

# Why the Low Scoring at Meadow Brook

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The Meadow Brook Club, on Long Island, has one of the nation's best-designed golf courses. It is on terrain that is ideally suited to golf. It is naturally rolling in character and bisected by a nicely flowing stream. The routing of its holes and the application of the strategy used is top-grade. The well-contoured green designs, some of the billowy, undulating type and some of the side-tilt type, demand position play as well as mechanical skill.

Why then should this example of golf-course architecture be literally torn hole from hole in the Palm Beach Round-Robin tournament last spring? On no less than sixty-one rounds out of eighty played, the professionals were able to equal or break par, and the low round was 64 by Cary Middlecoff, the winner. Golfers in the New York area who were familiar with the course were astounded that even the very best professionals could score so well on it.

Several factors were responsible for the inability of this course to defend itself.

One: the wind was less than the normal wind that one encountered on this Long Island course.

Two: the condition of the course was superb.

Three: the greens were covered with *poa annua* which was in flower, making them slow but extremely accurate, and the players were able to hit boldly for the cup. Under normal circumstances, the Meadow Brook greens are fast and treacherous. In fact, they are among the best examples of green contouring to be found anywhere. With speed, these greens demand touch and finesse. One cannot normally go boldly for the cup, as these players did. If they do, they are likely

to find themselves well past the cup and missing the return putts.

The prime factor, however, in Meadow Brook's inability to defend itself was the fact that it was last remodeled in 1923, and the strategy used then was based on the equipment and balls of that era. For that era it was a beautiful, in fact an outstanding, job of golf-course architecture. If every hole were perfect in its playing strategy and its design in 1923, demanding of all golfers the ultimate in their skill, they could not possibly be perfect now.

The equipment and the ball have outmoded the design. For instance, some of the shots that were being played into the greens during the Round Robin were played with No. 5 and No. 6 irons. These strokes were originally intended to be played with spoons or No. 2 irons,—if the wind was against, with brassies. Wooden-shafted clubs, when compared to modern equipment, appear to be like war clubs.

Meadow Brook has always won high praise from the golfers who have enjoyed it. Its appearance and playing value resemble English and Scottish seaside links. Its landscaping is admirably done, tying into the golf features to bring out the utmost in beauty and strategy. Some of its short holes are classics—the third, the ninth and the fifteenth. They have as much variety, challenge and beauty as any set of par 3s to be found on any golf course.

In order to make Meadow Brook again a great test of golf, the Club would have only to meet fire with fire—setting a few bunkers in the fairways at the target areas, based on present hitting power and tightening up the greens so that the players must hit skillful second shots to the pin or be penalized.