



Muscle & Guile

2007 winner Bo Links retains his Lido design title with an option-rich, dogleg par 4

By Ron Whitten

FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE year a fantasy golf hole submitted by San Francisco lawyer Robert (Bo) Links was selected as the winning entry in the Lido Competition, the annual golf design contest co-sponsored by *Golf World* and the Alistair MacKenzie Society with the goal of promoting the design principles of the late, great golf architect.

A couple of facts might lead one to conclude this year's contest was rigged. But it wasn't. Honest.

It was merely a coincidence that Links' winning entry was the first received in this year's contest, and likewise a coincidence that the judging was conducted by veteran San Francisco attorney (and former USGA president) Frank (Sandy) Tatum, who has known Links for years.

There was no reason for Tatum, a true statesman of the game and the epitome of integrity, to recuse himself from the judging. This reporter (last year's judge) sat in on the deliberations and can verify that the names of contestants were not disclosed to Tatum until after he made his final selection. Tatum was astonished when told he had chosen the fantasy design of a friend and fellow lawyer.

Nor was this a case of *déjà vu*. Links' winning design was totally different from his 2007 ideal hole. Last year he presented a short, wide par 4 with a two-pronged fairway and a wide, shall-

low green, elements faithful to those of MacKenzie's contest-winning design in *Country Life* magazine in 1914. This year he crafted a far different animal, a long, bite-off-what-you-dare dogleg-left par 4 with a curvaceous fairway and long narrow green.

At first glance his design seems based on the 10th hole of the MacKenzie-designed Augusta National, but Links said his hole was inspired by MacKenzie's work at Ireland's Lahinch, so it is gently rolling through sand dunes, not steeply downhill through towering pines. His hole offers multiple options of attack off the tee, undulations, illusions and, as he put it, a balance "between muscle and guile."

Links' winning design was no foregone conclusion. All 40 entries were first reviewed by Gene Zanardi, a past president of the MacKenzie Society, who winnowed them to 10 semifinalists for Tatum's review. Tatum, who has collaborated on 12 course projects, studied those 10, selected three finalists, then agonized over the merits and deficiencies of those final three.

"I'm concerned about the complexity of the green, based upon the length of the approach shot," Tatum said as he reviewed the hole for a third time. "It weighs upon me. Does someone who hits it only 220 yards have a chance? Still, there's a lot of latitude in the tees. The more I look at it, the more I think

we could even put women in a position where they could play this hole. There are a lot of concepts that I like."

(In a note mailed in with his entry, Links said he intended the hole to play as a short par 5 for women.)

Tatum also liked that the hole was exposed to the elements and could play much differently, depending upon wind conditions. "One item this hole certainly addresses is the unfortunate fact that a considerable number of people now hit the ball 300 yards off the tee," Tatum added. "So the issue becomes, can you build a hole to challenge them, too? There's a large enough percentage of such players that you must do that these days. And this hole certainly does."

It does it primarily by use of two center bunkers more than 300 yards from the back tees, bunkers reminiscent of that famous, artistic MacKenzie bunker that lies midway between the landing area and green on (again) the 10th at Augusta National.

For his repeat victory, Links receives a cash prize of \$3,000 and an invitation to attend the MacKenzie Society annual meeting to be held this winter at Titirangi GC in New Zealand.

Next year Links goes for the hat trick in our Lido Competition. Based upon the quality of entries of past years, we expect him to face stiff competition. Plenty of it, we hope. **GW**

"NEEDLE"

SCALE: 1" = 30 YARDS

457 YARDS • PAR 4
MEASURED FROM MIDDLE OF FAIRWAY



Links' winning Lido entry