

# 3 *Research of Games and Influences of Landscape Effect*

Earlier chapters discussed the concept of landscape effect- defined as “a golf course landscape component that has been contrived for an aesthetic purpose.” Or for “the look.” In this chapter we examine the influence of landscape effect upon the game of golf, especially upon play, where a landscape effect is located in the line or closely adjacent to the line of play. To corroborate the influence of landscape effect upon experiences that range from complete joy to frustration in golf as well as other associated qualities that affect enjoyment such as time and costs, this book cites the work of three social scientists. These scientists have researched the phenomena of games; what qualities make them attractive or unattractive to a society and what are the forces that corrupt games. Chapter 3 identifies these qualities and components of games that are specific to golf and also states corollaries of personal experiences associated with landscape effect. In conclusion of chapter 3, other golfer’s and writers experiences and anecdotes have been recounted. You as readers will find as I have myself, many of the cited game experiences involved with landscape effects have occurred to you personally.

Approximately 10 million players, one-third of all players in the United States, have lost interest in golf and have recently quit the game. Something is wrong and for the future health of the game it would be instructive to know what went wrong. What is so surprising about this \$75.9 billion industry is that although resources have been spent on questionable applied research no monies have been devoted to basic research that addresses the underlying cause of golf’s problems. The problems will not go away without some understanding of the causes and subsequent intervention. Monies have been spent on studies of golf’s more obvious major symptoms of a) high costs b) excessive time to play the game, c) difficulty, and d) diminishing fun, but the industry has no insight to the underlying cause of these symptoms. In further efforts to correct the game’s decline and stabilize the game, the industry has overlooked a fact of golf’s fundamental condition. The fact is that golf is a game.

The game of golf is a social phenomenon that epitomizes a spirit of play that is essential to our culture. *“To the degree that he is influenced by play, man can check the monotony and determinism of life. He learns to construct order, conceive economy and establish equity.”* (1) This sense of equity, called fairness, is present in our laws, our everyday conduct, social entitlements and our games. As you read Chapter 3, you will value how equity is an important part of the structure of the game –structure being defined as the activities of a game, its equipment, and the course upon which the game is contested. Equity is established between players and opponents and a player and the course. Chapter 3 examines the social science of games and games unique qualities. A major emphasis of Chapter 3 is the discussion of landscape effect, contrived for an aesthetic purpose, and its influences upon experiences of players engaged in the game of golf.

## *The Qualities of Games*

Fundamental to understanding Chapter 3 is the recent work of three social scientists: French sociologist Roger Caillois (1913-1978), Australian psychologist Susan A. Jackson (b c1963),

and American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (b1934) who have devoted a great deal of their careers to the study of games and leisure. This discussion is not a comprehensive review of their work, but mostly a description of their theories and research of science of games and leisure that address categories of games, state of flow, and similar constructs of fun that I have considered relative to the subject of the game of golf.

Like many theories, whether they are about scientific aspects of games and leisure, beauty, the cosmos, art or aesthetics, they are continuously being debated. It is not important here that pure truth of a theory be established and universally accepted without further contest. What is important is how these ideas might be applied for the benefit of society, even if only a segment of them are found to be useful. The authors are not seeking any pure truths, only dissemination of our interpretations of theories of artistic and aesthetic landscape effect and theory of games that may give insight to the decline of the game and set the stage for proof of our theories, through use of the **Golf Logic Model**.

Correlations of landscape effect based upon my own experiences as a golfer (how has a landscape effect enhanced or frustrated a play experience) are made with qualities of the game of golf of which I have gleaned from social scientists’ research of qualities of games. The scientists’ work in quantifying and measuring experiences of sports participants is discussed relative to how similar techniques may be adapted to measure golfers’ experiences and feelings. Such techniques would benefit the design of courses, making them less expensive and less difficult, needing less time to play, and more fun for all levels of skills. The paintings and narratives in Chapter 4 provide illustrations of the impact of landscape effect upon the game of golf.

As noted in the early chapters of the book, Horace Hutchinson, the influential English writer and then-reigning golf course design authority, was the force behind the scenic beautiful movement. He and his followers that dominated the thinking about course design at the time cited the added pleasure of scenic surroundings, *“linkscape gardening,”* while engaged in play of the game. Since its inception, Hutchinson’s proposition and the irrevocable aesthetic design influences of the late Victorian Era have grown to become a driving force in course design, the consequences of which have meant more visual pleasure and less mental and emotional pleasure to millions of players.

The consequence of landscape effects upon the course is our subject at hand. What are those qualities of recreational, participant games that make them pleasurable or popular or unpopular? What makes them lose their appeal, worsen, and become corrupted in our society today? In the final analysis, what are those characteristics and qualities that relate to the game of golf, and more specifically to the physical design of a course? We do not offer answers to these questions, only insights. Proven answers to these questions may be generated by the **Golf Logic Model**, which includes social scientific inquiry, similar to the experience

sampling method (ESM) as pioneered by Csikszentmihalyi. Although the findings of ESM would be based upon subjective experiences, big databases are as useful and as much on par with objectivity of findings of experiments involving the natural sciences.

Golf is classified as a game. Such common metaphors as: “*golf is the microcosm of the world*,” “*golf is like life*,” and Buddy Hackett’s (1924-2003) metaphor, “*golf is like walking naked in a strange place*” explain what golf is like. For a long time there has been no scientific inquiry of games. The histories of games have been limited to what games were like rather than why we are attracted to them. The work of Caillois explains why we are attracted to games. In his book, *Man, Play and Games*, 1958, Caillois has expanded upon the theory of games: “*It is the only work on the subject of games that attempts a typology of play by which characteristic games of a culture can be classified and its basic patterns of attractions of the game better understood.*” (2) The work of Csikszentmihalyi and Jackson in their book, *Flow in Sports* (1999) explains the optimal experience of fun in games and identifies conditions associated with its occurrence. Their work has application not only to games, but also to incentives and satisfaction with jobs in the workplace, as well as fulfillment of the richness of life. Csikszentmihalyi’s work on the subject of “*State of Flow*” one of the highest states of ecstasy and its sub-components is recognized in the world of social sciences as an important contribution to game theory.

Although the work of the aforementioned social scientists does not examine golf directly, one does not have to look far for correlations of a mix of game categories that are applicable to golf. The following, categories and subcategories are explained in the texts and focus upon pleasures and displeasures of the game of golf and how pleasures of the game may be corrupted by landscape effect; the book’s thesis: The beauty of golf course landscape effect is corrupting the game. Experiences of players engaged in the game of golf will often include simultaneous experiences described in the categories and subcategories shown in Figure 1 below and as follows.

**Figure 1. Experience Categories and Subcategories of the Game of Golf**

1. Competition
2. Chance
3. Simulation
  - a. Heightened Reality
  - b. Separate Reality
  - c. Extended Reality
4. State of Flow (a detailed extension of 3, Simulation, characteristics)
  - a. Challenge/skill balance
  - b. Clear goals
  - c. Transformation of time
  - d. Control and recovery
  - e. Concentration

With an understanding of what constitutes the various categories and experiences of the game of golf, the correlations of landscape effect with game experiences as depicted in Chapter 4 should become clear. Players’ anecdotal experiences, analogies, and quotes in Chapter 4 also help to explain the subject game categories. Given that competition and chance are more familiar and readily understood, the following discussion is focused more upon the less familiar concept of simulation and state of flow.

**1) Competition** is synonymous with and involves skill or merit. A sense of competition is inherent in humans and may be traced to human’s sense of survival. It is expressed with great diversity by degrees of equity. Factors that affect competition in golf, for example, are rules and structure of the game, which includes the course, equipment, and play activities. The popular forms of equity are handicapping and modified yardage of holes by tee selection. An example of ingenious equity is shown in the painting titled Hole No.18 Jefferson G & CC, which offers selection of different pin positions in a green. This is no different than being provided a choice of tee positions. The most pernicious abuse or inability to design for equity in competition with the course is landscape effect in the form of water, bunkers, foliage, and other obstacles and hazards. Too often equity is designed for the low handicapper, beyond the skill levels of 95 percent of all golfers, that group that cannot break 80. The specious rationale for minimal course equity is strategy, but strategy for whom? Not only does challenge/skill balance get short shrift in the pursuit of beauty by landscape effect, but also so do many aspects of the categories of chance, simulation, and state of flow for all skill levels.

**2) Chance** is synonymous with and involves luck or fate. Factors that affect chance are the course layout and course details. Chance may occur by accident or design and should be cultivated, for in golf a slight error may end as a thrilling surprise when a lucky bounce becomes a redemption rather than punishment. Both equity and chance are important, for if the outcome of a game is known in advance without opportunity for error or surprise it is incompatible with games in our culture today. Before the use of scrapers and the D6, nature graced the ground with artful undulations that were a big factor in luck. For example, early English course designer John L. Low advocated elimination of undulations in construction of the eighteenth green, its aprons, collection areas and adjacent surfaces because he considered a lucky bounce as not a result of skill. The layout of greens as a decisive factor of chance was important to Low, particularly the eighteenth hole if a match was tied. His objective was to reduce the element of luck and reward skill.

The popular run –up game, loved by rabbits for its thrills of triumph, error turned into surprise and chance so disliked by tigers has also been practically eliminated on modern courses due to landscape effect. Aesthetically shaped greens of ingenious forms built from borrow banks, spoils of ponds and bunkers sit cheek to jaw to such hazards and obstacles. They present no aprons, no collection areas and no chipping game. Peter Thompson, 6 times Open Championship winner, had this to say of the run-up game at St. Andrews Old Course when she is at her best with her magnanimous examples of equity.“ Approach work, too, is a matter of pitch and long run over hollow and ridge, a circumstance that modern professionals hate.”

(3)

Another is the stymie that is fraught with luck, both good and bad. Good luck is a pleasurable and exciting experience in games. Bad luck, such as an unplayable lie or wet ball, may be a test of one's mettle. Bad luck may be turned into good results if a succeeding play is not denied, and if a satisfying recovery (recovery and progress are components of state of flow) play is allowed. Robert Browning, in his book, *A History of Golf*, (1955) cited the reduced pleasure in experience of play due to the diminishing presence of luck in the structure of the game: "...we have been so anxious in the name of fair play, to take all the elements of luck out of the game...and destroyed its value as a test of each man's ability to stand up to bad luck. Modern golf is a stiffer test of skill, but has robbed the game of its charm as an adventure of the spirit." Browning's referral to adventure may be described as an element of simulation having aspects of a heightened, separate and extended reality, described next.

**3) Simulation** is synonymous with and involves drama. Simulation has the capability, as may be found in most forms of recreation, to produce sensations of altered reality. I have reinterpreted the term simulation to include a broad meaning of pleasurable altered reality to fit sensations experienced in golf. The sensations are a heightened, a separate and an extended sense of reality. Heightened reality may achieve a "*state of flow*" where one experiences great joy in the game of golf. Negative sensations may also occur. A lot of scientific social research has been devoted to experiences of heightened reality and its components which are described below in greater detail. A separate reality is where one imagines, senses, or acts out probable or real-life situations or events. In a state of separate reality one may take on an appearance or condition without the reality, as in a simulator, or a drama, or pretend to be someone and playing golf somewhere, as if in a dream. Simulation may also produce a sense of extended reality, such as a pleasant remembrance. Simulation may also occur later over time, in combination with all three phases of altered reality. Simulation that occurs naturally may also occur with ingestion of substances that affect mind and feeling. Creating a painting and viewing a painting, writing and reading, playing and listening to music, and in golf, playing and viewing the game, are forms of recreation, each with the capability to alter reality. One of the unique aspects of golf is that it is a rare tripartite combination with juxtapositions of the three categories: competition, chance, and simulation.

**4) State of flow** is generally defined by Csikszentmihalyi's and Jackson's trail blazing work as joy or ecstasy experienced by persons engaged in an activity. The particular sense of heightened reality, a pleasurable high, which I refer to above, is a condition of simulation that I consider to be similar to "*state of flow*." However, state of flow and its detailed, scientific components as developed by Csikszentmihalyi and Jackson is a much more extensive representation of heightened, separate and extended reality, refined by years of research in collaboration with other scientists and scientific experiments.

Csikszentmihalyi and Jackson, in their book, *Flow in Sports*, 1999, have described nine fundamental components. As a golfer and because of my own experiences and feelings I have limited discussion to the most pertinent flow components that might be associated with golf and that most clearly depict how a component of flow may be impacted by structures of landscape effect, resulting in situations either conducive to frustration and anxiety or feelings of joy and pleasure. The components of state of flow I have selected, what they are and how

they work in games with players of all skill levels engaged in game activities are briefly explained as follows. Chapter 4 paintings and narratives illustrate examples of landscape effect that have impacted one or more of the following flow subcategories or components.

a. Challenge/skill balance. The challenge/skill (C/S) balance is a ratio of perceived skills vs. opportunities (perceived or estimated challenges). A feeling of greatest pleasure, optimal flow, occurs when the C/S balance is a challenge that is set slightly above perceived skill levels and that challenge is met. Too easy and it is boring. If too difficult it is frustrating. If a player is in a mild sense of flow and the succeeding shot is too far above the C/S balance, the feeling will be disrupted and negative. Flow is not reserved for elite players but may also be experienced by players of lesser skills. There are many ways to accommodate various skill levels that would make the game more fun, particularly for that core group of 95 percent of golfers that cannot break 80. The first step is to eliminate landscape effects that are mindless obstacles to the game. These are namely lush grass, thick roughs, foliage, trees, and high earth mounds and bunker banks that are in play. Greens and chipping areas need imaginative overhauling to restore the run up game. Next, forced carries should be eliminated for the benefit of players whose skill levels are outside the skill capabilities of 50 percent of players (those who cannot break 100), and corridors opened at green fronts for that group that cannot break 80. Slightly miss-hit shots should not be denied recover play. The clever, responsible designer will find many imaginative ways to provide equity of the course for more than one C/S level, especially for those forgotten high handicappers, and still achieve beautiful, scenic views that may be economically maintained.

b. Clear goals. Goals direct action and provide focus and without direction and focus a sense of flow is hardly achievable. In the flow experience one has a good grasp of what has to be accomplished. Disrupt or distract the mindset of goal or focus due to a mindless obstacle on the course and the goal and focus become compromised. A definite feeling of negativity occurs.

c. Transformation of time. Athletes do not all experience a universal sense of time. For some hours will pass like minutes; for others time lags. What is instructive to golf about the various experiences of time is that it is important to the experience of flow. The idea of transformation of time is very distinct in golf. When I am either in a pleasurable state of flow or a heightened sense of reality, a near sense of flow, there is usually a sensation of timelessness and time passes quickly. Sometimes the transformation of time is slowed but it is not disruptive or negative if accompanied by concentration and/or expectation. Time flies when players are engaged in a state of flow and a player feels no disruption in pursuit of goals. Immediate feedback information allows continuity of the pursuit of the player's goals. This allows participants to remain connected with what they are doing and in control of where they are going. The opposite of timelessness in the spectrum of time transformation is idle waiting time, the burden of waiting, and excessive, frustrating time expended in concentration on diversionary goals, and contending with delays imposed by landscape effects, whether caused by you, your fellow players, or groups playing ahead of you. Idle waiting time is one of the greatest objections to modern golf. Incremental experiences with landscape effects from lush grass margins, extreme hazards, and dramatic obstacles add significant time to the game. Where waiting is not a fault of the player, the negative feeling often overshadows any prospect of a

satisfactory experience of the game. In golf, frustration with idle waiting may be tolerated by inveterate players but completely rejected by new generations of players. Unpleasant waiting on a golf course may be mitigated or tempered by expectations of achieving a “*state of flow*” experience by those who have experienced it before and value the thrill of it. However, waiting is not tolerated by new generations of golfers, simply because the joy of the “*state of flow*” in golf has been so rare due to increased obstacles of the game that it never before had been experienced. Waiting in anticipation of experience of flow or heightened reality is just not worth the wait. The most frustrating feedback in golf is idle waiting time, often caused by only one player involved with some landscape effect that affects many players.

A major study undertaken by Golf Magazine concluded, “*We don’t play golf slowly, we play golf courses slowly,*” meaning, that the courses have a great deal to do with the cause of slow play. This profound observation points to the proposition that the course and/or landscape effect is a cause of slow play. A Pope of Slope study of St. Andrews Old Course, Scotland, a course with no contrived landscape effects, with an American group of four players on a busy day found that it typically required three hours and 22 minutes to play. (4) However, no matter where you go, public courses, pricy resort tracks or exclusive country clubs “*slow play has infected golf... turning pleasant loops into 6 hour afternoons.*” (5)

d. Control and recovery. Being in control is the satisfying feeling that one has the skills that are capable of executing the challenge. Feedback, adjustment, and improvement of poor control may be corrected with recovery play. To deny recovery opportunity is negative flow. The ability to execute a recovery shot and to complete it successfully, whether skill or luck, is a thrill. The recovery shot is the threshold of a flow experience. Water, out of bounds, and lost balls will deny a recovery shot. If a shot is only slightly miss-hit the penalty is too great for most golfers and the penalty undeserved. Can you imagine that 318 balls were wet after four days of play by professional golfers at a recent PGA tour championship tournament held at the Doral Blue Monster in Florida? The recovery shot is the soul of the game; to deny it is to compromise the game. We shall see in Chapter 4 many examples of beautiful course landscape effects—beautiful to look at but an inequity to play and an injustice to the game. I love the rejoinder by Peter Thompson, Australian champion golfer that epitomized the dangerous beauty of modern courses and their obstacles and hazards when asked to elaborate upon the merits and pleasures of playing a course: “*If a course is a one ball course, assuming it has all the usual features, I think it is a great course. But a 12-ball course I think is rubbish.*” (6)

e. Concentration. Negative thoughts about capability and difficulty of the task at hand disappear when one is in a state of flow. However, set the challenge too high with landscape effects such as a 20-foot tall bunker bank (as found at one new Florida course) and many players begin to worry and thus lose concentration. The view of glistening sand and a 20-foot tall bunker may present a dramatic look, but it also definitely produces a feeling of anxiety. A disruptive experience while in a state of flow often occurs on the course. Alister MacKenzie, 80 years ago, recognized course obstacles affecting players’ enjoyment and fun. He referred to them as, “*difficulties and disturbances of the harmony and continuity of the game.*” It only takes a few negative feedback experiences to create dissatisfaction with the game.

By understanding game qualities of competition, chance, simulation, and flow experiences and incorporating them into golf course layouts, players will be able to experience more enjoyment. Those players who experience enjoyment will continue to come back to experience more of the same. Following are additional comments, anecdotes, and experiences that depict feelings of heightened reality, joy, and frustration. The feelings of heightened, separate and an extended reality may be spontaneous, on-the-spot occurrences and may also reoccur as remembrances years afterward, all consistently affected by the physical characteristics of the course.

### ***Experiences and Anecdotes of the Beauties and Attractions of the Game***

An experience of heightened reality may extend to any person who plays golf. William Furlong, psychologist, in his article “*The Fun in Fun,*” Psychology Today, 1976, describes the fun in a heightened experience: “*A person, in the flow of a game, may lose self-conscious sense of himself and of time, and gain a heightened awareness of physical involvement with an activity in the sense he is in a dream state.*” (7) How time is spent, without disturbances, is crucial to experiencing flow.

Water ponds are capable of providing visual delight but are the most abused landscape effects. Rory McElroy, the No. 1 golfer in the world at the time, while playing the 2014 Doral Blue Monster CC tournament course with its 14 water hazards, hit his ball into the water then flung his 3-iron in after the ball. Here is an example of denied recovery and display of frustration.

The top players of the world who knocked 318 balls into the water during four days of tournament play at Doral averaged an extraordinarily large number of balls per player for this tournament; a large number even for a lifetime. Such experiences by either experts or ordinary rabbits are no fun, allowing no recovery shot, a most beautiful art of the game now gone to somewhere between hot and hell. It is really a moot point whether water is a hazard, stratagem, decorative landscape effect, or a maintenance storage element; there are just too many of them in the line of play and adjacent to the line of play that interfere with the various levels of challenge/skill balances. Two continuous well struck shots will supply the player a high; three may put one in a near state of flow. But as soon as disturbances or obstacles interfere with continuity, progress, agency, or ability to attempt recovery, any sense of flow is apt to spoil. Players will then become conscious of themselves and burdensome time and surely and progressively experience displeasure in the activity.

The state of flow of a heightened sense of reality is described by the famous champion golfer, author, and early course designer, Walter J. Travis. His expression of flow, touched with a metaphor of separate reality is typical of golfers when they experience a series of satisfying shots. Travis described a state of flow by his own account in striking a series of shots: “*I was in that golfer’s seventh heaven.*” Being in a golfer’s seventh heaven could never happen when state of flow is interrupted by a ball lost on the course, or as much as lost in water.

In the reprinted version of Arnold Haultain’s original book *The Mystery of Golf* (1908), the afterword was written by author John Updike (1932-2009). Updike expressed his idea of an