



CONSTRUCTION OF GOLF COURSES

(reviewed June 2011)

General

It is recommended that any golf course development should be planned and supervised by a recognised Golf Course Architect.

EGU Golf Development Committee

The EGU have formed a Golf Development Committee from whom advice can be obtained. For information on this service please contact the Golf Development Department at the EGU.

What is required?

Careful consideration is necessary for development of a new course or existing facility. Whilst golf is one of the most expanding sports the cost of development is usually substantial. The questions must be - will the facility be used fully or development of existing courses essential particularly if the cost to members is going to be substantial? Thought must be given to the population, net expendable income of members and the continuation of major employment in the area. More care is required where a substantial amount of development costs are in the form of borrowed funds. Interest can increase to hazardous amounts.

The following points may be helpful:

- ✎ Location and close proximity of existing courses.
- ✎ Membership waiting lists of clubs in the area.
- ✎ Popularity of established clubs in the area.
- ✎ Surrounding population to support a new course.
- ✎ Practice areas for new members which need to be large if a number of them are new to playing golf.
- ✎ Availability of individuals with sufficient acumen to assist in the development and management of new facilities.

Site Suitability

Careful consideration must be given to the suitability of the proposed site. The following observations are well worthy of consideration.

Area of land required:

- a) 18 holes - usually at least 100 to 120 acres.
- b) 9 holes - usually at least 50 to 60 acres.
(In very rare cases, a course may be on slightly less acres than those stated).

- ⌘ Additional land would be required for clubhouse, car parking and a practice ground. The practice ground should be as large as reasonably possible.
- ⌘ Are there any problems with - internal roads used by the general public, underground pipes etc, overhead cables and wayleaves?
- ⌘ Are all mains services available for the clubhouse and any proposed greenkeepers sheds?

Land Form and Condition

- ⌘ Avoid steep hills.
- ⌘ Light porous soil is ideal - clay under soil holds water, is difficult to maintain and can create flooding.

Natural Features

- ⌘ Small becks and ponds can be helpful in design, form hazards and boundaries.
- ⌘ Planting of trees etc, adds to the attraction on inland courses. Many old clubs have and are now improving their course by planting trees and shrubs. Gorse and heather can form extremely pleasant surroundings. Trees, bushes, shrubs etc, can absorb a lot of water which would otherwise require a lot of drainage.
- ⌘ Wildlife makes an attractive part of a golf course. Ensure that odd unused corners and in between fairways are planted as thickets etc.

Greens

The laying out of a golf green is a job for an expert. If greens are not set down correctly they will never be "good greens" unlikely to withstand the pressure of constant wear. The greatest of care must be taken to ensure that proper and correct advice is received and that the greens are laid out in accordance with such advice.

Construction of Tees

- ⌘ Good tees are as important as good greens.
- ⌘ Always err on the large rather than small size.
- ⌘ Some greenkeepers are known to build high because it is easier; this creates extra maintenance work due to steep slopes and accident problems when golfers have to climb steep banks or steps.
- ⌘ Remember that tees need watering in certain conditions.

Sprinkler Systems

If the installation of sprinkler systems is being contemplated it is well worthwhile (as with other types of equipment) to visit other clubs to discuss the benefits and drawbacks.

A sprinkler system is to preserve the course during long hot periods and if installed on a time clock basis, the greens can be watered during the night. Overwatering can produce disease in greens.

Practice Facilities

- ✎ Practice facilities are required for:
 - a) Putting Green which could be used for pitching and chipping.
 - b) Practice bunker.
 - c) Indoor practice and practice nets.
- ✎ The professional will require a reserved practice area to give lessons.
- ✎ Area of practice ground about 4 to 5 acres - length about 275 yards and about 100 yards wide.

Driving Ranges

Site

Preferably adjacent to or within an urban area with good access for vehicles and public transport routes; this could well become a possibility for inner city development. Ideal for adding to a sports centre where facilities such as dressing rooms, toilets, cafeteria and ticket office can be shared. Recreation land or park not viably used could be used to advantage.

The direction of play is best when facing north to avoid direct sun facing the players. Useful to have sloping ground from the back of the range down to the tee for obvious reasons. Middle of the range should be void of trees and shrubs so that balls can be collected quickly and efficiently by machine; however, the planting of trees and shrubs around the perimeter can make the site attractive, adds to the enjoyment of the participants and is an added safety factor.

Tee Line

As the basic aim of a range is that balls should be directed to the central area, and away from the boundary, the tee line is constructed in a slight arc whenever possible. When not possible then nets and tee mats have to be arranged accordingly so as to guide the aim of the player. 10 foot cubicles provide sufficient room for participants so that they can swing in safety. Drainage channels may be required along the front and also help to discourage players from stepping forward (see safety below).

Tee Mats

Rubber mats with nylon inserts have proved durable - however it is advisable to check on the latest products as there have been substantial improvements in recent years. Tee mats are placed on platforms constructed of wood, asphalt or concrete - the latter is recommended in view of the small amount of maintenance over a long period. The average platform is 4 to 8 inches high, 6 feet wide, and 5 feet from front to back; during construction a recessed space is made to the same specification as the mat - this secures the mat and provides a solid teeing ground.

Shelter

A roof is essential if play is to continue in adverse conditions.

Electric Power

Play will be at its peak between twilight and evening hours - in consequence illumination of the range is highly desirable. The cost of the power must be taken into account for estimating budget costs.

Parking

Vehicle parking spaces should be arranged to accommodate the anticipated peak period.

Target

The range fairway should be marked at 50 yard intervals and it is recommended that target greens are sited on the range at similar intervals - preferably slightly off centre so that they are more visible. Such target greens provide an incentive for the beginner and assist the practice of the established golfer.

Safety

Large notices should be placed at vantage points warning both players and visitors of the danger of swinging clubs and flying golf balls eg

- ⌘ NEVER walk on the grass.
- ⌘ NEVER play a shot if a person is in range of club or ball.
- ⌘ Keep clear of swinging clubs as you walk behind players - remember that they are not able to see you.
- ⌘ If you hear a warning noise - STOP.

Etiquette

When an opportunity occurs, the importance of etiquette should be emphasised to all beginners ie.

- ⌘ How it relates to safety
- ⌘ Consideration for others.
- ⌘ Good preservation of the range (course).

Teaching

If there is no residing golf Professional, then a visiting Professional can, with permission, give lessons at a range.

Equipment Required

Tee mats, ball washing machine, balls, targets, flags, ball pick-up machine, baskets for balls, hire clubs, tractor, gang mower (triple or quintuple).

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