

What Is A Championship Course?

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The usual request made of a golf course architect by the construction committee of a new golf club is that he shall create a championship course. Most of the members probably would prefer a layout they could enjoy—they should have one. However, a championship course *can* be made pleasant for the rank and file. The ability to make it so is the architect's real test.

The term "championship course" means various things to different golfers. There is no definite standard which stamps one course as championship and another as mine-run, nor is it possible or desirable to have such a standard.

It is not desirable because the charm of golf lies in its variety, in the ever-changing mental and physical problems presented the player by weather, terrain, luck and his opponent.

It is not possible because no two golf course sites are the same, and no two architects would design the same or probably even similar courses on any given site. Could he forget his previous production, any one designer would, in all likelihood, bring forth different layouts at each succeeding attempt.

Many champions owe their success to supreme competence in one of the various departments of the game: wood club play, long irons, short irons, chipping, putting, or recovery shots. Hence, the length of a course cannot alone measure its championship calibre. The player whose long woods and irons might make him invincible on one course could be in constant difficulty on a layout where tricky short shots predominate.

Custom now dictates that a championship course must measure at least 6,500 yards. This is a fallacy, for the *distribution* of length much more than the total yardage determines a course's character. A short course may present more long shots to the green than one of considerably greater total length. This can be illustrated by the following table, which shows



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two hypothetical courses arranged in order of length:

COURSE A		COURSE B	
Length	Hole Calling for Long Shot to Green	Length	Hole Calling for Long Shot to Green
480.....	x	570	
470.....	x	555	
460.....	x	540	
450.....	x	480.....	x
440.....	x	465.....	x
430.....	x	450.....	x
415.....	x	435.....	x
400		420.....	x
385		405	
370		390	
355		375	
340		360	
325		345	
210.....	x	330	
180		180	
155		160	
135		140	
120		120	
6,120	8	6,720	5

Course A contains eight holes affording long shots to the green, although it measures only 6,120 yards; while Course B, 600 yards longer, has only five holes calling for long wood or iron shots home.

Any course, short or long, with 18 holes which require accuracy or distance and are sufficiently varied to test all departments of the game is a course fit for a championship. One which unduly rewards excellence in any one shot is not a fair test of all-around ability and thus not of true championship status.