

# A Hole Well Told

Lawyer/author Bo Links inks an intriguing par 4 and claims first prize in the 2007 Lido design competition

By Ron Whitten

WE WERE LOOKING FOR FLIGHTS OF FANCY IN THE 2007 LIDO COMPETITION IN GOLF Course Architecture (*Show Us Your Fantasy*, Feb. 16), a design contest co-sponsored by the Alister MacKenzie Society and *Golf World*, and we were rewarded.

Let's start with the fact that the winning entry, a drivable par 4 with a wishbone fairway along ocean dunes, was created by a 58-year-old San Francisco lawyer named, believe it or not, Bo Links.

That too-good-to-be-true moniker had no bearing on the competition results. Author identification of every entry was carefully blocked out by Gene Zarnardi, a past president of the MacKenzie Society, and Bob Weisgerber, chair of the Lido Competition, before this writer reviewed the entries and selected the winner.

Bo's real name is Robert. He was given the nickname by a high-school golf teammate after pro golfer Bo Wininger, not Bo Jackson or Bo Derek. And, yes, Links is his real, if improbable, last name.

If his name sounds familiar, it's because he has written a couple of golf novels, *Follow The Wind* (Simon & Schuster, 1995), best described as Field of Dreams-meets-Ben Hogan, and *Riverbank Tweed and Roadmap Jenkins* (Simon & Schuster, 2001), subtitled "Tales From the Caddie Yard."

Bo's winning design captured the flair and excitement of a MacKenzie golf hole by providing three routes to the green. A lower fairway on the left, generous in its width to allow high-handicappers the thrill of playing along the ocean, poses a partially blind, uphill second shot over an ocean cove. A right-hand fairway is 25 feet higher, but far more narrow. The reward for the tighter tee shot is a clear view of the green some 15 feet below. Both fairways end abruptly in dunes, requiring placement of a tee shot with something less than a driver.

The third option is to take driver and reach the green from the tee, a poke of 351 yards from the back tee to carry a vast stretch of rugged sand dunes, another 22 yards to reach the putting surface. (Would the good doctor MacKenzie believe that a hole of 373 yards would someday be considered drivable?)

His green is shallow but wide, with humps and rolls meant, Links said in his notes, to be a cross between St. Andrews and the once-famous tumbling MacKenzie green at Sitwell Park. Toss in some typical MacKenzie wind-blown bunkers and a notation that he intended his hole, buffeted by ocean breezes, to be invigorating, not impossible, and the conclusion is clear: Bo knows MacKenzie.

For his imaginative design, Links received a cash prize of \$3,000. He will also be honored at the MacKenzie Society annual meeting at Cypress Point Club in Pebble Beach next month.

Also selected were a trio of honorable mentions. Trey Kemp, a design associate at Colligan Golf Design in Dallas, submitted a hole with triple diagonal fairways and a diagonal creek crossing. While it was full of great angles and options, in the final analysis the hole favored faded shots and punished anything hit right-to-left off the tee.

Another honorable mention went to graphic designer Nick Kaldenbaugh of Belmont, Mass., whose entry was a variation of MacKenzie's famous ocean-cove par-3 16th at Cypress Point, expanded to a par 4. (Indeed, some insist MacKenzie originally intended the 16th to be a par 4.) Although Kaldenbaugh admits in an accompanying essay that he has never played Cypress Point, he has clearly studied diagrams and aerials of it. His hole provides some high risks and great gambles, but it has too much unused fairway on the far left, and there's no reward for carrying the ocean cove to reach the fairway in front of the green, when a tee shot of the same length can reach the green itself.

The third honorable mention was perhaps the cleverest of the bunch. Richard Fletcher, an architect in North Augusta, S.C., sent what he insisted was MacKenzie's idea of a dual fairway par-4 19th hole for Augusta National, with a tee about where Augusta's par-3 course now begins and a green at the intersection of Magnolia Lane and Washington Road.

To bolster that claim, Fletcher included a yellowed MacKenzie letterhead, purporting to be a note to Robert Tyre Jones Jr., the co-founder of Augusta National and the collaborator with MacKenzie on the design of the course.

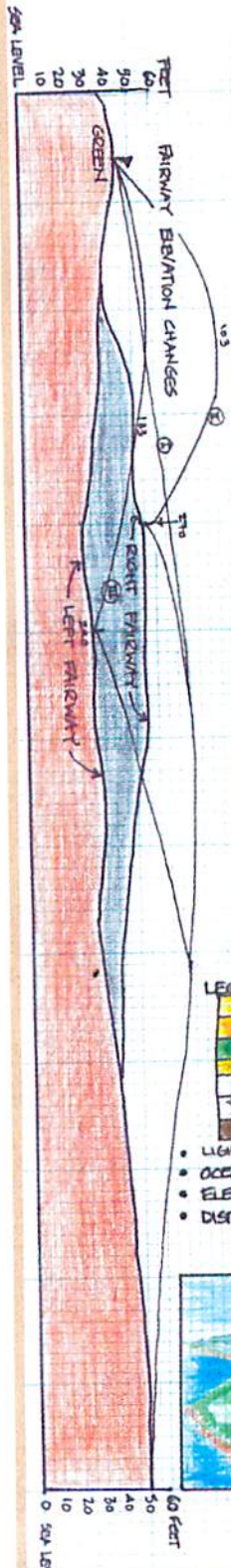
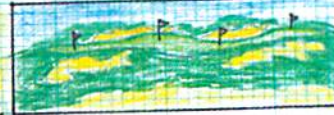
"I find it amusing that your members feel the need to have an extra hole to settle wagers," the letter reads. "A short one-shot hole could be laid out from the 18th green up to the Manor House but, in my opinion, such would be much too simple, out of character with the rest of the course. I have taken the liberty to draft a drawing of a two-shot hole, which is enclosed."

Fletcher clearly did his homework. The letterhead is identical to MacKenzie's stationery, though the signature is not. His

ALISTER MACKENZIE  
 LIDO PRIZE COMPETITION  
 TWO-SHOT HOLE - "TEMPTATION"  
 CHAMPIONSHIP YARDAGE - 373 YDS  
 REGULAR YARDAGE - 344 YDS  
 SNET YARDAGE - 306 YDS



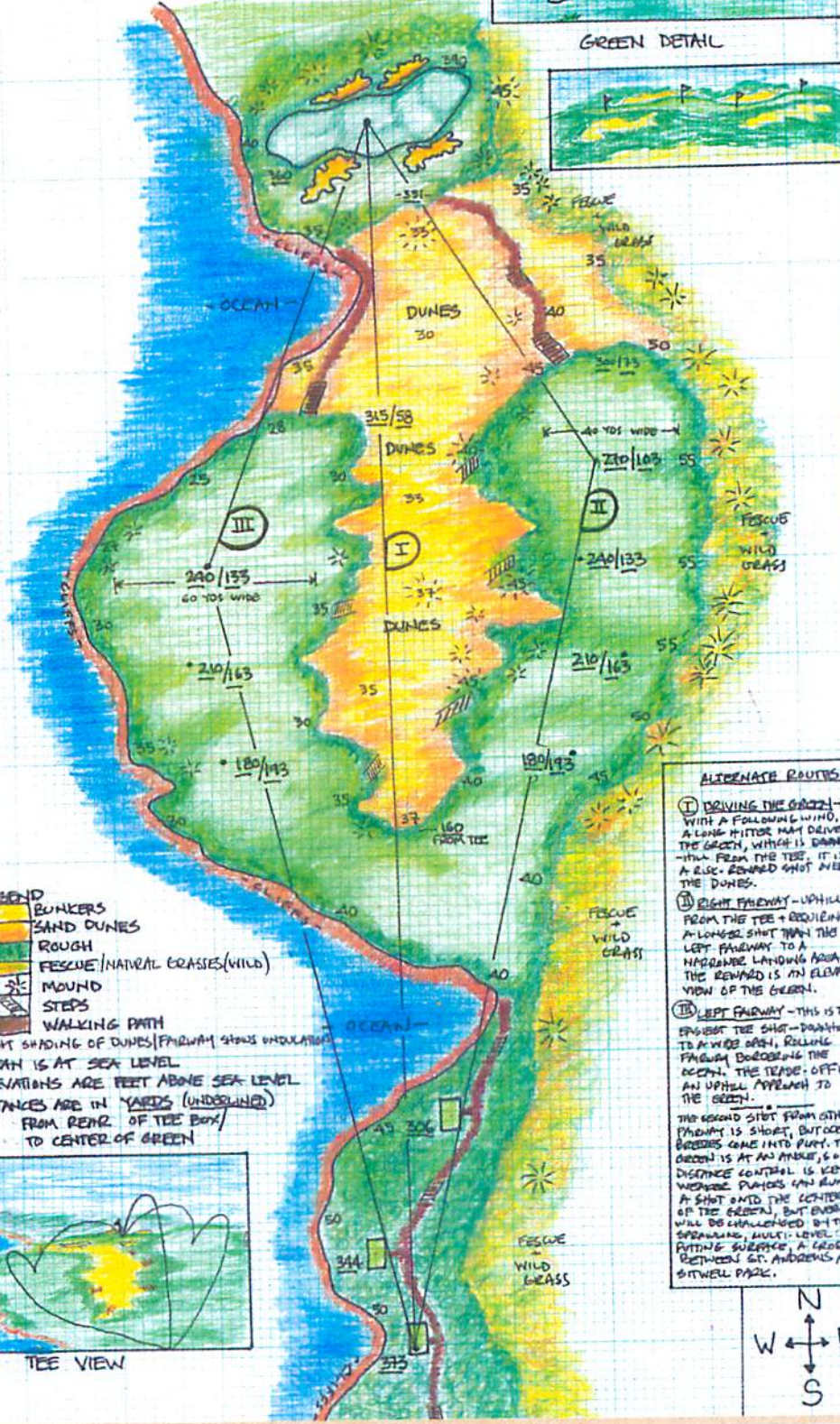
GREEN DETAIL



- LEGEND**
- BUNKERS
  - SAND DUNES
  - ROUGH
  - FESCUE/NATURAL GRASSES (WILD)
  - MOUND
  - STEPS
  - WALKING PATH
- LIGHT SHADING OF DUNES/FAIRWAY SHOWS ELEVATION
  - OCEAN IS AT SEA LEVEL
  - ELEVATIONS ARE FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL
  - DISTANCES ARE IN YARDS (UNDERLINED) FROM REAR OF TEE BOX TO CENTER OF GREEN



TEE VIEW



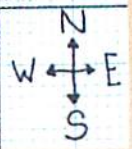
**ALTERNATE ROUTES**

**I DRIVING THE GREEN** - WITH A FOLLOWING WIND, A LONG HITTER MAY DRIVE THE GREEN, WHICH IS DOWN-WIND FROM THE TEE. IT IS A RISK-REWARD SHOT NEE THE DUNES.

**II RIGHT FAIRWAY** - UPHILL FROM THE TEE + REQUIRING A LONGER SHOT THAN THE LEFT FAIRWAY TO A HARDER LANDING AREA. THE REWARD IS AN ELEVATED VIEW OF THE GREEN.

**III LEFT FAIRWAY** - THIS IS THE EASIEST TEE SHOT - DOWNHILL TO A WIDE OPEN, ROLLING FAIRWAY BORDERING THE OCEAN. THE TRADE-OFF IS AN UPHILL APPROACH TO THE GREEN.

THE SECOND SHOT FROM EITHER FAIRWAY IS SHORT, BUT OBSTACLES COME INTO PLAY. THE GREEN IS AT AN ANGLE, SO DISTANCE CONTROL IS KEPT. WHERE PLAYERS CAN RUN A SHOT ONTO THE CENTER OF THE GREEN, BUT ENOUGH WILL BE CHALLENGED BY THE SPRINGING BUNTS - LEVELS: PUTTING SURFACE, A CROSS BETWEEN ST. ANDREWS AND SITWELL PARK.



Links' winning risk-reward entry shows a keen sense of MacKenzie's philosophy.

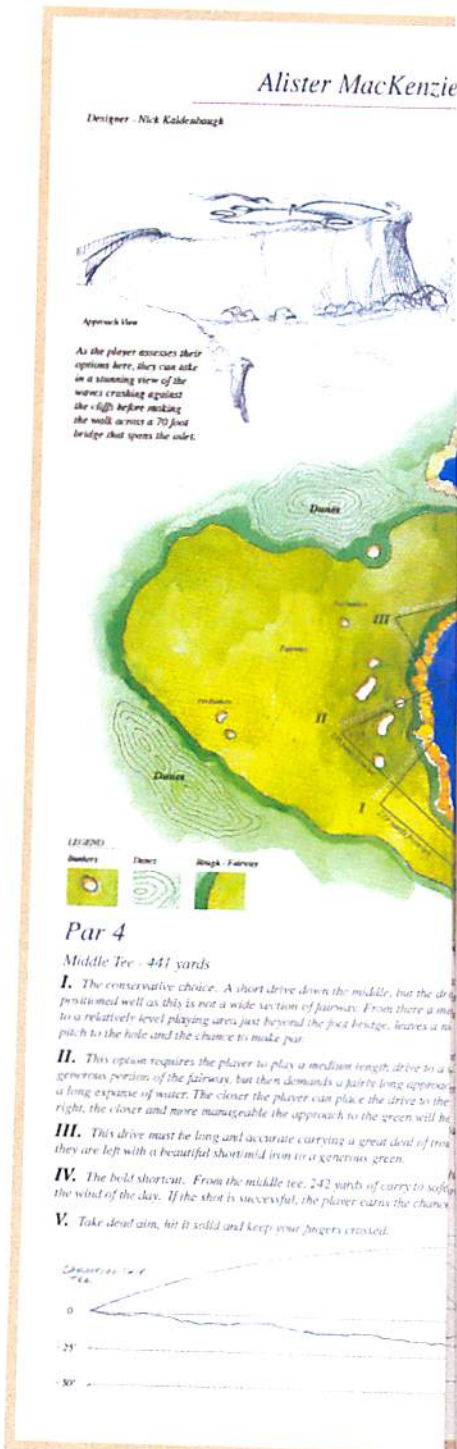


Kemp's trio of diagonal fairways gives an edge to left-to-right tee balls.

sketch of the three-pronged green bears all the characteristics of MacKenzie's famous watercolor green diagrams. His fairway bunker looks suspiciously like the lone remaining MacKenzie bunker on Augusta's 10th hole. And Augusta National did indeed once have a par-3 19th "bye" hole in front of the clubhouse.

Having recently proposed a tongue-in-cheek par-4 19th hole for Augusta National myself, this writer thought long and hard about Fletcher's entry, but finally concluded that while shrewd, it was not quite ingenious.

The contest received a total of 64 entries. Two entrants appar-

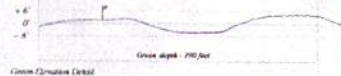


Kaldenbaugh sketched a par-4 version of

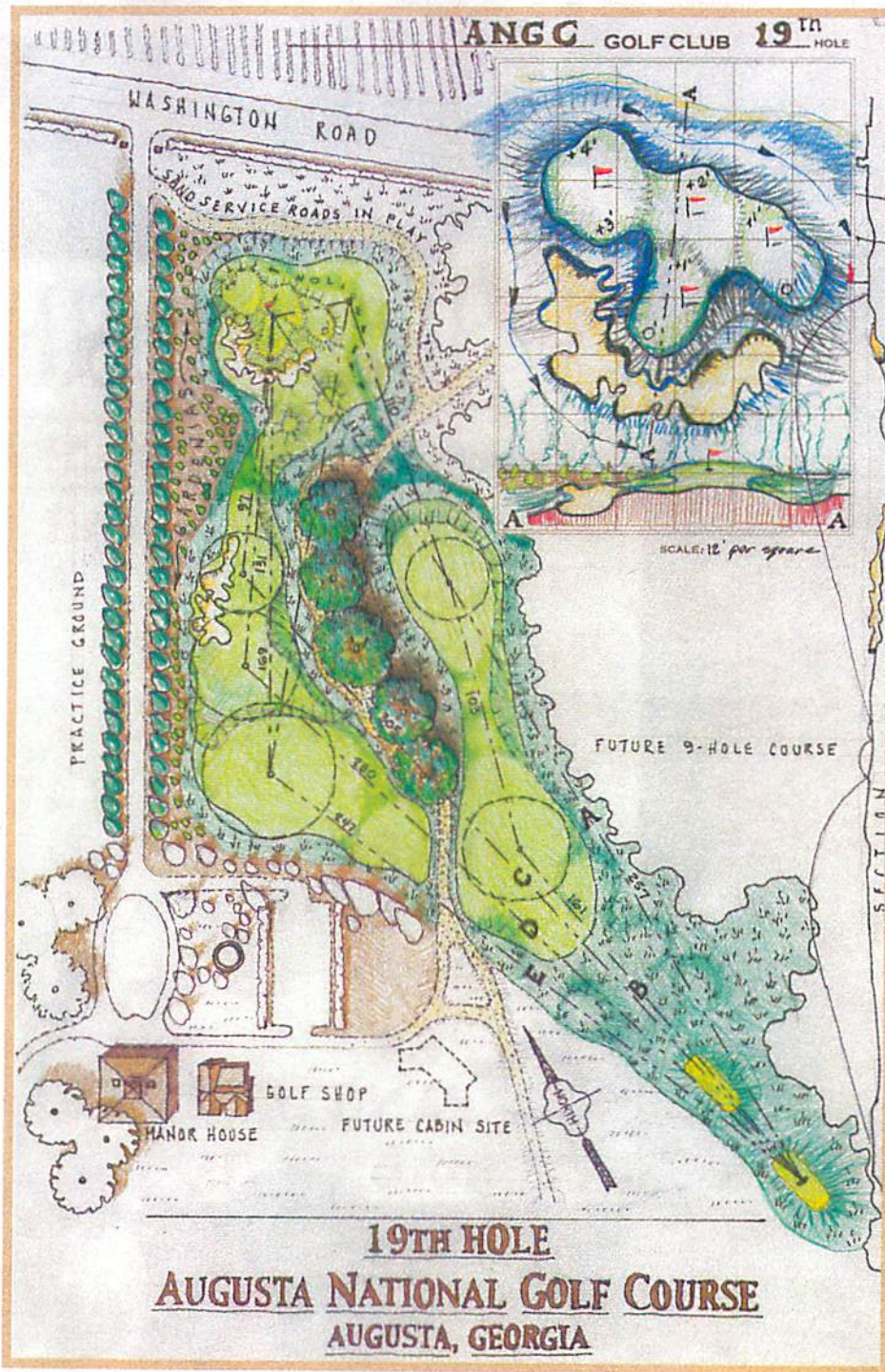
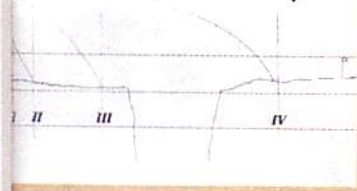
ently confused Dr. MacKenzie with Rand McNally. Sean Crain, an electronics engineer with the U.S. Department of Transportation, fashioned a hole in the outline of his home state of Maryland, with tees in the panhandle and a green on the Eastern Shore, with Chesapeake Bay posing a variety of water carries. Hugh Brockway, a physical education teacher in Leesburg, Va., shaped his "Empire Hole" like the state of New York, with the tees on the far side of Lake Ontario, Finger Lakes water hazards, a rolling Catskills fairway and a green fashioned from Long Island. (The Montauk pin position looks like a killer.)

## Prize Competition

A very large green helps make this tough hole a bit more inviting. A deep valley in the center portion divides the surface and allows the back section to be shared with another hole on the course.



most of the green. The decision will be largely based on very difficult hole into a birdie.



Fletcher's par-3 16th at Cypress Point.

All bets are over: Fletcher's Augusta National extra-hole tiebreaker was noteworthy.

Although rules required entrants to be 18, two high school students submitted darned good ideas. Lucas Franki, a student at Waynesboro (Pa.) Area Senior High School, and John Lyon, just graduated from Brighton High in Rochester, N.Y. (and a caddy at CC of Rochester), provided remarkably similar diagrams, straightaway par 4s with enormously wide fairways slashed by crossbunkers. Enter again, boys, when you reach the legal age.

We also heard from a father-and-son team, Terry and Michael Wilson of Pacific Grove, Calif. Michael is a senior at Berkeley, and his triple-fairway submittal was one of eight finalists. The

more conventional dogleg par 4 sent in by his father, an architect, didn't make the cut.

Lastly, we mention a tropical hole with lagoons and palm trees done in beautiful pastels by Kenneth Burns, who happens to reside in the Central Arizona Correctional Facility of the Arizona State Prison in Florence. He has been there since August 1988 and isn't due for release until 2028. Burns, who has entered the Lido Competition on three prior occasions, called this year's entry, "Free Spirit."

That's the spirit we were looking for in the 2007 Lido design contest. **GW**