Recommended Readings

A Conversation With:

Mark Fine

The Restoration of:

Brackenridge Park
Every sport finds itself being written about, and especially in the case of the major ones, to ever greater extents. Golf, though, is different in that so much of what is put on paper is more than mere reporting of championship outcomes and player interviews; it is literature and quite often of the highest caliber.

Quite often it is the books on golf that form the center around which home libraries are built. In fact the great works of golf literature grow both in value and importance as time slowly rolls onward, and so many collectors become students of the game rather than just players.

Tilly himself had a most impressive private library containing many important first edition copies of the classics of golf writings. Just two years before he died, he sold it to a friend whose family still owns it and has kept it together.

With this issue comes the first of what we would like to recommend that our readers consider for inclusion in their own collection. More than mere book reviews, we believe the two books below to be important works and worthy of placement on any bookshelf.

In February of 1936, Tilly wrote of “The Masterpiece of Donald Ross.” This article, published in *Golf Illustrated*, reveals his strong feelings toward his fellow craftsman and friend. He told how, “Early in December 1935, two old golf course architects put in a morning together at Pinehurst, North Carolina. One, Donald Ross, may be said to be Pinehurst itself. This was a meeting again after many years. As I alighted at the door of his charming house, Donald gave me a warm greeting and after just a bit of chat about this and that, he had me out his back door and we were on the No. 2 course…

“And what a course it is! Without any doubt Ross regards this as his greatest achievement, which is saying a great deal… Nothing was lost on me, and after our round together I told him with all honesty that his course was magnificent, without a single weakness, and one which must rank with the truly great courses in the world today.”

Tilly concluded this article by writing, “Donald Ross at his best was never greater.” It is most fitting then that the first book that we are pleased to recommend to you is the history of Pinehurst itself.
Richard Mandell is both a talented golf course architect and, judging by what he has presented us within the sumptuous 384 pages of this glorious tome, a fine writer and true historian of the game as well. Just as the Pinehurst golf community is large on a scale matched so rarely elsewhere, so too this work of literary art. At 9” x 12” one is tempted to lay it out on a coffee table as it will more than beautify whatever shelf or table top it finds itself on, but this book is for more than impressing a friend with its looks as it will provide many hours of pleasurable reading and many, many more of joyous research.

This is the definitive history of the entire Pinehurst community and golf complexes, for that is so much more than Donald Ross and his masterpiece, the # 2 course. “There is no better way to understand what Pinehurst is all about than to go back to the original ideals of its founder.” And so Richard does.

“There is an old chap up in Boston who I fear has more money than good common sense, and he has a wild scheme in the back of his head that he can make a resort up here in these barren sand wastes.” So wrote Walter Hines Page about James Walker Tufts plans for the sand hills area of this quiet backwoods area of North Carolina.

The reader is treated to a journey through the past, one that is not just a history lesson, but rather a loving look at a time gone forever by. From Verrazano walking along the shore of North Carolina in 1524 to 1622 when John Prory set out from Virginia for the Chowan river to the tar kilns of the 1700’s, we gain an appreciation of the beauty and the heartbreak that would mold this small land and its people.

As time went by the war that ripped our country apart and whose wounds were still oozing the blood of brotherly anger of one against another was still being waged just below the surface of the emotions of many in the quiet sand hills where John Tyrant Patrick envisioned a resort that would serve as a place of healing both body and mind. He named it “Southern Pines.”

With the building of the resort, inevitably the train would follow and with it community, development, growth, industry and this new game of the wealthy, golf.

Pages 44-45 display a copy of the original 2,561-yard long nine holes of Pinehurst #1 from 1898. It is but 110 years ago since it was opened, so long a time and yet there are still people in our country who were alive when it was opened. Just two years after that another nine was added as both community growth and resort demand began changing.
the face of the American golf scene. In fact, just 10 pages later an old aerial shows this explosive growth superimposing the original 18 onto the existing courses.

It is this combination of original photographs taken during so many different time periods of both, course, resort and the entire Pinehurst community that bring home to the reader that there is so much more richness to be found here, both in golf courses and those who live there, for it’s story isn’t just that of Donald Ross and his masterpiece in the #2 course.

With each page turned another treasure is found. The wisdom of Donald Ross explaining his design philosophy, drawings of course after course followed by photographs of them from both when they were being constructed to what they have grown into today, history come back to life in a way that inspires a person to want to visit this unique corner of America at its best.

The greatness of what has been built here is shown in the number of courses that have played host to the prestigious golfing championships for both men and women. History is walked upon as one strides down the green fairways that Mandell has shared with his readers, for Pinehurst allows the everyman golfer to play and test his own mettle upon the same landscape that the greatest of all tested theirs. For here have walked Jones, Evans, Hagen, Nelson, Snead, Palmer, Nicklaus, Woods and so many others who have earned the title of champion golfer.

We highly recommend that you add this exquisite work of literary art to your collection. To purchase a copy on the internet, visit www.golf-architecture.com. Or you may order by telephone at (910) 255-3111.

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Tilly was deeply interested in discussing golf course design philosophy with whomever and whenever he had the opportunity. It didn’t matter if it was Donald Ross, C.B. Macdonald or Joe Average Golfer; if they had legitimate ideas or questions about his work or theirs, Tilly loved to sit and talk about it. That is why I believe that he would have added the next book that we’d like to recommend be added to your golf library to his own. Bunkers, Pits & Other Hazards, is every bit the “Guide to the Design, Maintenance, and Preservation of Golf’s Essential Elements” as the title page explains.

Tilly once wrote that, “The appeal of golf is based on its hazards…” What Forrest L. Richardson and Mark K. Fine have authored is part textbook for the student of golf course architecture, reference manual for superintendents and those who work with them to aid in day-to-day and long-term care of their courses and artistic treasure in how it illustrates these most important aspects of golf’s challenges.

“You are holding a book about inconveniences…” This first thought grabs the heart of the reader and transforms them to thoughts of the many “inconvenient” places that they have found themselves playing from. Hopefully they will be smiling as they do so but, just as it inspired in me, thoughts of situations which brought expletives at both ball, course and self also came flooding back. What follows is inspiring: “While they are inconvenient on the surface, they are essential to the core.” Everyone who has ever swung stick at ball knows this to be true.
For many years, bunkers were little more than torture chambers across open links. But as golf courses became better thought out and planned, bunkers became more intellectual."

It is revelations such as “intellectual bunkers” when properly designed that has the reader realize that this is as much literature and work of art as textbook and reference. Rarely has learning about golf course architecture been so pleasurable and satisfying.

The reader is given a tour through the evolution of hazards in the history of the game as well as defining the types of hazards that a good architect will employ to test and confound the player.

There is a discussion of the design and strategy to be found in hazards on a course and another that teaches the proper way to construct them, but these two learned architects don’t stop with that, for once a hazard is built its life has only begun. They need to be constantly and properly maintained and Richardson and Fine discuss just how this should be done.

There is a fascinating chapter on the hazard philosophies of the game’s legendary architects and even another that deals with the psychological effects of hazards.

My favorite one is a discussion of golf’s “Twenty Famous Hazards.” From Rae’s Creek to the Road Bunker, a number of them are familiar to all. Yet even where the name is familiar, Church Pews for example, as they explain the design and beauty of it the reader is motivated to want to take their own crack at overcoming what they see on the page in front of them.

For who wouldn’t want to challenge The Devil’s Asshole and Hell’s Half Acre at Pine Valley, the Hell Bunker and the Principal’s Nose on the Old Course, the Dell, the Cardinal, the Redan? From Chocolate Drops to the Himalayas to the Pacific Ocean itself, Golf’s greatness as a game is surpassed by its wonder as an art with hazards as gloriously conceived as these. The chapter ends with what may be the most appropriately named hazard of them all – “That Damned Bunker” at St. George’s Hill Golf Club.

In addition to all of those wonderful reasons to purchase this book, there are too many photographs and illustrations to count. Most pages have more than one and it doesn’t matter if it is in black and white or color. What sets these apart is how they are used. On p.127 there is a series of 6 images side-by-side that beginning with the original Flynn sketch of the 17th hole at the Cherry hills Golf Club. Next to it is an aerial photograph of the hole from 1937 followed by others from 1963 and 1977 the present day. Then is a master plan drawing of the hole showing how to restore it to its original greatness. This book is unique and all should own it. It is published by Wiley & Sons and is available through all reputable book sellers.
Mark Fine – … I would say that 90% of what I do is education. You probably feel the same way when you’re out in front of a club, and it’s explaining why greens are shaped the way they are and why a green is actually part of a whole green complex that’s all integrated with the surrounding hazards and it all ties back into the hazards in the fairway and all right back to the tee…

What’s exciting for me is when you go around a golf course with people and the light bulb goes on and they get it. They start to look at hazards a different way, they start to look at angles of play a little differently. They understand why an approach might be better off it was firm rather than soft and how it’s going to change the complexity of the golf hole…

PY – Especially where renovations and restorations are involved, and we’ll use Tilly as a good example, he built his golf courses, even at the end of his career there was still a ground game; there is none today. Angle of play is even more important where a ground game is involved than when it isn’t. To get people who’ve been taught that golf is a game where a ball is hit through the air rather than to get it from point A to point B is a real challenge when making them try to understand that just simply putting a bunker between where you are hitting from in the fairway and where you will place a hole isn’t a challenge necessarily or increasing a shot value or making a good angle of play.

MF – Absolutely! As you well know, the older courses, I always say, were meant to be played along the edges rather than down the middle. Modern golf has a tendency to place the hazards on the side and you tend to play bowling alley golf, right down the middle and straight onto the green, and like you said it’s usually an aerial approach.

The older golf courses the best ones, that’s where that wind comes into play, you want to play along the edges because that’s where the temptation was and the better angle of attack for a hole location for one day versus another. Also, angles don’t mean as much if the conditions are soft. If they are firm and fast, then you have to be in the right places, particularly on tee shots if you’re going to attack a green. If not, then you’re going to be
in trouble, you’re not going to be able to hold the putting surface or use that approach, and at a minimum you won’t be able to get it close to the hole.

I think once people understand and see how some of these older courses were designed… You know I’m a big advocate of width, and it remains one of my big pet peeves as width has changed so much over the years; for the better golfer if you narrow a course up you tend to make it easier for them because you tell them where to play. Effectively, what you’re doing, is you’re only making it harder for the weaker golfer and no one is winning there.

If you widen the golf course, then the better golfer realizes that while he still has that line of play down the middle, if he plays it to the left side, for example, maybe close to where the hazard is, that he has a better line of play into the hole location and then they start to get themselves in more trouble. The weaker golfer, when he has more fairway to play, finds himself in it more often and thinks the game is easier to play and that’s better for everyone as well.

PY – I agree…

MF – Now that’s an educational concept that takes time to explain. This is where I think the USGA hasn’t done a very good job with their U.S. Open set-up from the standpoint of preaching what they practice. They talk about width, they talk about tree removal, and then when they set up their golf courses for the U.S. Open, well that’s what people see.

So many times I’m in front of a committee or members and they’ll say, “Well they don’t set up the U.S. Open that way.” Well, why do these fairways need to be at 40 yards, why do they need to be at 26 or something like that? It’s a very difficult educational procedure, if you will, to get people to understand why their golf course shouldn’t be set up at U.S. Open conditions, and how doing so is really destroying the strategy and integrity of their golf course, especially if they happen to have a classic course such as an old Tillinghast or Ross or Thomas; you name it.

That set up really can destroy those great old golf courses and definitely makes them less fun to play.

PY – Do you think Mike Davis [Director of Competitions for the USGA] who is now in charge of course set-up at the U.S. Open is going to be able to have an impact on that for the good?

MF – I’m not sure… I’ve met Mike a couple of times. He has a difficult task in that if you look at where the pros hit the balls these days, it’s just scary. He’s got to figure out a way to “defend the golf course” while at the same time, they set an example to everybody who watches the Open, listens to the announcers and sees how the golf course is set up, they then bring that back to their own golf course and want to see it set up the same way.

That makes it very difficult and you end up doing things on golf courses that you really shouldn’t be doing, and again, the integrity and strategy of these great old courses get compromised because people are looking at how the best players in the world are attacking golf courses and I don’t think there is much that Mike can do. I don’t think that he’s going to start widening the fairways and bringing things back to the way they used to be. It’s a problem and I don’t really know what the answer is… All I know is that after an
Open is played is the most difficult time to sit down with a committee and talk about a Master Plan and how their golf course should be done because they’ve just seen that championship on television or had been there and watched it and want to bring that experience back to their own golf course.

Very few players would ever have much fun playing a golf course set up for the U.S. Open.

For example, the controversy of older greens and how they were designed. They weren’t designed with that much contour primarily for interest and excitement but for drainage purposes. Not that they weren’t putting in contour for creative and artistic reasons, but a lot of it was to keep the greens back from dying because of too much moisture on them. So today, with green speeds up 11, 12 and higher, it makes a lot of the greens not puttable.

I think of the 11th at Fenway for example, one of my favorite courses, you drop that ball on the back of the green when it’s rolling at 10 and it’s rolling down and off the front. It’s a shame, but how do you handle that situation? Obviously you try to make that green as big as you can, take it all the way out to the edges of the fill pad, but after that there’s not much more you can do if you’re going to keep the green speeds that high.

Have you ever been there?

PY – Yes, I love Fenway…

MF – There are so many great holes there and Gil Hanse has done a wonderful job with the bunker work. I thought it was fabulous. It’s one of those courses I always recommend that people go and play.

The USGA is in a tough situation. The game is actually regressing a little bit as far as play and it’s just getting more and more expensive to play…

PY – Absolutely… When I grew up I paid 5 dollars to play a round of golf at Bethpage and was able to do so every week. Today, a family of four could spend four or five hundred dollars a week to play many local golf courses when you figure in equipment, food, transportation, etc…

MF – … Affordable golf just has to come back into play if we’re going to bring people back to the game. We’re going to have to figure out how to do that. One of the ways is we’ve got to make the course look less maintained. That’s another thing that you again, watch the U.S. Open impact; perfect greens, perfect conditions, and that’s very expensive and prohibitive for most clubs.

We did a survey as part of our Bunker’s book (see this month’s book review) on maintenance expense that goes into hazards and its approaching 25% of maintenance budgets which is absurd if you think about it. These are supposed to be hazards…

So this goes back to that education point I was making before. Bunkers are supposed to be hazards; they’re not supposed to be a maintained playing surface and there’s supposed to be some kind of penalty. It doesn’t mean that you’re supposed to make them inescapable or absolutely brutal, but they are hazards and we spend too much time making them perfect. That’s probably the biggest reasons golf courses get changed because of complaints about the hazards.
At a seminar I just did we had a part about that. It just makes the game more expensive and less fun…

PY – it almost sounds like…

MF – Don’t get me wrong, the USGA does a LOT of good things. The Greens Section does a lot of wonderful work with golf courses. But the problem is their premiere event features these set-ups and conditions that are totally unrealistic and that is what most people see.

As an architect and design consultant, these are the things that we face when we’re out there in front of committees and talking about master planning and course improvements or course restorations and renovations, call it what you want. They’re looking at that as an example and where I don’t think the USGA sets a good precedent in this…

All sports go through cycles and have their ups and downs; it’s just that I don’t believe this precedent of the USGA is really good for the game and is making it more expensive…

PY – I found something absolutely fascinating on your website… You’re the only architect I have ever seen to include this as part of their main design philosophy., that “The principles of strategy, challenge, FELLOWSHIP…”

To me that is so interesting that you consider “Fellowship” to be an important part of design philosophy. Can you explain that?

MF – I think it is. Golf is a social game, if you look back to the roots of the game; it’s all part of the experience. When you go out to play on a Saturday morning with your regular foursome or your afternoon nine-hole match or whatever, it’s that camaraderie that’s part of the game. That’s really why we play the game. And we play it on different types of playing fields.

That’s part of the beauty of the game. It’s not like tennis or bowling for example where a tennis court is always the same or a bowling alley is always the same… I just think that’s something that, in all of the golf courses I’ve played and all the people I’ve met on courses that, as an architect, that’s something that’s important to me. I think that’s important to any architect, that whole experience from the first tee to the eighteenth green that has to be incorporated into his design, and I do think some of the classic designers understood that.

That’s one of the reasons that I have a problem with courses that are completely tree-lined. It takes away from that opportunity to see your buddy coming down the fourth hole while you’re coming down number one. I think that’s part of the experience of playing golf… I hope that answers your question…

PY – Oh, definitely… The reason I asked it is because golf is different from any other game ever invented by man. For example, I can be playing Oakmont, and as I do so I’m actually competing against every great player who has ever played the game in my mind. I’m never going to ever be standing at home plate at Yankee Stadium and have my friend throw a ball to me and try to hit a home rune. But I can stand out there in the middle of
the fairway at Baltusrol and look down at my feet and read the plaque that says, “From this spot Jack Nicklaus hit a three-iron onto the green to win the U.S. Open” and I can drop a ball, take my own three-iron out and try to see if I can match the great Jack Nicklaus. There isn’t any other sport where I can do that.

Every other playing field in sport is utilitarian; not golf, it’s totally different. It envelops what the game is and the game is nothing without the field it is played on…

MF – That’s exactly it. It’s far more than just a mere sport… You can stand where the great players played and you just might even do better than they did on a particular hole and you can do it with your friends. That’s where that fellowship comes in. And yet that fellowship is also individual. You are the only person who is going to hit your golf ball. So that mental challenge is one where you face yourself as well as your friends.

So it’s not only a physical challenge, but it’s a psychological one as well. We talk about that in our book as well.

Mark and I spoke for a while about the importance of a golf club’s history and how researching the evolution of a golf course’s development always surprises and delights members of a golf club. He has also seen how, many times, by simply getting a better understanding of their courses history and appreciating the design and playing options that were originally built into it, a club will recognize the need to try and restore the original features back into what they now have. That is why I now asked:

PY – You’ve had the opportunity to work on a number of great old courses, and before we get to the Tilly’s, how much fun was it to do Cherry Hills?

MF – Cherry Hills was a fascinating project. I worked out there for close to four years and experienced four different Grounds Chairman and four different Presidents. For me the most exciting thing about it was how that golf course has evolved over the years. It originally was one of Flynn’s best designs and it doesn’t get viewed that way by a lot of people today because it’s changed so much.

The bunkers have totally changed and unfortunately most of the green sites have, though all but two are still there. But it’s fascinating to see the evolution of that golf course and also the different committees and board members I worked with get excited about it.

I have really enjoyed working on that course and seeing how an old course can still challenge the best players in today’s game…

Another one that we just finished a master plan for was Robert Hunter’s only original design which is the old Berkeley Country Club, now the Mira Vista Golf and Country Club…

PY – I was going to ask about that one next…

MF – Yeah, that’s a fabulous golf course and the plan was just approved, with construction to start in the next year or so. We expect the plan to be implemented fully over the next few years. It was just neat to go back and do all the research… Then again, there’s another case where the membership just didn’t realize how interesting and
exciting their golf course was because it had changed so much. Huge eucalyptus greens had been planted, bunkers had been taken out or filled in and the greens had shrunk…

It changed the character significantly and Forrest and I put together a pretty exciting master plan that’s going to bring all the old features back and the club’s really excited about it. That’s what’s most rewarding about seeing the club embrace the concept of seeing the club restore the old Robert Hunter features.

I got a comment from one of the members the other day who said, “I can’t go around my golf course anymore without thinking about what it was and what it will be when all of these changes are finished.”

PY – That’s wonderful…

MF – That’s what’s fun and exciting about working in this area, to see someone take a totally different perspective of their design because they’re thinking about the architecture and not how many shots it’s going to take to get the ball into the hole.

I think Bobby Jones said it best when he said at one time that, “Those that really start to understand and appreciate golf architecture are really starting to understand the essence of the game and in the long run will help to improve their golf score.”

I think that’s very true…

PY – You also had the privilege of working on one of the least-known of all of Tilly’s courses, and I’m not talking about Suneagles, though we’ll get to that. I’m talking about Irem Temple…

MF – Irem Temple is a neat old golf course. We just finished up a new range up on the hillside which I must say is breathtaking once it grows in and should open [shortly]. That’s a neat old golf course with one of the most unique opening holes in all of golf… playing from the clubhouse down the hill. Like most of the old courses the greens have shrunk. A couple have been changed from a routing standpoint, but the golf course is really mostly intact. We’re really hoping that the club will proceed with the bunker work and implement the master plan. It really is an old Tillinghast gem that most people don’t know anything about.

PY – That’s one of things I love the most in learning about Tilly and his golf courses. There are even a good number of them in many places where even the membership themselves don’t know their pedigree and that Tilly did work there and designed some things and even designed the entire course in some cases. For example, in 1934, Tilly wrote that he had designed and built several hundred courses, yet we only know of 89 of them. That means there are a hundred-plus courses out there that the memberships don’t know that Tilly designed them…

MF – It’s interesting when you do research and find that Tilly came into a course and did some work or may have even designed the entire course… There was also a lot of idea sharing back then. Going back to Cherry valley for a moment, there’s three replica holes on the course from Pine Valley. Until we pointed that out to the membership, not a single
person had recognized that or knew it… That should come as no surprise as Flynn worked at Pine Valley for a number of years…

PY – Let’s talk about Suneagles… I am dying to see that. I’m going to be up in New York later this year and I must get over to see it…

MY – You really must see it… There is some amazing bunkering out there. In fact the fourteenth hole is one of the best reverse-Redan holes that Tillinghast ever did. It’s still there and that’s the beauty of it.

The biggest issue we’re facing is it’s an Army base and it was cited for closing. The golf course will stay remain, so we’re told, but it put a hold on spending. There’s been some tree work and we’ve done some bunkering but we haven’t been able to do the full plan. It will be one heck of a golf course when it’s done, and like you said, not many people know about it.

It was a 1926 project with a fairly big budget as well. You can tell just by looking at the bunkering and the green shapes that he put a lot of time and effort into that golf course. It wasn’t a “Donald Ross topo” where he never even saw the site; Tilly definitely spent some time at Suneagles.

You have to see it. Some of the bunkering is among the most dramatic Tillinghast bunkering I’ve ever seen. In some ways I compare it to Fenway. I actually took the construction firm that we were going to use to do the work out to see both Somerset hills and Fenway because I thought some of the bunkering at those two courses were representative of what we would be doing to bring back the bunkering at Suneagles.

It’s one of those courses that if you’re a Tillinghast fan you have to see…

PY – I think it is a very important course for the people of New Jersey. Whether the base is closed or not, by preserving the golf course they are preserving a great work of art for the local community to enjoy for many years to come.

MF – Absolutely. You’ll see some of the best shared bunkering that Tillinghast ever did on four and five… It’ll just blow you away; it really will…

PY – Just a few more questions for you. The first one that I am dying to know is who chose that Forrest would come as the first name on the book?

MF – (As I laugh heartily Mark immediately replies) If you really knew Forrest you wouldn’t be asking that question. Actually, Forrest is quite a gentleman and extremely knowledgeable in golf course architecture and his name deserves to come first on the book. I couldn’t have had more fun writing a book with him…

PY – What’s your favorite course?

MF – That’s a tough question, but I’m kind of partial to the links courses I’ve played over there [in the UK]. Put me on a firm and fast links and that’s probably my favorite golf course.
PY – Then, if you had one round left in you, which one would it be played on? Let’s put it that way.

MF – I’ve been asked that question so many times and I’ve never given an answer… There are so many great ones… I’d love to play Cypress Point and Pebble Beach and Pine Valley, Crystal Downs, Prairie Dunes… It’s hard to beat a sunny day with the wind blowing up at Royal Dornoch; golf just doesn’t get any better than that… I have to think hard on it; I don’t really have an answer on it for you… What’s more important to me, what I’d be more concerned about is who my three playing partners would be…

PY – Well that was my next question…

MF – It would probably be my two kids. You know I had the privilege to play Cypress Point with my oldest son. Now it probably doesn’t mean too much to him, but one day he’s going to look back and think that was really special…

PY – Wow… Isn’t that a wonderful memory.

And a wonderful way to end our conversation!
It was just over a year ago that the good news that the city of San Antonio was going to restore the Brackenridge Park Golf Course back to as close as possible to Tilly’s original design. Opened for play in 1916, it was the first of the great municipal golf course’s that brought the ability to play the grand game to the common man. Note in the copy below of the original layout how masterful Tilly used the San Antonio River.
In the years since Tilly designed and built this, one of the most historic courses in the annals of Texas golf, much has been lost. The city annexed some of the golf course to provide for a highway and so three holes have been are gone forever. In addition, the smaller branch of the river that flowed through the course was blocked up; this in response to a series of floods that regularly damaged the course.

Now, whenever a course, especially one with a history as important as Brackenridge Park’s, is to be “restored” to its former self, often times it is more a statement of hope and good intentions rather than practical reality.

Let me then be the first to share this message, for Tilly can truly be found once again in Brackenridge Park! In fact, they even restored the long-lost river bed.
John Colligan and with Trey Kemp and his team from Colligan Golf Design out of Arlington, Texas were determined to do what most thought an impossibility and have found a way to not only restore 15 of Tilly’s original holes as he designed them, but to even bring back the blocked up river into play once again. Below is an overlay that Trey Kemp did of the original course routing on an aerial of the course as it exists now. It was this overlay that allowed the restoration to be highly accurate.

In Tilly’s day

**THIS IS THE OUTLOOK THAT CONFRONTS THE PLAYER**

*From the ninth tee on the Brackenridge Park course, opportunities for trouble are abundant.*

Today
Tilly’s original design for the hole from the booklet “Planning a Golf Course.”
1st hole BEFORE construction… 1st hole AFTER & growing in.
15th hole above… 16th hole below
In the coming months we look forward to the course reopening and hopefully being there to celebrate along with the City of San Antonio for their far-sighted investment in their own history and with John Colligan for his masterful recreation of Tilly’s southwest masterpiece. He would have been very pleased… Congratulations!