service and practice areas are needed for each), a one-third saving is effected in course construction costs, and, when necessary, two men can usually maintain the set-up. Three rounds would make up a standard match and, should future conditions warrant, the six holes may be extended to nine, 12, or 18 holes.

The popularizing of six-hole golf courses would not only spread the game to many communities that now feel they cannot afford to build or maintain a golf course, but smaller universities and secondary schools could provide golf for their student bodies, and industrial or-

ganizations for their personnel. For this latter group this possibility should be especially valuable at a time when every effort is being made to break up vital manufacturing operations into smaller units located at spots comparatively safe from atom bomb attacks.

Six-hole units should not be poor tests of golf ability or monotonous if, in the design, due consideration is given to hole-length variation and the device of multiple tees is used to the utmost. A suggested yardage table is appended:

POSSIBLE MULTIPLE TEE LENGTH VARIATIONS

HOLES ARRANGED IN ORDER OF LENGTH, NOT IN PLAYING SEQUENCE

<i>Yards Length Average</i>	<i>Yards Length Minimum</i>	<i>Par</i>	<i>Yards Length Maximum</i>	<i>Par</i>
130	100	3	160	3
190	160	3	220	3
330	300	4	360	4
390	360	4	420	4
450	420	4	480	5
530	490	5	570	5
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
2,020	1,830	23	2,210	24
x 3	x 3	x 3	x 3	x 3
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
6,060	5,490	69	6,630	72

If six-hole courses are accepted, the golfer whose age approaches 60 or 70, and who needs the relaxation and exhilaration six holes will bring, can find it without the fatigue and strain which 18 holes sometimes produce. The man who cannot escape the clutches of business before 4 or 5 o'clock can easily get in a full round of six holes just before or after dinner. One will no longer be required to take off half a day to enjoy golf and can, by thus playing at frequent intervals throughout the week, instead of week-ends only, improve his golfing ability beyond belief.

Occasionally the opportunity is presented to use limited areas in congested zones for golf. Witness the Mid-City Golf Course on 60 acres within 20 minutes of Chicago's loop. This course, built

on the unstable filled excavation of a huge clay pit, has not only transformed an unsightly dump into a park but has provided a valuable recreation ground for the dense population surrounding it. Almost half of its week-day play occurs in the evening after 5 o'clock, when the twilight golfers — few of whom get in over fifteen holes, many nine or less — take their daily workouts after hours of confinement.

At luncheon one day last summer in Chicago, Herb and Joe Graffis, of GOLF-DOM, Bob Harris, golf course architect, Ted Woolley and the writer agreed after a lengthy discussion that the idea of six-hole golf courses was a sound one, that it would enable many more people to enjoy the game, and that its adoption should be encouraged.

DIFFERING VIEWS OF CREEPERS

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thing and signal to the players behind you to come through."

We confess that this is a viewpoint that had escaped many of us in the uproar to speed up play. Regardless of how many are on one side or the other,

we salute the writer of the FORWARD box for at least reminding us that privileges are not confined to those who agree with us.

It all boils down to the principle upon which the Constitution of the United States is predicated: our liberties end at the point where they begin to encroach upon the liberties of our fellow men.