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BY DESIGN



Excellence in Golf Design from the American Society of Golf Course Architects

Growing together

How long-term relationships
with architects benefit golf clubs

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The joy of golf | Don Knott, ASGCA

A game of life-long fascination

The feel and shape of a perfectly hit ball is pure magic. The near perfect shot deposits itself directly into the long term memory banks. I still remember one especially spectacular five wood from the right rough. The ball just missed the arching branch of the massive valley oak and was heading for OB and forest beyond. Then, just as envisioned, it began its 30-yard fade, landing ten yards short of the green, bouncing past the cavernous right front bunker and on to its rest three feet from the pin.

It was a one in 50 shot, perhaps even more. It was at the limits of my ability. The *game* of golf allows the freedom to continuously attempt such shots without the stifling fear of OB and a high score. The *sport* of golf would have me playing a safe chip out, then a standard mechanical approach.

The game of golf is what young children enjoy. A game that is free of fear and expectation. The game of golf is the pure joy of hitting a ball with a stick, finding it, hitting it again. The game is the pure satisfaction of hitting the ball around the putting green until it finds the hole. The youth has no expectations and could not care less about keeping score. The beginner soon learns the magic, the special feel and the pure joy of hitting a ball squarely on the club face.

The sport of golf is what we see on TV. It is the highly competitive endeavor focused on score. This is

the golf most instructors teach, and is the focus of virtually all media. The competitive and championship qualities of golf are the focus of seemingly all publications, public relations, prestige, and ratings. The sport is the endless search for a lower score and more length.

We all marveled at Phil Michelson's brilliant shot from behind the pine on the thirteenth at Augusta. Why? Because all golfers can understand

“The game of golf, free of fear and expectation is what young children enjoy

and even participate in the immense satisfaction of success. We can all appreciate that Phil, embroiled in a major competition, played the game and not the sport.

Learning the game is difficult. It is the task of discovering inner joy and self satisfaction. We strive to discover true gravity and being in the zone. The game involves the cultivation of the mystical and spiritual qualities of golf. The game of golf is an art.

The sport of golf is more of a science. We humans seem innately competitive and therefore the Sport seems quite logical. It is easily understood. The objective elements



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of scoring and statistics make for a rational system to see how we stack up. At some time in our golfing life the curiosity of how we stack up captures us all, and we spend great time, energy, and resources attempting to improve, to be 'the best that we can be.' For most golfers, this search for a lower score and more distance is damn frustrating! For some, the anxiety and reality of how they compare leads to the sticks

gathering cobwebs in the garage.

The key to the kingdom is learning the game. To play golf for a lifetime one must eventually learn and return to the game. The reward of a well hit shot is not the subsequent shot. The reward of a one in 50 shot is the immediate satisfaction of pulling it off. The less concerned we are about score and the more often we attempt the long odds, the more often we can bank another special memory. Smelling the roses is rarely accomplished in the sport: but it is a requisite for the game.

Golf should be a game of lifelong fascination! ●