

Representative American Golf Holes

Example No. 1

The Sahara, the Second Hole at
The National Golf Links
Southampton, Long Island

Described by
C. B. Macdonald and H. J. Whigham

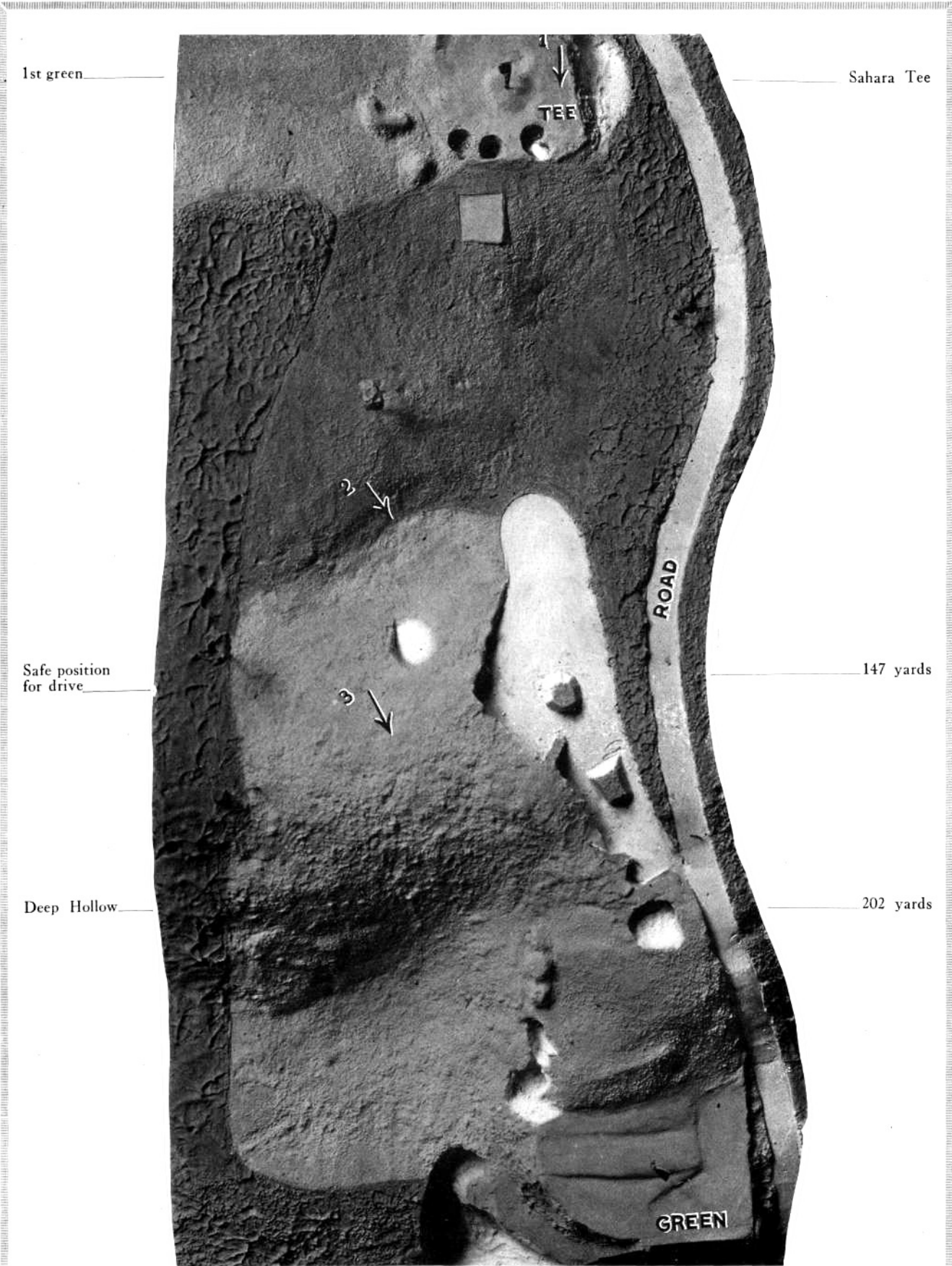


No. 1. The Sahara hole from the tee. The direction of the green is just over the left-hand corner of the diagonal bunker, a carry of 190 yards

This is the first in a series of representative American golf holes to be a monthly feature of the magazine. Each will be illustrated with a full-page plaster of Paris model worked out from an especially prepared topographical map. This allows a visualization of the character and interesting difficulties of each hole not possible if only a survey chart were given. To this the photographic illustrations will be a further aid, as the position and direction of the camera will be found indicated upon the model. It is hoped that as time goes on these examples of the great holes of American golf courses will furnish to Green Committees the country over a fund of knowledge from which they may gather much that will be helpful to the improvement and added interest of their courses.

Next Month

The Alps, the Third Hole at the National Golf Links



THE SAHARA HOLE, NATIONAL GOLF LINKS
 Surveyed and modelled by Oscar Smith, Jr., of F. S. Tainter & Co., 55 Wall Street,
 New York

SAHARA HOLE AT THE NATIONAL GOLF LINKS

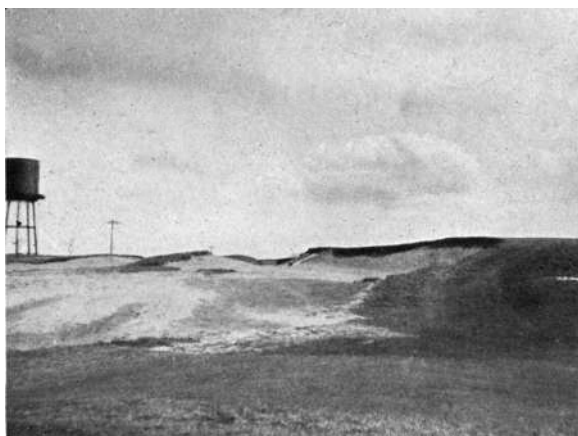
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THE second hole at the National Links is called the Sahara, because it carries out the principle of the Sahara or third hole at Sandwich. Otherwise the name is a trifle misleading; for whereas at Sandwich a sandy waste stretches in front of the tee for a distance of nearly two hundred yards, at the National the chief bunker is more circumscribed, and therefore less reminiscent of the African desert. But the principle in both cases is the same, and is the basic principle of all the best full-drive holes. The distance from the middle tee to the middle of the putting green is about 270 yards. The large bunker is so placed that a ball played straight on the flag must carry about 185 yards. The edge of the bunker runs diagonally so that the extreme right is only 148 yards from the middle of the tee; the small pot bunker which is at the extreme left of the main hazard and is just a little to the left of the straight line to the hole is 200 yards from the middle of the tee.

When the player steps to the tee therefore he has a choice of carries from 148 yards to 200 yards. If he wants to be absolutely sure of avoiding all hazards he must carry 200 yards; if he plays perfectly straight on the flag he must carry at least 185 yards; if he cannot do that he can take a shorter carry by aiming more to the right, and then if he puts a little hook on his ball he can still reach the green; if that shot is beyond him he can make a safe carry to the right of about 150 yards

and leave himself a short but rather difficult approach from the hollow to the right of the green. All these carries at the National are up-hill so that they really represent a little more than the actual figures would seem to indicate.



No. 2. The Sahara as seen from position and direction of arrow 2 on the model

The short player who cannot even carry 150 yards must avoid the bunker altogether by aiming to the right. He has a perfectly open fair green there, but he cannot reach the brow of the hill and is left with a blind and extremely difficult second. The principle of the hole is to give the player on the tee a great number of alternatives according to his strength and courage. If he plays for the green and succeeds he has an advantage of at least one stroke over the opponent who takes a shorter carry to the right, and probably more than one stroke over the player who avoids the carry altogether. But if he fails he is bunkered and may easily take a five or six and lose to the short player who goes round.

The Sahara at the National is a better hole than the Sahara at Sandwich, first because the edge of the main bunker is more clearly defined, and secondly

because the second shot for the player who makes for safety is far more difficult. At Sandwich any sort of shot played well to the right leaves the player with an easy run up to the green, so that he has a chance of a possible three and a fairly simple four. At the National the second shot is always difficult unless the big carry is made; in fact, a fairly good tee-shot
(Continued on page 47)



No. 3. The Sahara green as seen from position and direction of arrow 3 on the model

THE SAHARA HOLE

(Continued from page 23)

played only a little to the right is apt to run down to the bottom of the hollow, and result in too difficult a second. The short player is sure to have a very difficult second. But the fault, if any, is on the right side, because it gives a real advantage to boldness and precision. A just criticism of the National Sahara is that the floor of the main bunker is at present too flat and easy so that the tendency is to play for the long carry in any case, and take the chance of getting a good lie in the bunker. But that criticism can very easily be removed by altering the floor of the bunker. In the main the National Sahara is one of the most inspiring holes in golf; the carry is stupendous and awe-inspiring, and there is a great reward for the perfect shot; but there are plenty of alternatives, and for those who cannot go for the flag there are infinite possibilities in the approach. Fifteen years ago a 270-yard hole was considered a very poor affair; with the rubber-cored ball and natural features like those of the Sahara properly taken advantage of it is perhaps the finest hole in golf. At no hole is a properly played three more satisfactory. Generally a 270-yard hole is a difficult three but a very indifferent four. In this case even the best players are glad to get a four, and for the short player a four is a veritable triumph. In other words the Sahara is equally interesting to the scratch player and the man whose handicap is twenty-four.