

Length of Holes in Relation to Par

Some inquiries have been received from clubs with regard to the correct par for holes of various length. Directions for computing par are given on page 260 of the Year Book of the United States Golf Association for 1924, which for the benefit of our readers we are quoting.

"Par means perfect play without flukes and under ordinary weather conditions, always allowing two strokes on each putting green. For holes up to 250 yards inclusive, par is 3; for holes 251 to 445 yards inclusive, par is 4; for holes 446 to 600 yards inclusive, par is 5; for holes 601 yards and upwards, par is 6. These figures are not arbitrary, because some allowance should be made for the configuration of the ground and any other difficult or unusual conditions. So also should be considered the severity of the hazards, especially on a hole where the par is doubtful. If on any hole the par is more or less than the length of the hole would indicate, state the reason on the score card. Each hole should be measured from the middle of the tee to the center of the green, following an air line as nearly as possible."

As a general thing, when the computations are close to the limits, preference is given to the lower par.

The Nature and Use of Penalty in Golf Architecture

By Max H. Behr

In the active ball games that we all played before the days of golf, a ball was either fair or foul, in or out. They were conflicts of skill for the control of a common ball and were played within a definitely defined space demarked by lines. A ball that passed beyond the surface limits of these areas suffered either a restriction upon its further play or a definite penalty. Owing to this history, there has developed the idea that such limits were primarily to draw a distinction between good play and bad play. Thus an arbitrary penalty, independent of the advantage gained by the more skilful play of an opponent, is supposed to be inherent in the nature of such active ball games of which it is a part.

It is the purpose of this paper to discover the origin of this type of penalty. Such knowledge is of the greatest importance to golf, for it is this kind of penalty only, aside from those which the rules inflict, with which the golfer has to do. Therefore should it be possible to determine the bases upon which it rests, it follows that the only proper use to which it may be put will be known.

If we study the histories of ball games, we shall find that in their original form they possessed a certain characteristic of golf—one that now distinguishes golf from them—that is, the field of play of each was unbounded. One form of early football was a conflict between the inhabitants of two villages, the ball being put in play at a point equidistant between them, the object of the game being to drive the ball back within the confines of the village of the opposing side. All means were used to this end, even to carrying the ball on horseback. Baseball was rounders with no foul line, and

lawn tennis is but a refined adaptation of *long tennis*, in which there were no court lines. The number of players composing a side in these early forms of football, baseball and lawn tennis, was not a matter of consequence.

It must be evident that if a greater number of players were again to compose the sides in these games, their present boundaries would have to be enlarged, and there would come a point where the increase in the number of players would automatically do away with limits altogether. We see, then, a reason why natural pastimes came to be enclosed within a limited playing space. Unbounded, the individual factor was negligible, and they required a greater number of players to make the game enjoyable. Hence, the space in which a game is now played was originally dictated by a desire to give more play to individual skill; a desire which brought about a restriction in the number of players which, of itself, determined the size of the space in which an exercise of skill would be justly rewarded. How important a correct apportioning of space is must be apparent when we consider that there would be inadequate reward to skill in singles at lawn tennis if the side limits of the court were stretched to the doubles line. Volleying the ball would practically cease and the majority of points would be scored by aces. Under such conditions, players would soon tire of playing at all. We are, therefore, presented with the fact that, in the premises, the lines that mark out the space of the singles court were decided upon to enhance the interest consequent on more restricted play. And this will be found to be true of all lines that limit the space in which games are played.

The tendency in games, therefore, has been turned toward a restriction of what were once unrestrained, unbounded and natural pastimes—they have been brought into form. And it would seem to be manifest that the arbitrary boundaries that lay down the limits within which play must take place do not, in the premises, coexist with any idea of distinguishing between good and bad play, but are for the purpose of providing the most desirable surface limits wherein skill may be developed and be most effective. Thus the conception of penalty as having anything to do with the origin or reason for such boundaries is erroneous. Their one object is to apportion space so as to render play interesting.

Now, it is quite possible to imagine a game of lawn tennis being played wherein an out ball would require the replaying of the point. But as the neighborhood of the base and side lines of the court requires the greatest skill to play to, and tends to reap a higher reward in that a greater physical exertion is placed upon the opponent, it follows that there must always be a potential or active pressure upon these boundaries. And if all points had to be replayed when strokes landed beyond them, the loss of time would not be endurable. This was found to be true in baseball where unlimited fouling entailed too great a loss of time.

We therefore find ourselves confronted with a problem which arises in all spacial restrictions—we are faced with the concepts of *space* and *time*, and they must be accounted for and dealt with. In an unbounded and natural pastime they do not force themselves upon our attention. But when we go about making a game by laying off a definite area within which play must take place, we find that we can only concretely control the surface of the ground which, when

leveled and marked off, is made up of the two dimensions, length and width. But to complete space, which is three dimensional, we have yet to account for the dimension height. We must erect something to take the place of this dimension which, to the mental eye, is an imaginary wall rising from the boundary lines. Otherwise it is evident that players would continually drive the ball toward the lines marking the limits of the playing area the more easily to circumvent the physical activity and skill of the opposing side. Activity, unless there be a barrier to it, is subject to a law of gravitation of its own, and, like water seeking its level, will also seek freedom in the easiest way to achieve its purpose. Therefore in lawn tennis a ball passing through our imaginary barrier wall, which is the dimension height, over and above the two dimensions length and width of which the level surface of the court is composed, suffers the loss of a point.

Penalty, therefore, accounts for the dimension height. With it we have confined time, for points do not have to be replayed; and likewise, with it we have established an equilibrium and stabilized all parts of the playing area, for to score a point, one part is as good as another if the opponent be only absent from it. It is evident, then, that the virtue of penalty in lawn tennis is premised upon rendering its playing area interesting.

Lawn tennis has been taken as an example because the use of penalty to replace the dimension height is more pronounced than in other games. With lawn tennis its use is mandatory. With baseball it is necessary to the extent of calling the first two fouls strikes. The abbreviated boarding upon the sides of the polo field and the side walls of the hockey rink are sufficiently high to keep the greater amount of play within bounds; and when the polo ball or the puck goes beyond these boundaries, it is brought in a certain distance and, consequently, we have only a restriction upon play. The same is true of football. In all indoor tennis games, such as true tennis, rackets, and squash, where actual walls rise from the boundaries of the court and are used to play against, penalty only comes into play when a ball strikes these walls above a certain limit placed upon them. It is evident, then, that penalty is only used in games where the nature of them demands it, and its purpose is to enhance the interest of the playing area by stabilizing it and conserving time.

We are here in the presence of a very pertinent and governing law in regard to the use of penalty. Penalty is a means that enables us to construct; it is the scaffolding by which we control three dimensional space. And our desire to so control space is to confine it into various sizes most suitable and interesting to the playing of various games. Just as we build a house for comfort, do we, with the aid of penalty, erect three dimensional space for interest. Penalty, then, is a coin of exchange for interest. But penalty is also an idea and, because of this, the mind is apt to forget its origin. It becomes something by itself. An apt illustration of this is money, also a coin of exchange, which is commonly looked upon as wealth. But money upon a desert isle is worthless and penalty in the desert of thought is impotent. But just as the only legitimate use of money is its translation back into the source from which it sprang in either a purchase of the implements of industry or their products, it follows that the only legitimate use of penalty is also a reversion to its

origin, its use to the end of conserving interest by its protection. That there is an illegitimate use of both is patent. In war, money must be used to destroy its sources in possession of the enemy, but, in games and sports, there is no such coercion.

It may be said, then, that a game is akin to science, for everything in it, lying as it does within the concepts of space and time, is known except one thing—the skill of the players. But every sport, of which golf is one, is an emotional experience in which space and time take on the attributes of infinity and, hence, are akin to religion. If this comparison is well drawn, then man is not the master in golf as in other games. It is not given him, nor should it be his purpose, to make a precise mathematical use of space and lay his law upon it. On the contrary, his object should be to preserve the mystery that lies in undefined space. He is in the realm of art.

Golf was once a free, unrestrained, natural pastime, played over ground untouched by man. Doubtless, the greens and, perhaps, the fairgreen, as upon the common ground at Leith, required scything at times. But mowers to cut the grass had not yet been invented and, consequently, golf was more a winter pastime and was restricted to links land and common only where a fine enough herbage was to be found.

Machinery may, on the whole, have benefited mankind but, in some respects, it has done irreparable harm. The invention of the grass mower permitted the transporting of golf from its original habitat to what otherwise would have been impossible country for its playing. For this we must be thankful. But, whereas, upon links land the fairgreen passed so imperceptibly into inhospitable country that it would have been difficult to draw a line where the one ended and the other commenced, upon our manufactured courses the mower drew the line for us. At the same time, it drew a line in our minds and, with it, the inception of a creed. The fairgreen became all that was good, and the rough all that was bad. Seeing no further than this, it must needs be that we must enhance the good, and how else than by making the bad worse? In fact, there exists today the fatuous belief that the excellence of a golf course is in some way bound up with the number of bunkers and difficulties it possesses.

But what is a hazard in golf? The rules are definitive up to a certain point. But with what do these rules deal? Is it not the third dimension? Are we not prohibited from soling our club in certain situations and doing various other things in order that the influence the third dimension has upon the lie of our ball, whether for good or ill, shall not be disturbed? It must be apparent therefore that if golf were played upon a level surface, practically a two dimensional area, there would be no hazards. Hence the dimension height or depth is the hazard dimension in golf as well as in games.

Now we saw that, in lawn tennis, play sought freedom in the vicinity of the boundary lines of the court, and because of this it became necessary, for the sake of interest, to erect a barrier of penalty upon them. But the golfer also seeks freedom by endeavoring to so play his ball that the way to the hole will be rendered easier and freer upon his next stroke. Therefore according to the philosophy of penalty which we have arrived at, is it not incumbent upon us to use penalty in golf in the spirit of its origin; that is, as a guard and protection to that which excites the most interest? Unfor-

tunately the mowing machine has made the fairgreen an area of interest by itself. But should we look upon this as a definite area and deal with it as we do in games? It would seem that if we allow such an idea to prevail we must inevitably destroy that sense of freedom and choice which is the very essence of such a sport as golf. In golf, nature, more or less modified, is our opponent; there can be no set limitations to space and time.

The golf architect therefore is not at all concerned with chastising bad play. On the contrary, it is his business to so arrange the field of play as to stimulate interest, and, hence, the province of hazards is to chasten the too ambitious. The use of hazards otherwise is a corrupt use of penalty; an approach to the subject of strategy from the negative side; a dwelling of thought upon what the golfer should not do; whereas the concern of the architect should be positive and have solely to do with what the golfer should do. In other words, the mission of the architect is not that of a moralist the principal word of whose vocabulary is *don't*. The golfer should not be made to feel that he must renounce, that the primary object for him is to conquer his faults. It is not for the architect to inform him when he has played badly; that is the duty of the professional. No, the mission of the architect is that of a leader. By his hazards, he exhorts the golfer to do his best, enticing him, at times, "to shoot the bones for the whole works." His endeavor should be to instill in the golfer the spirit of conquest by presenting him with definite objectives upon which he must concentrate. The golfer, in meeting nature thus fashioned to his pleasure, is again face to face with life in the raw. It is for him to gain the good in it by the virtue of his courage and skill. It is for him to stamp his law upon it. Therefore, it is not for the architect, by the dictation of his hazards, to lay down the law to the golfer. His duty is merely to assist nature by rendering, in greater contrast, the interest which she, in the first place, affords.

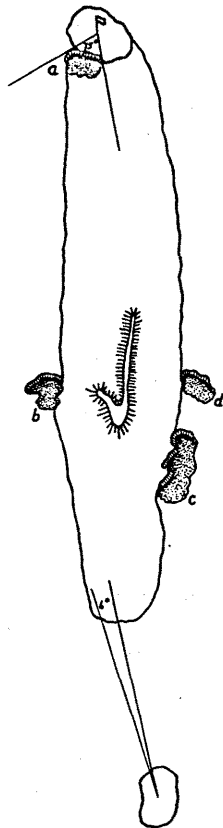
All attempts to use hazards for the sake of penalty alone occasion a duplication of bunkers and the reduction of golf to trench warfare. War is, perhaps, the greatest sport that man is addicted to, and as long as it remains an open battle, there is excitement to be had. But after the Marne, the World War became a nightmare. It ceased to be a sport and became a game with trenches forming its boundary lines and death the penalty for crossing them. And this is true, in a sense, of many of our courses today.

Let us take, as an example, a green guarded by a bunker which must be carried by a shot played from the left side of the fairgreen. Would not a bunker to catch a pull from the tee be a duplication of the green bunker and represent the first trench to be taken on that line to the hole? Would a player who had to play from this bunker continue a frontal attack upon the green bunker, or would he play out to the right and endeavor to outflank it? The answer is evident. But the result of this moral theory of bunkering is that the value of the green bunker is minimized and the player is robbed of the necessity and the resulting excitement of having to play a grand carrying shot over it. But if we remove the pull bunker altogether and put in on the right-hand side of the fairgreen either a bunker to be carried from the tee or a guarding bunker, we have created a

legitimate contrast by placing a penalty adjacent to the position that opens up the hole, the most interesting position to play to.

To attempt to penalize all badly played strokes is just as futile as to imagine that a police force can be made large enough to catch all those who err. If such a thing were possible, society would disappear in it. And such a theory of bunkering, if carried to its logical conclusion, must terminate in the death of golf. But even if this theory is used with discretion, its bunkers are unfair unless they are made large enough to gather in all badly played strokes—that is, treat all alike. This is seen to be true in the case of a ball that just escapes going into a bunker of this type. It is, relatively, just as bad a shot as one that must pay the penalty. But a ball that just escapes a bunker placed to stimulate interest and ambition, even if it lie upon the very edge of it, must be accounted a good stroke; and should it go into it, the stroke must be looked upon more in the way of a misfortune. At least, the player has only himself to blame, for he played fully aware of the risk he was taking. But when his ball finds a penal bunker, he not only commiserates with himself for having played a bad stroke, but resents being told so.

If the reader considers this all very theoretical, let us look at the question from a practical standpoint: whether it is worth while to construct penal bunkers altogether aside from consideration of the cost of their upkeep. In the illustration, we have a hole 400 yards in length, and bunker *b* is a typical penal bunker. It faces the tee with a width of 20 yards and, with the tee as the apex, it subtends at 220 yards only an angle of 6 degrees. Bunker *a*, guarding the left side of the green, is the same in width as bunker *b*. With the hole as the apex in the center of the green, it subtends an angle of 75 degrees. Not only is it a potential hazard for all the territory covered by bunker *b*, but for all the territory which the player wishes to avoid. Bunker *a* is the key bunker to the hole and the player from the tee will, naturally, try to outflank it. Now, if we bunker this hole with a proper use of penalty, he must face a carry over bunker *c*, avoid a slice into bunker *d*, and keep his ball to the right of the strategic ridge in the center of the fairgreen which, otherwise, will throw his ball under the dominance of bunker *a*. These three hazards are placed to create interest, for they guard the most favorable position to play to. It is this abutment of penalty to that part of the fairgreen that is of the greatest value to the player, that results in contrast rendering play to it of dynamic interest. What valid reason, then, is there for bunker *b* and bunkers like it? Would not this hole be far better without its distracting influence, aside from the question of equity, which it must always arouse owing to its definitely limited effectiveness? And may we not even go further and widen the fairgreen in the vicinity of this bunker and thus entice the golfer with a good lie to have a bang at bunker *a*?



With bunkers then placed for interest alone, a player is given the opportunity of assuming the risk of a direct tax if he wishes to gain the more inviting position which they guard and, in the degree he falls short of what he attempts, he comes within the governance of an indirect tax upon his next stroke. This indirect tax can be made severe to the point of being an impassable barrier to the hole. In the latter case, the player loses a stroke just as much as if he had to play from a penal bunker. But, playing from a penal bunker, the player is immediately aware of his loss, whereas playing from the position of the penal bunker, if none were there, no matter what the difficulties were the next shot presented, the slack of despondency would be taken up by the stimulus of hope. The player might even have a go for it, hoping against hope to carry the indirect tax bunker, now become a direct tax through his faulty play from the tee. But even if not so foolhardy, he can play short, or to one side, and by an extraordinary short shot, hope to make up for the original error.

Here, then, is mystery and freedom. But with a lot of penal bunkers staring one in the face from the tee, there is no mystery—only misery. Driving becomes a species of target practice, and one does not have to wonder why the dub kicks.

The strategic side of golf architecture is, hence, not a science of penology. Where it has been looked upon as such, there has always been a destruction of that economy of attention, that centralization of interest which is one of the axioms of art. Looking at a work of art we see a whole, but looking at a police force, we examine each of its units separately. From a psychological standpoint, bunkers send out a wave of danger, as it were, and if such a wave is met by another coming from the opposite side of the fairgreen, the fairgreen becomes static. A certain equilibrium has been established which is against the whole nature of a sport. There is brought into it the principle of equity, a necessity in a game where all must be known and be of equal value, except the skill of the players. But its application to golf is an infringement and violation of its nature.

This does not imply that a position should never be guarded upon each side. On the contrary, it is often highly desirable and of the greatest interest. Where distance is the factor from the tee, a fairgreen that gradually narrows at, say 250 yards, with yawning pits awaiting a mis-directed shot, is not a type of penal bunkering. Nor may any desirable position guarded upon either side be looked upon as such. The fourth hole at the Lido and the bottle-neck hole at the National are splendid examples. If the player at the Lido refuses to face the great carry from the tee to a narrow fairgreen guarded upon either side by perdition, he can take the safe and longer way but he gives up any chance of getting home in two strokes. Here the indirect tax is a definite loss of distance which can, in no way, be made up. At the National, the approach from the neck of the bottle is much easier than from the rest of the fairgreen to which play from the tee requires little risk.

But the misuse of hazards is a delusion and a snare, an enslaving and destructive principle, for it demands that they be made large enough to fulfill their purpose. In other words, the idea of penalty for penalty's sake commits us to size and, of course, the greater this is, the better is the idea carried out. The ground is no longer being

interpreted for the sake of interest but to carry into effect a logical idea, and the architect ceases to be an artist; but, being bound to no such governing idea, the architect becomes a free agent. Using hazards for the purpose of interest alone, he may use them in the way of emphasis to bring out the highlights of a hole. They can be made formidable or small. Often a tiny pit placed in just the right spot, so small that it can have little effect upon actual play, can be a mental hazard with tremendous effect upon the morale of the golfer. But to place such a pit is as truly an art as one revealing scratch of a pen by a Rembrandt which we ordinary mortals could not duplicate with a thousand scratches. The pseudo-golf architect will have the faint glimmerings of an idea and will try to catch it with numerous bunkers; whereas, the true artist will place just one bunker upon the sore spot and it is done. Such a bunker is the road bunker in the face of the seventeenth green at St. Andrews. To have placed such a bunker required rare imagination and audacity.

The golf architect, therefore, should look upon himself as an artist; and the colors of his palette are the various types of hazards which he employs to lend interest and bring out the features to holes which he either invents or interprets from the ground; and the pigment of his colors is made up of the dimension height or depth, the hazard dimension of the ground. It is this dimension which unlevels the ground as in slopes, undulations, mounds and bunkers, and makes a hazard of long grass. It explains the greater charm that lies in playing golf upon links land; its tumbling nature affords an ever mystery as to just the position from which one will have to play the ball.

The great golf architects have always looked upon the province of hazards as that of exciting interest. But even so, such a viewpoint by no means excludes a hole made up of penal bunkers. Such a hole may afford the greatest interest in the way of contrast to the rest of the holes. But it must be evident that, if such a theory of bunkering predominates, it must arouse controversy, and understanding can never flourish in terms of controversy. And yet, to one uninitiated into the secrets of golf, to minds bred on games, this moral theory of bunkering is a very natural one to assume, for the wish of man is ever toward reducing nature to his order of life. But with golf, as with all sports, this civilizing instinct has no place. Golf is an uncivilized pastime—it is not a game.

Therefore, those who hold to the theory that the purpose of hazards is to chastise, labor under a great handicap. Sand is the greatest birch rod they can use, and the result is that their work is not colorful but a painting in the sepia of this one type of hazard. A proper balance of values has been destroyed and the lesser hazards lose their importance. And yet, what seems most needed in golf architecture today, is a greater use and variety of color by undulating the fairgreen, the construction of natural-appearing strategic mounds and ridges, and some character given to the rough.

But, above all, golf should be kept an open battle; danger should beckon, owing to its proximity to positions of the highest interest; and the whole impulse of play should be forward with a sweep and a bang and not be, as it so often is, a tacking process. There would seem to be no reason why courses laid out and designed in this manner should not be as great a test as one could wish and be all the more pleasurable to play.