

Famous British Golf Architect Will Plan Melrose C. C. Links

Dr. Allister Mackenzie, Builder of More Than 400
Courses, Is Designing Layout for New
Club at Elkins Park

By TED HOYT

DR. ALLISTER MACKENZIE, of Leeds, England, famous golf architect, who has designed more than 400 courses during his long career which began in 1906, and who is planning the links for the new Melrose Country Club of Elkins Park, has some very interesting ideas as to how a course should be laid out.

He insists that tees and greens, traps, bunkers, fairway and rough should so fit into the surrounding landscape as to look perfectly natural and not be obviously the work of man, as is the case at many links.

And he firmly believes that while each hole should be so constructed as to test the ability of the stars to the limit yet there should be more than one way of playing the hole so that the dubs, the older men and the short but accurate hitters will have a chance to reach the green in a reasonable number of shots.

Seen yesterday at the office of Wayne Herkness, a member of the Construction Committee of the Melrose Country Club, in the Land Title Building, Dr. Mackenzie said that he always used natural hazards whenever possible and tried to make those he added look natural.

In designing holes, he continued, he always sought to put a premium on brains as well as brawn. The drive must be placed just right to open up the green for the second shot at the par four holes and at the long ones, unless the tee shot and the brassie were dead accurate it would be impossible to reach and hold the carpet with the third.

Dr. Mackenzie does not believe it's "golf" to have every green banked at the rear and facing the ball so that most any old pitch shot will stick. He slopes his green to right or left or even toward the rear, depending on the nature of the terrain and the effect he is striving for, and the only way a player can hold the ball on one of these carpets is to approach it from just the proper point on the fairway.

"It's the strategy of the game that makes it so fascinating," according to Dr. Mackenzie. "On a course I have designed a man must play each shot so as to make it possible to get the desired results with the next one. This holds good until the ball is in the cup. You cannot stand on the tee and hammer the ball in the general direction of the green and expect to make low scores. Distance, yes, but right along the line."

First Invasion of Eastern Territory

While Mackenzie-made courses are scattered through the British Isles, in Australia, New Zealand, California and other sections of the West, this is his first effort in Eastern territory and he is, quite naturally, anxious to give the Melrose C. C. a layout both he and the club can be proud of.

And, of course, local linksmen are keen to see what the man who is known in England as the "dean of golf architects" will produce as his initial contribution along the Atlantic seaboard.

Speaking of the terrain of the Melrose C. C., which was formerly the Curtis Country Club, Dr. Mackenzie said it had every natural advantage and he believed he and his partner, F. B. Maxwell, would be able to plan and build a course there that would attract golfers from far and near.

Mr. Maxwell has already drawn some tentative plans, and he and Dr. Mackenzie will spend several days going over the property. Then they will decide on the final plan—and work will begin at once. Already a sawmill has been installed and the task of clearing out some of the thick clumps of woods that dot the terrain has been started.

The actual construction of the course will be in charge of Dean Woods, chief engineer of the Mackenzie-Maxwell organization, but Mr. Maxwell will pay frequent visits here to supervise the job.

An interesting point is that there will be only one steep climb on the course, though the ground is hilly and has a valley through the central part, where gently ambles the Tacony Creek. This stream will be utilized as a water hazard at a number of the holes.

Dr. Mackenzie is a graduate of Cambridge University, both from the col-

legiate department and the medical school. After the usual period of hospital duty, he hung-out his shingle in Leeds and settled down to be a regular medical man. Then came the Boer War and he went into the Medical Corps of the British Army.

It was during his service in Africa that he evolved the thought of camouflage as applied to men, trenches, guns and so on and which proved so useful during the World War. He frankly confesses that he got the idea from the Boers and that he first applied the principle to golf courses when he went in for that line of work around 1906.