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GOLFNOTES

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Augusta National

Golf Digest says it's the Greatest Course in America.

Is it really that good?



In football they hardly ever call unnecessary roughness *during* the play. And it happens a lot, tackling harder than they need to. They call it often when the play is *over*. Why? There's no necessary roughness justified *after* the play. It's something else: post-play assault, non-sidewalk mugging or gratuitous thuggery.

Besides our loyal companions, dogs have another function in our lives. For some people, if they didn't own a dog, you would never see them. Thank you, dogs, for your ability to force your owners to show their faces. I know there are some owners who open the door only wide enough to let the dog run out to his world-wide potty. Shame on you. Actually, those who stoop to that, I will have to look harder but I will do it to identify you for future reference.

Most young people would be able to handwrite in decent script if they learned how to hold their pen properly. Penmanship training would help too.

If you are not convinced of the pig eaters we've become, just look at people who take a slice of pizza and fold it over and eat it double. That's gorging, not enjoying the experience of eating pizza. Eating is one of life's pleasures. When you fold it, you are halving a physical delight. Why rush through it? And ponder it while we're doing it. You don't think about golf during sex. Oh, wait. Check that. Anyway, enjoy your slice. But eat it single, and savor it while you chomp. Take minibites, not killerbites.

Why did people or cultures create words with letters you don't even pronounce? What a waste. The h is silent in herb. Really? Don't say the g in gnaw. Why bother including it? And those multiple silent letters, as in though or bough. Do they have a purpose except to give teacher words for her spelling tests, and words for those people who run those spelling bees. And when are they going to have a spelling bee where Caucasian kids can win. Isn't that discrimination?

Don't tell me you can't define obscenity. You say you only know it when you see it. That's lazy thinking. Same with intuition. Define them with words. Intuition means "I know the right thing to do. I just can't dredge up *why* at the moment." Think about it and you will eventually find the words to define it. Obscenity? The test is: "How much did she take off and what is she doing about it?" Okay, now somebody tell me what emotions are? That's a tough one. I'm still thinking about that one after many years.

Children should be made to eat crust. It puts leather on their hide. Toasting the bread is a good way to start. And while we're at it, enough with the chicken nuggets and mac and cheese. If you're still letting them, you've given up.

So many people are on their second marriages. They grumble about the creep guy they married and couldn't stand so they got divorced. These people they complain about, they all get married again. Somebody wanted them. Of course the "creep" is yapping to his friends about the bad first marriage he had with that "bitch," the one that grumbled to you. She re-married too. Someone also wanted her.

Somehow there is a right way of saying things. People will understand the moment you finish. You can't describe your feckless, no-account friend with no personality and no successes? How about "He's smaller than life."?

Why do pro golfers keep their yardage books bulging in their back pockets? These days the books are filled with vital information and too large for their back pants pocket. Don't they have room for those books nearby? They'll be available when needed. They have caddies and bulky bags with pockets. Let the two of them keep the yardage book till you need them.

Do you wanna just hold hands or go right to a slobbery French kiss?

Everyone likes to quote their parents. My mother would tell me "You can catch more flies with honey than swatters," or something. Your children quote you as an expert on life matters? What made you so wise? We've become authorities on whatever drools from our mouths just because we had sex with their mother.

Dumbest scientific law ever discovered. "A body at rest tends to stay at rest." I could have told you that one and I never had anatomy. It isn't always valid either. I can't sit still. I guess I'm never "at rest." I think that law was discovered by the guy who got hit with an apple on his head. It must have been a big apple. Or maybe a guy gazing at a hammock.

It's time for the 1/2 point to be abolished from all sports scoring. In fact, let's delete it from everywhere else too. The Ryder Cup score US 6 1/2 Europe 5 1/2 should be doubled. A win is 2 points; a tie is 1. Thus, the score would double to 13-11. Now those movie reviews. You can replace it with the ten-point system we use for most other casual ratings in life. It's more accurate anyway. We ask, "Mom, on a scale of 1 to 10 how much pain are you feeling right now?" Besides, with films they will give it maybe three stars but don't tell you how many total they could award. It's usually four or five, but we don't know. It seems so awkward. If you have to explain it, ("3 stars out of 5"), then it's time to change it. ●

BOB JONES AND CLIFFORD ROBERTS

The men who made The Masters

Bob Jones was an American hero in 1930 after his headline triumphs in the four legs of the then “impregnable quadrilateral”: US and British Opens and the US and British Amateurs. No Masters yet of course and Jones couldn’t win the PGA since he wasn’t even a pro. After a ticker-tape NYC parade, he retired from tournament golf at age 28. He was admired by even non-golfers with his modesty, genial humor, generosity, good looks, and clean-cut image.

In 1930 Clifford Roberts was a Manhattan stockbroker, age 36, who had lost most of his wealth in the Crash of 1929. He met Jones probably through mutual friends at a grill sharing drinks and jokes. It may have been when Roberts was established in NYC and had joined Knollwood CC in Westchester County. Jones played in an exhibition there. As he got to know Roberts, Jones liked him more and more. Jones told Roberts he was thinking about building a golf course in the South and he wanted it to reflect his views on playability. Jones was from Atlanta, Georgia. Roberts suggested a location like nearby Augusta and he would look into the financing. Jones liked the choice of Atlanta. It would give him more privacy than Atlanta. He couldn’t play a round without it becoming a public exhibition.

Despite Roberts’s young age, Jones thought he was assured and competent. He let him become the strong overseer of the club and The Masters. Soon Jones’s judgment became correct. Roberts listened to people, thought about



Clifford Roberts

their views, then, if he accepted them, would carry them out and utilize the right people. Herbert Warren Wind from *Sports Illustrated* and *The New Yorker*, a renowned golf historian, described Roberts as a perfectionist and a detail person. He was meticulous and hard to distract from duty. Byron Nelson called Roberts the “best executive I ever met.”

In 1931, an acquaintance told Roberts about a property near Augusta. It was an abandoned nursery. Jones visited it and called it an “unforgettable experience.” He considered it already a golf course just waiting to be built.

Although Jones had a vision for building a course, he and Roberts had a giant obstacle facing them in financing, building, and attracting members to this deep South layout. It was the early 1930’s and the Great Depression was going Great. This was before interstate highways. Cars were primitive and had mostly muddy roads to get anywhere. No sleek airliners to fly you there either. Planes were just going from two wings to one. People chose railroads to chug them through a rainy night in Georgia. After some slow going, they got enough members to get the club running.

Jones then scheduled his first Masters for 1934. Clifford Roberts was the chairman and Bob Jones the President of Augusta National Golf Club (AN), and The Masters. Although it was Jones’s course and tournament, Roberts got them to the peak they enjoy today. Roberts wanted to call it “The Masters,” but Jones thought that was too

boastful. They settled on “Augusta National Invitation Tournament.” The press and everyone else considered it The Masters. Finally in 1939 Jones relented and “The Masters” became official. The original logo with the flagstick stuck in Georgia on a US map remains its current logo.

Although Jones was considered a gentleman, he earned his reputation only after some early outbursts of temper, including throwing clubs, and stalking off the course in the 1921 British Open after taking five strokes in a bunker at the 11th hole at Saint Andrews. He learned to suppress it. Apparently Jones thought he never lost it. One time he wrote after he gave up tournament golf: “To the finish of my golfing days, I encountered golfing emotions which could not be endured with the club still in my hands.” Still, all his friends vouched for his calm temperament and he seemed composed in public.



Against the image Jones portrayed was Roberts’s demon, tyrant, ogre. He could be difficult, determined, frank, and stubborn. Fostering his image, he included a glower in photos. His friends would say he wasn’t all that in private. When he spoke he paused and lined up his thoughts before uttering anything in response to a question or his turn in the dialogue. Secretive about himself, he rarely discussed his childhood. Jackson Stephens was Chairman of AN from 1991 to 1998 and became close to him the last fifteen years of Roberts’s life. He once mused, “I just figured Cliff had never been a child.”

Roberts did have a childhood. He was raised in poverty in many small towns west of the Mississippi. His father moved his family around

after failing at several businesses and jobs. Roberts began in golf as a teenage caddy in California, where he made 15 cents a bag. He got in trouble in school but somehow he regularly attended Sunday school. As a young man, he was strong and handsome, making friends and playing sports. Roberts left school during Ninth Grade. After many jobs as a teenager, including the last one selling suits in the Midwest (he liked good clothes), he pondered a better future. Wanting to leave the Midwest, he studied biographies of wealthy men to learn of their secrets to success. He aspired not to be a big fish in a little pond but a little fish in a big pond. Studying cities where he might have success, NYC was where the money is, he thought. He went there and got into stocks and other investments. Before he could establish himself, he was drafted in 1918 at the end of World War I. He was a private in the signal corps stationed at Camp Hancock in Georgia. That was near Augusta, Georgia. After that stint, Roberts returned there for vacations and golf. He liked that trains could reach it from NYC overnight and that it was warm in winter.

Roberts was the face of the Masters. Byron Nelson said that AN was Roberts’s bride. AN was his home, although he had an apartment in NYC. At the famed clubhouse he had his own room, resembling a hotel room, where he slept more than any other place. He labored to protect AN and its image. While he did so, he never tried to upstage his own hero, Bob Jones. Why would Jones put up with this monster Roberts? Apparently Roberts wasn’t as bad as portrayed, or else Jones wouldn’t have tolerated him as a longtime friend and business associate. Many other people wouldn’t have been attracted to him, especially the giants of the game. The Masters needed Roberts. Without him, eventually it likely would have faded into a curious artifact of golf lore.

Roberts was a savage octopus in control of the Club and the Tournament. He set up annual board meetings around a golf outing for members. The actual meeting was short. Someone would ask the agenda and the answer from others would be

“Nothing.” He could be callous and nasty in defense of his beloved course and tournament. He once said, “As long as I’m alive, golfers will be white and caddies will be black.” He had CBS commentators removed for speaking too freely about what they saw. When commentator Jack Whitaker described spectators around a green as a “mob,” he had him removed.

In 1948 General Eisenhower visited the course and became a member. It was his retreat from all the attention he still got from his role as Supreme Allied Commander in WWII. He became close to Roberts, even allowing him to handle and invest him money. In fact, in 1953, when Eisenhower became president, Roberts created what was called the first blind trust, insulating public officials from their holdings to avoid conflicts of interest.

Roberts remained in the background from Jones and Eisenhower and during the Masters as well. He would be in his bedroom or office and only emerged when the winner was announced. He would yield the spotlight to Jones to talk to the winner and other leading golfers.

The Masters is arguably the best-run golf tournament in the world and may be the best-run sporting event. Roberts and Jones and their successors both eschewed display. Roberts bristled if you tried any. Officials have always

refrained from the glitz prominent these days. Modest prices for items and tickets, no corporate tents or logos, few TV spots, food wrapped in green paper to blend with the turf, and spectators they call “patrons.” Although he’ll take it, the champion aspires not to the prize money, but that symbol of Masters immortality, the green jacket. In 1998 Hootie Johnson became the fifth Chairman of the Masters. He stated that the four

most influential figures in American golf have been Bob Jones, Arnold Palmer, Dwight Eisenhower, and Clifford Roberts.



Roberts standing at left, Jones in cart, and Eisenhower standing at right with putter and hat

In 1948 Jones was confined to a wheelchair from syringomyelia, a rare chronic disease of the spinal cord. He had symptoms reaching back to his days of competitive golf. He remained there until his death at age 69 in 1971. Obsessed with image, Roberts fretted about

how Jones’s wheelchair and physical decline would appear to the adoring public. In later years, Roberts tried to avoid them seeing Jones in his fragile state. But Jones resented it and his family thought Roberts was instead stealing the limelight. When Jones died, Roberts was not invited to Jones’s funeral.

In 1977, at age 83, feeble from age and illness, Roberts borrowed a friend’s airplane and flew to Augusta. Somehow he got down AN’s slopes to near a service road on the dam of the par 3 course. He ended his life there with a .45 pistol. ●



The Most Over-Rated Golf Course in America

Yes, sadly, it's Augusta National



In its February 2015 issue, Golf Digest (GD) published its 2015 rankings of America's Greatest Golf Courses. Replacing Pine Valley as Number One was Augusta National Golf Club (AN). That act was the lice on my attitude's bomber jacket about this sacred layout in Georgia. I can no longer remain closeted in the confines of my repressed, suppressed and never expressed opinion that AN is the most over-rated golf course in America. That's a shame because otherwise you can't beat The Masters and its sponsoring Club.

The Masters and its locale AN are not merely like turning our clocks ahead each spring (actually late winter), but a pilgrimage to the Church of Golf in America. Actually, golfers not dead yet believe they aren't at a church. They're where they hope a church takes them eventually. As they view it on TV, those at home silently drool and devoutly wish they were at heaven on turf—AN. The ones who get there know they're lucky. They inherited their passes or have only one arm and one leg left after paying for them. The going rate for the secondary market is about \$7,000. Yes, there is a free lottery for some tickets, which then cost only \$100.00. The rich national/National members support a club that needs no more money. Why do you think the jacket's green?



The course is maintained immaculately and The Masters is run flawlessly. Gary Player said it was the only tournament where you choke driving through the gate into the course. AN has a gorgeous setting with its emerald turf, majestic Georgia Pine and other shrubs and trees (Azelia, Magnolia, Flowering Peach, Dogwood, Redbud, Camellia, and more), halcyon royal blue waters, blazing white bowls of sand with edges shaved to the worms, bobhopenose fairways cascading from the sedate clubhouse, and fairways that soar toward the clubhouse as if to Mount Olympus. Everyone wants to come and no one wants to leave. A guest once remarked, "I rode here in the front seat and will be in the back seat going out so I can stay as long as I can." AN and The Masters are the cynosure of all golf eyes, and many non-golf ones too, in early April every year. Golfers set their calendars by it. If it's The Masters, they know spring is here and they yank their clubs from the closet. Then they go sit for four days in their barcolounger, which becomes their Old Milwaukee beer fishing boat.

Masters history soaks you with lush memories of golf lore. Throughout the course we are reminded of the immortal golfers who strode there: The Sarazen bridge at No.

15, a Palmer plaque near the 16th tee, and the Eisenhower cabin near the 10th hole. Other renowned artifacts abound: the Butler cabin, the par 3 course, Magnolia Lane, the green jacket, and the crow's nest atop the otherwise discreet clubhouse. Each year the media repeats the blessed myths that hover—the benign spirit of Bob Jones, gentlegod, the specter of Clifford Roberts, dour despot chairman. The course itself won't yield to those images. It glitters with the splendor of green and white joined by a vivid array of blooms. Each hole carries a local shrub or tree name on this former nursery and each one easterparades around the fairways at Masters time. Inside the squarish,

humble clubhouse is the apex of refined country club food and service. Outside, you get quaint and cheap food items, like pimento cheese sandwiches for \$1.50.



All of these radiant features of the AN club and its annual tourney The Masters blind us. They thwart your try at rationally assessing the AN course itself as a grand test of golf. The players, who are invited guests, are so intimidated by the blaze of these features, they bow in reverence and shun criticism. If you want to clearly evaluate AN as the number one golf course in America, you must first get ahold of yourself, put down that bourbon and water, put on your sunglasses, and fit titanium in your spine. Although AN is a great course, it does not warrant a sanctified place jabbing its butt atop the pyramid of America's best courses. We are appraising the golf course, not Bob Jones's ghost or Magnolia Lane. Yes, the surrounding beauty, the unsurpassed tradition, the meticulous care of the course are part of the GD rating. But it can support the course only so far. When we are gauging the top course in America, we must focus below where the rubber of the golf cart wheels meets the macadam of the cart path—the green, blue, and white of the layout.



To do so, we must first tell you what we think golfers expect in their golf course. Then we'll tell you what GD thinks is important in its rankings. After those, we'll tell you how we think AN does not meets these standards as the best golf course in America. ●



MEMO

To: Golf Digest

cc: Augusta National Golf Club

From: American Golfers

RE: What we like in our golf courses

Let me speak for most golfers about what we like in our golf course and what repels us. I think these principles are embedded if not expressed in the criteria GD uses for its rankings. If they aren't, they should be. Some of these principles are general; others are

more focused on AN and its distinctive elements.

Our prime interest is playing a challenging but fair course. We recognize that if we're grading those two for the best in America, challenging must mean tough, and fair must match it as it rooches up the gauge of difficulty. Fair to a hacker is not the same for a pro.

We don't mind a long putt that runs downhill. It tests our touch and nerves. But we do mind one that is down a severe slope that is next to impossible to control. We especially don't like them on fast, slippery greens. We also don't enjoy playing a course with many of them.

We like a green to have some interesting and trying rolls. We don't want it to be flat with few rolls to challenge us. By the same token, we don't like to putt green areas where the rise and fall of the surface is radical, especially around the hole itself.

We don't mind a green that is narrow and long from back to front. But we don't like to have a lot of them.

We don't mind a green that is shallow from back to front and long lengthwise. But we don't care to play many of them. We especially don't believe it is fair to have this kind of green on a long hole and especially where the green has bunkers in the middle of the front.

We know that a hole where the green is well below our approach shot is easier than a level one, and much easier than one we must hit uphill. It creates a shorter approach shot, we can get a much better view of the green, and even a bad shot will roll farther. But we don't think it is sporting to have several of them.

On a parkland course we don't mind if there are few or no trees around and close to any green. But we don't expect to play a whole round with no trees or few trees close to the green. That is hardly a challenge on a parkland course. We recognize a links course may not have any. We also expect to have a variety of tree types. One kind may predominate but not overwhelm the others.

What *Golf Digest* says they like in a golf course

1. Shot Values

How well does the course pose risks and rewards and equally test length, accuracy and finesse?

2. Resistance to Scoring

How difficult, while still being fair, is the course for a scratch player from the back tees?

3. Design Variety

How varied are the golf course's holes in differing lengths, configurations, hazard placements, green shapes and green contours?

4. Memorability

How well do the design features (tees, fairways, greens, hazards, vegetation and terrain) provide individuality to each hole, yet a collective continuity to the entire 18?

5. Aesthetics

How well do the scenic values of the course (including landscaping, vegetation, water features and backdrops) add to the pleasure of a round?

6. Conditioning

How firm, fast and rolling were the fairways, and how firm yet receptive were the greens on the day you played the course?

7. Ambience

How well does the overall feel and atmosphere of the course reflect or uphold the traditional values of the game?

To arrive at a course's final score, we first throw out "outlier" evaluations at the high and low end. (Statistician Dean Knuth, creator of the United States Golf Association's Slope and Course Rating system, does the math for us. He tosses any evaluation that's more than two standard deviations from a course's mean score.) We then total the course's average scores in the seven categories, double-weighting the Shot Values category. A course needs 45 evaluations over the past eight years to be eligible for America's 100 Greatest. golfdigest.com

We don't mind a green that has a shelf dividing it in two. We don't mind a shelf or mound in just a portion of the green. But we don't care for several of either kind throughout the course. This is especially so when the edge of the shelves are straight, rather than irregular. Those are not tricky enough and are boring to see. We also don't care for the top mound of the shelf to be too high for the bottom part. It creates a steep slope that requires too delicate a putt from the top, and too demanding a putt to reach the top.

We don't care for shelves on fast, slippery greens. And we especially dislike downhill putts once they are on the lower shelf to be on a surface that is acutely inclined by itself. Any architect can make a green with a shelf creating difficult putts that must run from one area of the green to the next. That is not fair or imaginative.

We don't mind ridges in a green. They can be a superb aspect of the up and down rolls and curves that make putting a challenge. But we don't care for pointed, not rounded, ridges that divide greens, especially when the rest of the green has few curves to it. They jar a ball off line as it crosses them. We don't expect to see many of them either. We don't want these ridges merely to be an uncreative way of making the green tougher to putt. Just as when we are driving our cars, these ridges are like speed bumps. Where used properly, they have a purpose. Otherwise, they are just irritating.

We like the fringes of the greens to have some up and down areas, with mounds or dropoffs. We don't mind some thick grass or rough close to the green. We especially don't like greens that are uniformly similar around the fringes and their dropoffs.

We don't mind some greens that are roughly rectangular or round or oval but we do mind when many of the greens are these shapes. We prefer greens that have irregular directions and shapes to their sides and their fronts. These create a variety of challenges for our chipping and pitching.

We enjoy a variety of grass lengths on the areas just beyond and aside the greens. We prefer that the areas not all be closely mown, especially on the banks or other sloping just off the green. With a bunker next to a green, we prefer that it have not all closely mown grass around it. We like a variety there too. Thick grass on the fringes of the bunkers is acceptable as another challenge.

We don't mind rough, even some that is a few inches tall. It should not be very prevalent just off the normal driving areas. But outside the normal driving areas where accurate ones should go, we expect some rough. We recognize we should be penalized for straying. But the areas there should not be free of rough or with rough that is barely taller than normal fairway height. They do not present testing challenges .

We don't mind greens that roll fast. But we do mind when they roll so fast that we are guarding against hitting our putt too hard each time. We especially are spooked when we must play fast greens with deep slopes and bothersome ridges, severe shelves and bulky mounds. We don't want to feel as if we are lagging or hitting delicate putts to the hole.

We like sand bunkers as challenges around greens and in driving areas. We prefer that they have a variety of shapes and depths and fringe grass. ●

The case against Augusta National

This dog's not that shaggy

Before I analyze AN hole by hole, here are some general critical comments I must offer. They provide an overview for grasping the specifics of my review.

First, I believe the most important aspect of a golf course is the green complexes. This is a vital part of my analysis and conclusion. Few pundits seem to recognize the critical importance of the areas around the greens. Some architects don't seem to either. They are **the** most important aspect of a course. They are the spot your ball wants to be. They are always its final resting place 18 times a round no matter its wayward journey from the tee. The golfer must always confront them; he can never avoid them.

That's not true with other parts of the course off the tee and before the green. You can skip them as much as your skills and strategy allow. Most of the course is pre-set

by nature and the golfer must deal with its shape and contents. The architect and the builder of the course can of course create their location, plant a tree, or alter their features, damming a stream to create a pond, or locating a tee at an angle that makes a natural object more of an obstacle.

They also can create other conditions to challenge the golfer, such as sand bunkers, rough, shaved grass to encourage a ball to tumble farther, mounds and other ground disturbed to inhibit a golfer's ability to hit straight and take his next shot from level, unhindered ground.

These areas away from the green are only the common, plentiful parts of a typical golf course. Yes, they can each be given fresh looks on every hole. But after a while they seem to run together and their influence is minor, unless they are everywhere and large, as an

amateur architect will betray.

Bunkers and Sand

Around the greens the sight of sand traps is unnerving. One on each side is the rule, isn't it? That isn't necessary. And it's boring too. Why does a bunker always need to have sand in it? How many bunkers have you seen around the green with thick grass (rough) in them. The few that do exist often, if it's not sand, will have grass not much more than fairway length. If you put thick grass in it, that should make it harder to get out. Do you we even need a bunker to grow grass in? Just grow it longer where a bunker might be fitting, like on a bank next to the green.

Sand is always raked in bunkers. At least it's supposed to be. What about not raking bunkers to toughen them? I know this creates a new condition for each following golfer. But, after all, does each golfer

face the same wind, rain, temperature. A field of pro golfers may play in cold, dewy, rainy, early morning and maybe hot, dry, windy, sunny afternoons? When players, caddies, and other participants, as well as spectators, trudge in the rough and beyond, they are changing the conditions for later players. What are the chances the next several shots will land in the same place? Divot holes on fairways change course conditions for those behind too, don't they? Trudging around on the greens especially around the hole, changes conditions. Maybe it's time to take in the rakes from bunkers and let disturbed sand lie.

Anyone can harden a course by installing an array of bunkers. Or insisting that every hole has water to threaten an errant drive or later shot. Or leave all the existing trees just off the fairway as you bulldoze your way through a forest. But the green complex is the one area of the course where the builder creates from scratch the entire area that will receive every golfer's approach stroke and determines his fate as he finishes the hole. No natural growths or original parts of nature remain on a green or

its constructed edges when the work is done. Maybe underneath and just off that surface, but otherwise it's all a new man-created look.

The builder-architect becomes a sculptor and can fashion any form of green and its surrounds he wishes. Yet, it's amazing the number of courses with green complexes that resemble each other. This is not limited to others on the course. They often resemble greens on other courses. Why must this be so? To a large degree the architect must dig with what

Hole No. 13 green



nature presents him for his layout. Yes, he can move earth as much as his owner can afford to pay and install bunkers and other features as he creates his unique design for this particular course. But the green area is the *tabula rasa* for the sketch of his golf course outline. As it rises from the naked ground, it reveals the personality of its creator to become like no

other green area ever made. Or emerges like too many we've seen before and blemishes his standing. Or, more likely, too many of the green complexes on the **same** course are similar. They look like 18 brothers and sisters.

Augusta's Greens

AN's greens aren't unique in golfdom. Yes, they are often huge with brilliant white sand and marthastewart trim edges. I give them credit for close-cropped edges, as it increases the risk that a ball nearby will run into the bunker. Must they all be shaved, with no rough edges? GD rankings wants a variety in the bunkers. AN could have more bunkers too. Mac and Jones thought courses had too many of them. But AN then needs to compensate by other obstacles that make it tough and challenging. AN is right to avoid what virtually all other courses have done in recent years. Where the bunker has a steep wall facing the golfer, most other courses have removed the sand from the top portion and replaced it with grass or merely reduced the overhang. Presumably this was done to alleviate washout from storms. It has always been hard to maintain sheer sandy walls of bunkers,

especially those that curl back toward the golfer. Some of these lips were also unfair. An approach would bury underneath it and the player would take an unplayable lie (in the bunker too) or open their sand wedge's clubface, and blast away, hoping his ball ends up on the green.

Those "treacherous" AN greens

Everyone talks about the difficult greens at AN. They may be mowed short and are well-maintained and therefore slick. That is an aspect of their treachery. Alas, they are a mixture of dull flatness or unfairly demanding with a few that are fairly challenging. AN has too many greens that are long and narrow from front to back (Nos. 2, 8, 9, 11, 16, and 18) or thin from front to back and too extended lengthwise. (Nos. 2 is both, 7, 11 is both, 12, and 15). The slopes are too tantalizing a test, worsened by the quick speed. The best course in America should have tough greens but not unfairly tough. Some golfers call these greens the course's "ultimate defense." Imagine if they were all fair.

AN should also have no flat greens. Those are for your municipal layout and your chip-and-putts. How

they are too flat must be explained more fully in the evaluations for each hole. These level greens are rendered "treacherous" mostly by the first refuge of the amateur architect or designer. He makes a green tough by putting a shelf on it, either a broad one across a great part of the green or confines them to some area shelves, covering only a portion of the green. They are an uncreative way of rendering a green more grueling. AN has few greens with subtle or random curves with testing rolls and knolls. Mostly the greens that can be deemed difficult are divided by large shelves with flat divided surfaces in both areas or by smaller area shelves. AN's area shelves tend to create large knolls with severe slopes, creating unfair putting areas on top and below. Another way a green can be made tougher is with a ridge, a small wave that deflects most putts off line trying to go over it. They are the speed bumps on a golf course. As we face them in our cars, they annoy golfers too and redirect a typical long putt. As you will read later, AN has too many of them, some on the long and narrow greens with the serious inclines.

Over the years AN has changed a lot. One of the wisest moves Augusta made, Jack Nicklaus says, is what they didn't change. "The greens have basically remained the same," he says. "They're very much the same greens that Jones and MacKenzie had," which lends the course a sense of historical continuity." Jack, that is the problem. When many of the greens have had deficiencies, they should have been changed. Continuity is fine where a green warrants its acclaim as a demanding but fair surface.

Uphill and downhill at Augusta

Some thoughts on areas away from greens. The most challenging holes on any course are those that require an uphill shot from the tee or an ensuing one. Golfers prefer them but they don't want an uphill green to a blind green. They can tolerate a few for variety. They know that many great holes sit at the top of a hill and, by virtue of that, they won't get a view of the green surface. Uphill holes play harder than holes that are similar level to the green and much tougher than holes where you look down to a green that is well below your lie and visible. When you can

look down to a green you are more confident in your shot's outcome too. We don't mind one or two of these downhill holes. I'm not talking about a hole that is technically downhill from the usual approach shot. Every green has some higher or lower level for the golfer's approach shot. I mean ones that are drastic dropdowns to the green. Golfers like that they can see so much around the green. They enjoy that they can top a ball and that it will get extra roll down that steep hill toward the green. But golfers regret in their heart that they are unsporting and make the hole much easier. It's okay to have a few for variety. It's better they are on long holes to shorten their approach. AN has **eight** dropdown holes. Numbers 2, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 15. This renders each hole easier, which detracts from AN's standing as a great course. It defies three of GD's criteria.

Hole No. 7 green



With so many of these holes, "variety" in the "configuration" of each hole

is diminished. It reduces "shot value," and it minimizes "resistance to scoring" by making each hole less difficult.

Augusta's evolution as a golf course

AN has no hole with twin bunkers flanking any fairway in the driving area. The uncreative architect would do it on several holes. Most golf courses that are deemed "championship" layouts will have them ready to catch slices and hooks. For years AN had either no fairways bunkers, or only one or more on the same side of the fairway in the driving area. When you combine that with a meek rough throughout the course, AN was not a difficult but sporting layout you expect for lofty repute. It was too wide open. Yet it was consistently ranked in the top courses in America. Was this open area the intentional design by Bob Jones and MacKenzie, the immigrant Scot doctor, in their philosophy of target and position golf? Apparently so. We are familiar with the massive Georgia Pines adorning AN. They are majestic and iconic. If you look at photos of the course

when it opened in 1933, you notice how few trees existed in this former Fruitlands nursery. The creators wanted target golf but left so much room for kaboom shots without penalty. They countered the open driving areas with several goofy greens that would be laughable today. They were fat boomerangs with bowling alley targets to hit. Some vestiges remain. No. 2, 8,9,16, and 18 all have long and thin greens. From that standpoint, positioning was paramount. In recent decades many mature trees have been planted in the driving areas. This has catapulted its value as a tough layout but deviated from the Jones and MacKenzie style of target golf without penalty for stray shots.

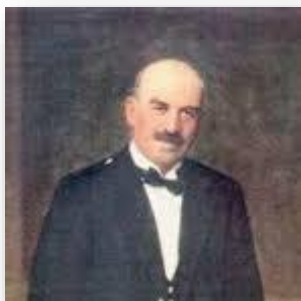
AN also seems to have few of these that would harden a course: unplayable lies, lost balls, and demanding areas around its trees. Branches are mostly high up in those Georgia pines. Few are close to the greens. Some pine needles have been added under the trees in recent years. This has toughened these areas somewhat.

Augusta National's Architects

Who designed AN? It was Alister MacKenzie (Mac), the Scottish immigrant doctor, who was the designer. Jones had his vision of what it should be. Consider him the junior

associate. They had similar ideas and Jones was a significant contributor. Mac acknowledged as much when asked, but chairman Clifford Roberts thought Mac hadn't given Jones as much credit as he should have. What role did eternal chairman Roberts play? He contributed little. His role was taking care of fundraising, managing the money, and running the club. He took the images out of their heads, and off the greenprints, and saw that they got onto the rolling land outside Augusta, Georgia.

Jones and Mac worshipped British golf courses. No American course seems to have arisen in their design of AN. However, Mac had designed that California coastal gem Cypress Point (No. 3 on GD's list). In prior ratings it has also been considered the best course in America. That layout convinced Jones to hire Mac. They agreed AN should be demanding for pros but playable by amateurs. They both eschewed penal design, like Oakmont. Jones adored St. Andrews, which became his model. That Scottish links is a spacious, irregular, mostly flat course that seems not to have a designer. It's ancient and ragged and lacks trees. AN is modern, sculpted and manicured and hilly and has trees as now a parkland layout.



Alister MacKenzie

Jones imagined his new course as a links. Yet it was miles from the sea and in a parkland setting with those imposing ski runs. It has slowly evolved into a true parkland course with more trees and now-mature trees. Jones especially admired Saint Andrews's 11th hole, a par 3 170 yards that Mac believed was close to perfect. In the 1921 British Open Jones took five shots to reach the green and stomped off. From there his maturity as a golfer began.

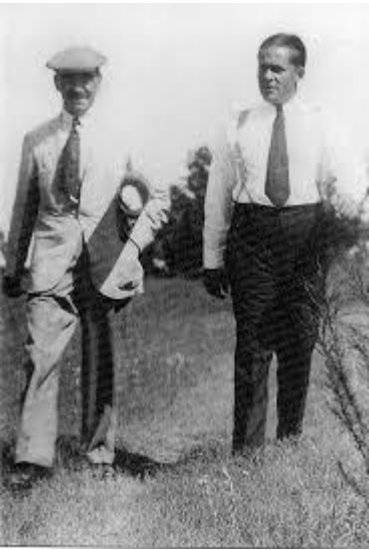
As David Owen remarked in his book *The Masters*, AN is sacred ground but not a museum. Jones respected Roberts and allowed him and some other architects to make changes over the years. The changes were not well-coordinated. More changes have been made to it than any similar championship course over the years. Roberts and Jones deemed it a work in progress. Comments from all comers were considered. Jones said it was "truly of national design." Originally Mac had the holes numbered as today. Then before construction he reversed them, probably for view by members near clubhouse



Mac gesturing with his wife at Cypress Point, California, one of his honored designs and No. 3 on GD's 2015 list of America's best golf courses.

window to be built. Mac had died before the course opened in 1933. Before the second Masters in 1935, Jones moved them back. The shady area near the 12th green, the lowest area, thawed last and he thought should be played last.

Jones set distances at fives, declaring that it was absurd to use actual yardage since it changes with tees and pins. That 0 and 5 interval remains today. Jones wanted it to be a winter course—November through April. Now it is closed from late May to early October. Jones considered a short 19th hole between the 9th and 18th greens to allow for double or nothing after a match ends. It wasn't installed. He decided the site views for a gallery or people on the back porch would be impeded.



Clifford Roberts and Bob Jones checking the "Back 18" during construction of AN.

Jones's design view was—hit your shot to the right spot for an easier next shot. Trouble on the sides was not important. If you stray from the bullseye, you won't be penalized much. You may be left with an awkward line to the pin over sand or to a green canted away from your approach. This has evolved over the years. These days, when you stray, you wind up in the trees or sand, or water, and even a modest rough.

GD's No. 1 course in the

US has only 44 bunkers. When it opened in 1933, it had half that many. Jones bunkers had random nooks and wild crannies. They were each unique, looking like spilled milk, or melting snow, unlike today's xeroxed ovals and bulging clouds. Most of AN's bunkers have adopted the typical modern style. Few of them vary from the round and soft curves of other American courses today. Still, they are deep and lies will bury.

Mac believed that a course should have feature and contour, not a series of installed hurdles. He thought American courses had too many bunkers. He wanted to remove

half of them and replace them with "grassy hollows." He built a course on Long Island called Mingay (now gone) with 19 bunkers. He wanted to use the natural sinews of native growth and the land. To him bunkers were synthetic penal obstacles, not needed to toughen a course. If you use every shrub and hillock, you won't need them. A great course can avoid bunkers and still gain elevated stature, both Mac and Jones believed.

Jones valued reachable par 5's for better golfers. No. 8 plays long as an uphill 570-yarder. No. 2 is 575 yards but plunges downhill. We all know the two on the back nine better. The dogleg left 510-yard 13th is reachable with a short iron. For years it was only around 465 yards. No. 15 leaves most pros with mid-iron or less at its 530-yard length. But four reachable par 5's are not par 5's. They're four arduous par 4's. On par 3's, Jones wanted only irons hit. None of his four were over 200 yards. No. 4 has been stretched to 240 yards; the other three remain under 200 yards.

Changes have altered the intent and nature of the Mac and Jones design. It's now a mixture of penal and strategy. Mac and Jones didn't want to punish wayward golfers; they wanted to reward straight hitters. In recent years the increased length and accuracy of the pros has triggered longer holes, more rough, and more trees near the fairways. The bunkers on the left of the 18th fairway were a frantic step taken to sanction errant drives, departing from Jones's thrust for rewarding a good shot, not punishing a bad shot. Those looming bunkers were installed in 1966 after Nicklaus's stunning 271. In recent decades and more so with Tiger and the young bombers, the holes have been radically



Jones driving off a crude tee during construction of AN on what is now the par 5 570-yard uphill No. 8 hole. Mac stands next to him in his plus fours and Hogan hat.

lengthened. They have also been radically tightened. Yet few of the AN greens have been altered much lately, which is disappointing. For qualifying as the top layout in America, it is devastating. ●

Picking Nits

My hole-by-hole Comments



Hole No. 3 Note the huge dropoff in the green toward the flagstick.

Hole No. 1 This is a solid opening hole, not too tight or laden with trouble and a decent 440-yard length. Its green is topped with tough but varied undulations. Two mounds toward the back are unfair in their falloff to the rest of the green. They are too steep.

No. 2 At the start the green was only 525 yards away and 55 feet downhill from the tee. As it was very reachable, soon a pinching front was



Hole No. 2 with its two long shallow tongues and deep sloping from front down toward the back.

sculpted into the left front of the green. This green has bunkers along each side. The jagged edges of all of MacKenzie's bunkers were

finally cropped to fairway length and rounded for ease of maintenance. His rough edges are prominent at his classic California course, Cypress Point. Today the distance is up to 575 yards but it still very reachable in two down this ski slope. With no other trouble short or wide or long except the straddling bunkers, everyone goes for it. The green is unfair with its delicate downhill putts on too-severe sloping. Its three-pronged shape is

odd (but not for AN) making pin placements that are tight enough coming over those bunkers to a downhill surface, but absurd when you realize how little room remains around the holes.

No. 3. This shortest par 4 hole of only 350 yards then

and now has had the fewest changes. It's weird with a table-top green of three leaves yielding harsh pin spots. It's got a left-side bunker. Roberts wanted a front bunker to deter run up shots. Jones and Mac said no. They believed a run-up shot would veer to the left bunker if not perfect. Run-up shots were more common in the 1930's. Greens were not watered and maintained as obsessively as they are now. A single left fairway bunker became four in 1983, which still remain. Many golfers hit iron off the tee to avoid the four traps and the encroaching trees close to the fairway on the right. When Tiger won big in 1997 he hit a drive to 15 yards from the green and bogeyed. The green's right side slants sharply to the left side. It's too much of an incline and is unfair. Otherwise it's a marvelous short par 4.

No. 4 A par 3 and now 240 yards. Before opening, one of the sons of Fruitlands Nursery, who sold the land, suggested that they plant near the greens trees that bloomed in winter. He was allowed to pick them and a palm tree was first planted for this hole. Only one is now left. Each hole is named for a flower. This one is now called Flowering Crab Apple. Modeled after the 11th at Saint Andrews, it has severe unfair undulations. With the original odd shapes of Jones-Mac greens, this one has three-tongues too. They are tawdry ways to toughen target areas on any green. The green was also too close to a public road. In 1964 the tee was re-graded for drainage, leaving it higher in front. Jack Nicklaus complained that his low screamers were clipping the tee. Re-grade toward a downward slope, suggested Roberts. No, said architect George Cobb. You'd feel like you were falling from the tee. From the outset until 2006 the distance was 190 yards. The green is well below the tee, as is par 3 No. 6. Patrons can congregate down in the hollow unseen by the golfers. These two holes resemble each other too much because of the dropoff. Yes, they have different bunkering and different greens. But their looks from the elevated

tees are so similar you can easily say they are fraternal twins. These similar par 3's are too close on the card. The green has a large shelf

no pot bunker in front as the Road Hole has. It's also a dogleg right over a hotel. The hole was listed as 450 yards for years then in 1981

Hole No. 6, a par 3 with two severe shelves in the back left and right.



that drops from the back half toward the front half. It's just too steep an incline to be fair for putts from above or from below to the shelf. That is worsened by a false front slope too sharp to be fair.

changed to 435 yards without explanation. It's a stud hole now at 455 yards into a diabolical green with large mostly-unfair humps. A steep false front means that most of the green surface is just too inclined to be sporting.

No. 5 This par 4 was modeled after the par 4 17th Road Hole at Saint Andrews. Hard to believe that. The green has

No. 6 A par 3 of 180 yards, it was based on a redan hole at East Berwick, England. A

Hole No. 5 with ridges that incline absurdly toward the front.



redan green slopes downward from the front to the back. Typically it will be a green that is canted right to left. Since it also sits well below the tee, as does No. 6, its longtime 180-yard

trees were added to the left driving area. Some were already on the right. Architect Perry Maxwell did some of this green altering work. He had been a partner of Mac.

crowded with trees. The green is ringed by five massive bunkers and is still shallow from front to back and lengthy across. The green tilts radically over a long ridge from back to front. It was so unfair that it

Hole No. 7 450 yards to a green ringed with front and rear bunkers and a green that slopes unfairly from back to front.

length requires a middle or lesser iron. It has a large front bunker there from the start but moved closer to the green years



ago. Two humpy shelves loom at the back right and left on the green. They are too severe to be fair. had to be re-shaped in 2006 to allow for a back right pin placement. The green remains unfair for the hole's 450-yard distance. It used to be a short hole, okay for the thin shape it has. Little length from back to front is not a

ago. Two humpy shelves loom at the back right and left on the green. They are too severe to be fair.

No. 7 It was modeled after Saint Andrews's 18th hole. Initially it was a short hole with a large but shallow green, no bunkers, and sitting down. From above, it resembled a drill without a bit. Roberts said it lacked character. It was obvious. The pro at the course said add a face bunker and create two sections to the green. Jones said little about it. Horton Smith, who won the first Masters, said elevate the green, add bunkers in front and move the green back and right. Jones and Roberts finally said okay. Much later

He designed many other courses, including Southern Hills, (Oklahoma), Colonial, (Texas), Crystal Downs (Michigan), and Prairie Dunes (Kansas). He also increased the rolls on the first and 14th greens. Maxwell's green curves should have been done when first built. Without them the greens were mediocre with just shelves or ridges. But Maxwell's changes were drastic, leaving severe shelves and acute inclines, and unfair putts to try.

Early on the hole was lengthened 40 yards, as players were driving past added trees to the upslope and left with only a short pitch. Today its fairway is

fair test for approaching on a long par 4, especially where it is surrounded by those five large bunkers that are also tight to the green. (See photo above left)

No. 8 Originally this par 5 was 500 yards and had a long, thin green with huge ridges on three sides. In 1956 Roberts had them removed for better spectator views. That upset Jones. The green was boring with few curves and its strange shape seemed alien to the course. It seemed on loan from a municipal layout. In time Roberts decided the sacrifice was too great and wanted the mounds restored. Finally in 1979 after Roberts and Jones were both gone, AN had

Hole No. 8 with a slim green that curves little but has a mild hump in the middle left. The green has large mounds but no bunkers.

Byron Nelson lead in restoring the mounds as they appeared originally.

In the early years golfers could approach the green from the first fairway on the left. Jones's construction had left many open areas throughout the course. Roberts eventually blocked that rout with trees down the left side and then trees short and left off the tee. Some big mounds (See photo right) on the outside of the fringes remain today, especially on the left side.

This hole is stellar with a fairway bunker right and trees along the outside, until you reach the green. It's still long and skinny and the surface remains flat, although that left hump in its middle is still there. It's a pathetic sight. Not a bunker in sight around the green. Only trouble at the green otherwise is mature trees far on the left. The only obstacle at the green is the sizeable up-and-down mounds that loom around the green. On



the left they are huge. The mounding and its slender shape and no sand are perplexing. It's not like any other green on the course.

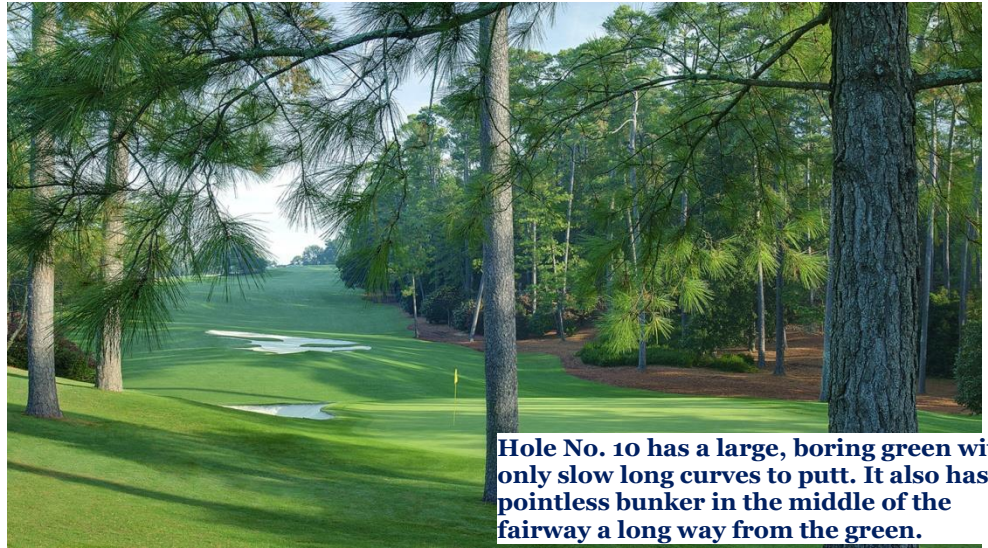
No. 9 During initial construction Roberts took out a hill toward the green and made it flat on this par 4 that ends with a steep rise to the green. That was where his drives would go. This was the one item Roberts admitted he got involved in during construction. He didn't want his matches with Jones to be decided his having to hit a downhill, sidehill lie to an elevated green.

This was originally the 18th hole. Golfers also would approach this hole from the left using the first fairway. It was shaped like a boomerang

and the left part of it faced the left-approaching drives. Eventually they planted trees on the left and then finally planted some more close to the tee to block any kind of launch to the left.

The green is an unfair mix of brutal back- to-front slope and long narrow shape. Any golfer above the hole is putting delicately down the hill and from the right facing a big right-to-left break. The sheer false front already lying on a steep approach hill propels an inadequate approach backwards to oblivion. False fronts are acceptable here and there. But where the whole long and narrow green is itself a false front, the one in front is wretched excess.

No. 10 Originally this dogleg left downhill hole was 430 yards. No question it is gorgeous, especially if you are standing on the fairway awaiting your second shot on this long par 4, if the sun is shining and it's behind you as you gaze at the green. The view of the green area is so luscious it resembles a painting. Unfortunately, when you get up close, your rapture dissolves. The green is just ugly. It mimicks no others here but many others away from AN. It's huge and slightly elevated with short steep banks all around. No doubt it was built up to avoid water drainage as it lies at the bottom of that great downhill grade from the distant tee. The green surface is liveless. It has no worthy subtleties and no particular undulations that AN is supposed to be



Hole No. 10 has a large, boring green with only slow long curves to putt. It also has a pointless bunker in the middle of the fairway a long way from the green.

Have you ever seen a pin anywhere except for the great middle portion of this dull green? It looks like a municipal course green: indifferent and only redeemed by its location among the trees in a wondrous setting. As to the trees, they are mostly distant from the green. No doubt room has been kept for galleries around the green.

guarding the green sits in a good spot. It begins short of the green and covers the first half of the green's right side.

This hole is long but is shortened drastically by the massive dropoff from tee to near the green where the fairway rises to a crested green. It was finally lengthened in the early 2000's to 495 yards and the tee was moved left to

No. 11 Hole from behind its mostly flat green.

known for. A vague oblong in shape, at least it is both wide and deep, unlike many greens before it. Its surface curves are



only long and bleak, with a serious slope in the front. You can gauge this front incline by never seeing the pin there.

Still, a few trees are close to the green, unlike most other holes here. The one bunker

accentuate the dogleg. It's much improved. The woods on the left are a serious threat, but the fairway and **rough are wide**, with no fairway bunkers to threaten you. Golfers can start their draws way right. Only a wild right drive will

reach the woods on the right. Bubba Watson maybe didn't deserve his triumph in the

2012 Masters when he blasted his tee shot on the first hole of the playoff into the right woods. But his giant hook approach through a liberal opening got him to the green and the ultimate victory there against Louis Oosthuisen.

No. 11 No playoff has gone beyond this green. The pond left and in front was once only Rae's Creek. Many golfers claim they suggested it be dammed up to create a pond. Roberts and Byron Nelson are two of them. In recent years trees were added along the right side. Palmer demurred, saying that a good spectator spot was now seriously reduced. Later several pines were removed. Trees were also added to the outside of the woods on the left. A few times since 2002 the tee has been lengthened and shifted for new angles to prevent long draws down the hill. The hole is actually a slight dogleg right now. Many of the tweaks to AN in recent years show that it wasn't that great all along. Why else did they make them? I'm not referring to the lengthening caused by the Tiger Effect or any other bomber. I wouldn't impugn them for that. It's the other changes. Some were long overdue anyway. It was

also stretched lately from 440 yards to 505 yards.

The green complex is dreary. It sits close to fairway height and is mostly flat. Another one of those "treacherous" greens at AN? It has no subtle or other curves of consequence, just long, gradual ones. Remember that chip by Larry Mize to win the playoff in 1987? He was right of the green. He only needed to hit it low, cover a slight rise at the green's short bank, and it ran straight for the hole. That wasn't so hard, although sinking it was of course miraculous and enthralling.

I recognize the fearful pond guarding the front and left part of the green with a shaved bank and the hohum bunker to the middle rear of this somewhat narrow, angled-left green. That close pond and the shaved bank enhances the challenge of this hole. But it is reduced by these other drawbacks. You should be able to put a pin on

most any area of a green. How many times have you seen a pin on the far left or back left of this green? Some areas are not fit for flags. But what is unfair in these areas? The green there is mostly flat, I think. I say, I think, because I am going by my visual memory, never having seen a pin there. They put the pin on No. 16 in the back left close to the water and bunker every year.

Why is there no bunker to the right of the 11th green? Most golfers target that area with their draw approaches. Most golfers up the fairway will aim to the right part of the green or further right to avoid the pond in front. Ben Hogan once said if his approach shot landed in the middle of the 11th green he had mis-hit it. The only obstacles in the area off the green itself are some sizeable short-grass mounds among gentle terrain. This area waits for a sand bunker. Give it one. The only bunker

Hole No. 12 with a small, narrow, listless green, virtually flat, although trouble surrounds it.



on the entire hole is the one behind the middle back of this dreadful green. How many players have you ever seen in that bunker? These faults alone render this a mediocre hole despite the changes in recent years of trees added along the right side and the left side of the driving area and the movement of the tee from its initial spot. The hole also suffers because the second shot is a deep drop to the green, a major drawback for this hole. This is one of the eight such drops on this celebrated course.

No. 12 Nicklaus said it's "the toughest tournament hole in golf." 1946 US Open champion Lloyd Mangrum called it the "meanest little par-three in the world." Rick Reilly in *Sports Illustrated* said it was "a hellacious, wonderful, terrifying, simple, treacherous, impossible perfect molar-knocker."

Trees on the right of the par 5 13th hole threaten a normal straight drive.

Gentlemen, get hold of yourselves. At first Jones put in a much thinner bunker in front. A lonely one sat behind the green on the bank, where

today two large ones loom. In the early years the shallow green was tighter on the right side. This acclaimed par 3 of usually 155 yards over Rae's Creek has a small, mostly flat green. Yes, it's a tiny target with the large swooping bunker in front and the water crossing in front. A hill with some mean bunkers threaten behind. Why is that front bunker even there? If there is water just in front of it, why didn't they just move the green closer to the water? The green is extraordinarily ordinary. It looks like a chip and putt green auditioning as an executive course green. It's oval and has no particular mounds or irregularities on its edges. You never see a putt break more than a few inches from any direction, nor run up or down an incline. Another one of those "treacherous" AN greens to putt. The green is even slightly below the tee, which makes it a bit easier to view and then hit.

No. 13 In 1933 this short dogleg left par 5 had only a few trees at its driving area right, whereas now it has a roomy grove of them. It also had five bunkers around the green, looking like chili peppers. Later they were altered into ovals closer and more left. The hole was only 465 yards for many years and rose to its current 510 only in the early 2000's when AN acquired land behind the tee from the adjoining country club. Drives must curl left before the trees on the right but also avoid the meandering creek along the left. If your drive doesn't draw, you will fly into the trees. After a worthy drawn drive, the second shot is a modest iron to a green well below the golfer.

The green has a stage setting, which deflects errant approaches and leaves tricky chips and pitches. It's also protected by a bevy of bunkers surrounding the rear and one to the left. The creek



in front keeps its mouth open for balls that plop and those that roll back from the spare bank in front of the green. The green is large but a simple oval with no special bumps on its rim.

The only noteworthy feature on its surface is the large shelf dividing the front and the back. What do you get on each section of that shelf? Mostly flat putting with only long curves. The shelf is long and high, and fairly even. This feature is the only treachery this green surface presents.

No. 14 No bunker anywhere on this par 4 slight-left dogleg of 440 yards. This hole, along with numbers 5, 7, 15 and 17, originally had none too. Mac based this

hole on the 6th hole at Saint Andrews. A liberal area for drives to stray, although trees border it on both sides. The green

height varies by six feet. This green is an anomaly for the back nine. It's huge and round, which doesn't

necessarily devalue it. But it resembles no other green.

That aids GD's criterion for variety. Its ultra-heaving makes it unfair, not sporting and testing. In places it looks like a sidewalk

beside an old maple tree, bulging and bursting. In the front is a big wave that never breaks. One way to gauge the fairness of a green is to recall the spots you have seen the flag over the years. Have you ever seen one anywhere in the front half of this green? Some great spots to insert a bunker around this green go unused. They seem to cry out, why

Hole No. 15 with the trees in the fairway area on the left



not here? But none ever arrives. Could it be that the green is so unfair there,

installing one would be overkill?



Hole No. 14 has no bunkers and an absurd, heaving green.

No. 15 From the getgo golfers said the green is too easily reachable in two. Jones told the contractor no change. All four par 5's are reachable and all have been lengthened, but not enough to avoid reaching in two. No. 8 is a poke being uphill and 570 yards, though. Mac did not care about par as a gauge. He

cared only about shot values and strategy. Jones declared that he liked par 5's reachable in two. That's okay for maybe two of the four they

have. But all four? Where is the variety? In effect, when you have four reachable par 5's, you have no par 5's. You

have four long but tough par 4's. No bunker guarded the right side of the green until 1957. After playing off the mounds in the area, Hogan had suggested a bunker. One was finally added, but it was years later. Mounds were constructed in the driving area to the right in 1969. Soon they were shortened as golfers were blowing past

Sarazen's double eagle in the 1935 Masters and still proclaimed (the bridge there bears his name) was not a hard shot though it was a miraculous one. The green was 20 yards behind the water and the front bank was mild, unlike now. Eventually it was lengthened

it has no special tests for chipping and putting. Any putt is at most a slow breaker and modest of incline. The front bank is shaved and will roll a short approach back into the water. That is a challenging obstacle for an inadequate approach but too typical of AN's back nine.

Hole No. 16 has a major ridge dividing the spine of the green and creates unsporting severe downhill and uphill putts.



them anyway. And they weren't like rest of the course. But trees later were planted on the right to narrow the driving area. Some also were added to the irksome trees to the left, the ones in the area of the left part of the fairway.

40 yards but no change was noted on the scorecard. No. 15 has always been a letdown in its broad (until recent years) fairway, especially when the hole is only 520 yards with a green well below the golfer on his second shot, shortening it even more. The green is insipid in its shape and attributes. It's an oval that expands on the right. But

AN has some driving areas that are unfairly tight. It's true the area to the right of this fairway was open for so many years with only some trees here and there. It has been tightened with those mounds, some rough, and some more trees. Now the only way to avoid the tight driving area is to hit past them or well short. No one lays up of these trees. Everyone smashes their drives. If they succeed in playing to a clear spot, a middle iron or less will get them home. If it's offline and too far to go for it or blocked, they will lay up. No harm done, a wedge can still get you a birdie.



Hole No. 17 with a dreary public course green unbecoming a finish to a major championship course. The right side has a ridge to the rear that forces overly delicate putts.

No. 16 Mac copied this par 3 from Stoke Poges, England now called Stoke Park, where James Bond and Goldfinger clashed and Oddjob menaced 007. The green sat on the left of the stream (now a placid pond) and the tee was back right of the 15th green. It was only 145 yards. In 1947 Jones suggested moving the green to its present site, damming the creek, and converting it into the current pond. Architect Robert Trent Jones did the work. (No relation to Bob Jones) No par 3's at AN are long except No. 6, now 240 yards, which is downhill to the green. A middle iron or less for pros. Jones and Mac thought golfers shouldn't be hitting woods from par 3 tees. The green is difficult to hit, guarded left by water and enclosing white beaches, amidst a marvelous setting.

there. The chief culprit is the stuffed irregular shelf that divides it in the middle and the radical sloping on either side. Golfers are confronted with fragile putts right to left above and below the divide in the green. Tough, not sporting, they ruin this otherwise splendid par 3 of now 170 yards.

No. 17 At the outset it had no bunkers and allowed run-up shots for pars. It was based on the 14th at Saint Andrews. The green has always been round, large and humdrum, although the front narrows. Its inclines are long and little bowed and unfair in the falloff back right. A redan rundown off the back left is different. It threatened the ground game of the 1930's golfers. After 1937 architect Perry Maxwell banked up the

But it's unfair when you get

left side of the green and the hill next to it, and added three bunkers to guard the front sides. Roberts wrote and complained that Maxwell ruined the run-up nature. Who was in charge here? Where was the dialogue about these changes? And where was Jones? For years the hole was hardly a threat to offline drives. Only in recent decades several trees were added along the left side and right side driving areas. Now it's the tightest driving hole on the course.

No.18 For years at AN's finishing hole, Jones wanted golfers to strike a long fade around the right dogleg to allow for a second shot to the narrow green, avoiding a flight path over the yawning left front bunker. The hole had no bunkers in the landing area. The fairway of course is a dogleg right up the hill, a stairway to golf heaven. It's a 70-foot rise from tee to green. With the Jones focus on position with no hazards as penalties, the hole had nothing but green grass to the left of the fairway. Trees did exist a distance left. Thus players could blast away favoring that side without penalty, except for their lengthy next shot to a narrow banked green facing away toward the right side of the fairway. They also needed to

fly over a large bunker front left. This was classic Jones setup of position shotmaking. After Nicklaus's strangled AN with his record 271 in 1966, two massive bunkers were added to that open left side off the fairway. Hogan wrote and said the new bunkers should be removed. He was denied. Later Roberts added trees to the ones on the left of the bunkers. Now the bunkers and the trees penalized hooks or forced golfers to play the hole

For the final green at The Masters, it's flawed. The defects outlined before repeat themselves. The green is too narrow and is long from back to front. That's not a grand- finale green viewers want to see or golfers want to play. It's too steep from back to front. It has a shelf dividing the back half of the green and then the severe incline off it to the usual Sunday pin placement in the bottom third of the green. As before, shelves are a shoddy

to lag them and if they go in, they go in," The front of the green has a false front that appears too often on this revered layout. On this finishing hole, the green is unfinished. It has no major curls or undulations anywhere; just long slow curves above or below the shelf on the rest of the green.

And the area just off the fringes is smooth, regular and ordinary. The left bank is a gentle slope now. Just like many of the other green borders at this eminent course. They don't test you with any rough, just short grass, and they present few tough lies to chip or pitch from. The fronts are where it's tough, if at all—false fronts or a steep bank. They do make them difficult. But when they are often there and often steep, they become unsporting and detract from the quality of this layout as the Greatest Golf Course in America.



Hole No. 18 has a long, narrow green with a shelf and a sharp downslope off the shelf, making putts from the rear a touchy, lagging, unfun finish to your round. A false front helps to get you coming and going.

honestly and lay up short of the bunkers. The hole was 420 yards till recent years. To counter those young gorillas off the tee, the hole was extended to its current 465 yards. It is 300 yards to the first bunker and 335 to carry the second.

way to enhance a green's difficulty. Anyone putting from the back over that shelf is stroking a delicate lag all the way and just hoping to be near the hole. That's no fun.

Zach Johnson, 2007 Masters champion, said this about all AN greens: "You try

Bob Jones wrote that "No man learns to design a golf course simply by playing golf no matter how well." No matter how good a golfer is, he won't necessarily become a good architect." Was he referring to himself? ●

Photos inside



Clubhouse



the
Augusta
National



This is the renowned pimento cheese sandwich (see article below for details).



Funky Jones or Loony Jones

Some of the things AN has done over the years are curious, if not bizarre. The pimento cheese sandwich is a glaring example. It's made of white bread, pimento, (yeah, like from an olive), processed American cheese, and mayonnaise. No wonder they are so cheap at \$1.50. Yes, they sell other typical sandwiches now, but for years they didn't. Apparently it's a Southern thing. The sandwich embodies the peculiar aspects of this otherwise traditional, establishment, stuffy, country club institution. It does add to its cultural appeal.

Jones, and AN since, have done odd things to the course itself. Some design items that Jones had installed made little or no rational design sense. Some of the actions taken thereafter as a result make you shake your head more in disbelief. You think he and his successors were either funky architects or loony ones. Some features were added without Jones's approval. A few lasted for years, even after they were told how faulty, unneeded or silly they were. A familiar one survives today as a symbol of this folly. You see it every year on the 10th hole and wonder. Read about it and the others in this hole by hole description of the unusual at saintly AN. Then you make the call: funky, loony, or okay by me.

1. A bunker well short left of the green was inserted originally. No one explains why. This was a 380-yard par 4 then. Apparently it was like the sandy waste areas of Pine Valley and now today like those at Pinehurst where players can ground their clubs. Yet this bunker is not large enough or close enough to the green to be very often in play.



Hole No. 1 when the course was finished had this strange bunker way short and left of the green. This was on a course with only 22 bunkers at the time.

Also, before the 1983 Masters the tee was moved back 15 yards. No one told the pros. Instead, they were told the right fairway bunker had been moved ahead 15 yards. The distance on the card was not even changed until 1999.

2. The original course had a large, ragged bunker on the right, but not far from tee. To what purpose? No one explained. Players griped to Roberts that it was useless. He ignored them. No bunkers along the left of this left-dogleg par 5. Ben Hogan, a fader, recommended they move it to protect the dogleg on the left. Roberts said no. There are trees down the left side and a deep ravine with a creek. The short right bunker lasted till the 1960's when it was moved to the right and farther down the fairway. Finally it was in place to grab fading tee shots.

3. That peculiar three-leaf clover green on a raised platform. Call it mesa verda weirda.
4. Unless you count those three clover leaves (more like tongues) again, which you should, nothing here but the one Palm tree on the entire course.
5. Initially this dogleg left hole was 440 yards and had no bunkers at the corner. Somebody had some later installed. Who? When added, they were more of a visual hazard, as they were drivable. Jones did not want them. He thought they were not needed. Why didn't Jones prevent their installation? The corner now has two left-fairway bunkers at the right distance. They require a 315-yard drive to clear them on this now 455-yard hole.



Hole No. 8 after its surround mounds had been removed. It looks like a giant pancake looking for a dousing of syrup.

6. On this par 3, it's weird here but the green has four tongues that flair but only somewhat. In front of the green the one big bunker itself has three tongues.

7. Odd that among Jones, Mac, and Roberts, they even let the original hole design be built. (See my hole by hole prior comments. Good for Roberts to say it lacked character. Boo to Jones and Mac for not noticing it and for Jones not to alter it until first Masters champion Horton Smith (1934) suggested it.

8. That odd green shape and the knolls on the sides have always been weird. When Roberts took out the ridges, the green looked primitive and unbefitting an eminent layout. It was unprotected and mostly flat. Only its thin shape provided any defense. Even with grand mounds restored, the green area remains a strange gangly duck.

9. A boomerang green shape was installed early on. It had a big clawlike bunker in front with the two tongues flaring out behind it. Golfers would prefer to drive to the open left approach area of the first fairway, shunning the tougher and longer shot from the fairway itself.



Hole No. 9 early on with the boomerang green and ragged Mac bunker.

10. It's that giant, mounted, fingered bunker up the hill well short of the green in the middle of the fairway. We always see it on broadcasts but no one ever goes in it or explains it. It looks like a squad of ghosts playing rugby. Maybe an unfinished puzzle depicting a snowman. Why is it there? It was next to the green of the original construction. In 1937 Perry Maxwell moved

the green way back to its present site to evade poor drainage. That bunker stayed. Why that bunker remains all these years, nobody seems to know. It is a unique, appealing, flamboyant site, like the Eisenhower tree on the left at the 17th hole. I've never seen anyone hit that Ike tree or end up in that fairway bunker at 10. It's merely an accent piece stuck in the middle of an enormous room. If it wouldn't look so stylish in contrast to most of the current starchy bunkers around AN, it would be an

No. 10 hole with the famous bunker in the middle of the fairway. It was formerly next to the original green but remained after the green was moved back to its current locale (shown in this recent photo). Why the bunker remains, no one knows. It's far from the green now.



eyesore. It interferes with your brisk walk downhill after a straight drive. Besides eye candy, it's only strategic value is to capture balls of those hacking out of the woods

far up the fairway. It can't be reached from the tee and it's so far from the green that even poor approaches fly over it. When you get ready to hit your approach to the green, it looks like it's in play, but it's not. Oddly, Mac liked merely visual obstacles. It's 59 yards long. The flaming edges show what all Mac's original bunkers looked like. Still, AN has rounded them off for ease of maintenance. If you look at those ragged bunkers at Mac's Cypress Point, you can see the resemblance. Do they rake this bunker? Apparently they do. Why?

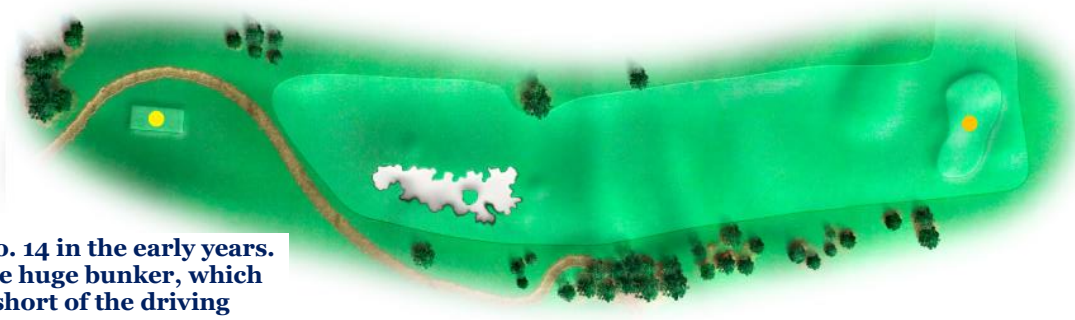
11. Originally Jones had a pot bunker stuck in the middle of the fairway where a good drive would go. As the fairway descends there, squat Gene Sarazen said he couldn't even see the bunker from the tee. Jones said he wanted it as an obstacle that you could not see. You would face local knowledge or good luck. He borrowed this absurdity from slapdash Saint Andrews. This bunker was filled in only years later.

12. In 1939 Roberts had Perry Maxwell enlarge the green on the right by gouging earth from the hill behind green. It would expose rocks, which Roberts thought would add to the thrill of the hole with balls caroming anywhere. A few months later Roberts wrote to Maxwell, "We do not wish to expose any rocks on the bank." Instead, he made the area into bunkers and enlarged the green.

13. The only oddity here is the driving area. If you want to hit a drive straight, you will carry close to a grove of trees on the right. When the course opened, only a few were there. They've added some since and they've grown to maturity. To gain any length you must hit a draw around the left bend and risk going downhill into Rae's Creek. That's a very unusual for a tee shot---you can't merely hit the ball straight to the fairway with driver. Your average drive will threaten the rightside trees.

14. Two quirks here. Until 1952 this hole had a large bunker on the right side of the fairway. It was only visual because it was not far from the tee and was easily

carried. A huge mound in front of the green made an approach somewhat blind. Jones wanted to blunt a ground approach.



Hole No. 14 in the early years. Note the huge bunker, which is well short of the driving area.

Run-up shots were bigger in the old days. Greens were not irrigated as now; they were dry and hard. The mound became an antiquity. It was reduced only in the late 1990's.

15. For years AN had many open driving areas, implementing the Mac-Jones theory of target golf, not penalty golf and allowing average golfers to enjoy their round too. No. 15 always had some trees that normally would be deemed in the left portion of the fairway. Did they finally remove them? No, they planted some more nearby in the fairway. They also made the driving area much tighter on the right by planting several trees. It's now actually too tight to be fair, but many pros drive past both sides and are left with clear approaches to this downhill green.

16. In 1950 Roberts poured copper sulfate into the muddy pond to make it look blue.

17. Originally the hole had few trees anywhere. One was a Loblolly Pine tree 175 yards to the left and encroaching the left driving area. President Eisenhower, whose vacation cabin was off the 10th fairway, hit toward it too often. At a board meeting he stood up and proposed cutting it down. Roberts ruled him out of order and adjourned the meeting. (This must be where *Roberts Rules of Order* started.) It remained there and was dubbed the Eisenhower Tree. It had become more relevant in recent years for the pros because the tee has been moved back to 440 yards and the tree had grown to 65 feet. In February 2014 an ice storm ravaged the tree and it was removed.



Hole No. 17 with the infamous Eisenhower tree menacing every pulled drive. After an ice storm ravaged it in 2014, AN removed it.

18. Jones installed a bunker in the middle of the fairway about 120 yards from green. Why? No one seems to know. Only in 1966 when those two bunkers on the left side were added did that mysterious no-account bunker disappear. ●

Acknowledgments: Most of the factual items come from *The Making of the Masters* by David Owen, Simon and Schuster, 1999, and the photos and other data from online sites about Augusta National, especially Augusta.com, Masters.com, and golfdigest.com