4 *Paintings and Narratives of Golf Course Landscapes*

To a golfer, nothing is as stunning as a golf scene that has great light and is dominated by one landscape component that makes a strong, lasting impression. The paintings in various sections of chapter 4, A (Water), through I (Structure), depict dominant landscape components. Some are examples of contrived landscape effect and some are natural. All are examples of beautiful landscapes. In many scenes the narratives discuss the impact of a landscape effect upon playability, obstacles and enjoyment of the game.

4A *Water A Dominant Landscape Component*

Water and its reflections are the most beautiful golf landscape components, providing delight that no other landscape component can do. Water in many forms is also a major landscape effect. Water scenes offer stunning beauty to course designers. But for players, water exacts the harshest of penalties while denying pleasurable, intrinsic qualities of the game–the qualities of recovery, agency, simulation, and state of flow.

The world's most famous course, St. Andrews Old Course is noted for its challenges. The only water on the course is Swilcan Burne, a narrow ditch coming into play only on the first hole. How different course designers chose to use water provides insight into how well they understood the purpose of golf. For example, Old Tom Morris placed great emphasis on functional purpose, pleasurable excitements and low-cost maintenance. There was no social imperative to make golf holes beautiful. In fact, because golf balls could be lost in water, he avoided any scenic water contrivances. There are numerous references in early golf writings where golfers called the now-famous Swilcan Burne nothing more than a "dirty ditch." Water held very low value in Old Tom Morris's designs where visual beauty was subjugated to playability and cost.

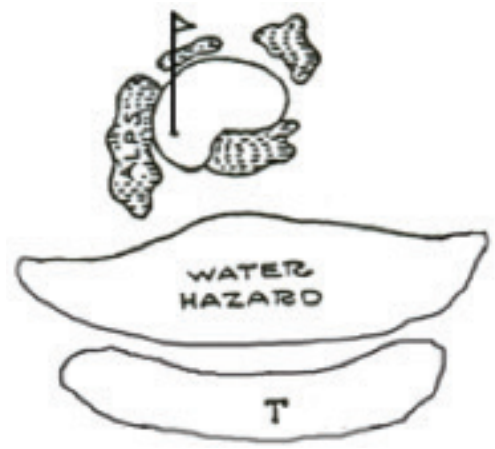
About 80 years later, at the other end of the philosophic spectrum of water was Robert Trent Jones (1906-2000), who designed lots of ponds and water features to be directly in play and to be harsh, penal hazards, often shaping pond banks so that balls would roll into the water. Jones saw water as beautiful, but his work indicates that he didn't worry much about being fair to high handicappers. Somewhere in the middle of the continuum in time and thought between Old Tom and Trent Jones, was a design philosophy favored by A. W. Tillinghast (1876-1942) and Dr. Alister MacKenzie. They didn't shy away from water as hazards, but rather used it in a simple and less harsh, "in-your-face" way. For example, when MacKenzie designed Augusta National, Rae's Creek was a stream on holes #11, #12, and #16, but in Jones's remodeling he made the stream into ponds. They are lovely scenes and great theater for spectators watching triumph and despair beset the world's best tournament players, but a little too much for day-in day-out play for the average player.

Ponds or water hazards are now common, even in the middle of deserts. The new Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympic course, designed by Gil Hanse (1963), has five water holes that require forced carries or are adjacent to line of play. Hanse considers St. Andrews, with only one ditch and countless opportunities for recovery play, the finest course in the world. He states that, *"recovery shots are the soul of the game."* Golf Digest, Aug '16, p 90. How ironic, there is no recovery play possible from his Rio Olympic golf course water hazards. Nor is there recovery play at his recently renovated Trump National Doral Blue Monster GC, Miami, FL, which has water ponds at 14 holes.

Baltusrol GC, Lower Crs, No. 4
Springfield, NJ

Early light through a break in the trees at the left of No.4 green suggested a visually stunning painting. A yellow light covered the putting surface reflecting low morning light from the vertical standing leaves of grass. The bright putting surface contrasted with dark water and background made a dramatic scene. A case in point of making the course both a pleasurable experience, fair to high handicappers and challenging to low handicappers is exemplified by Tillinghast's original 4th hole, Baltusrol GC. Lower. His plan view is shown below, completed in 1922. Tillinghast's par-3, No. 4 was 126 yards with a horseshoe-theme tee. The fourth

1953 R.T. Jones Design, 194 Yds.



1922 Tillinghast Plan, 126 Yds

Baltusrol GC, Lower Crs, No. 4

hole allowed rabbits play options to land in front of the green between the front bunkers on the left side of the green.

Robert Trent Jones remodeled the hole in preparation for the 1954 U.S. Open. Jones's approached the task; citing two goals: *"To make the courses fairer for the average player and harder for the low handicapper."* (A1) This may well be Jones' philosophy and what he intended, but not what he did; just the opposite. His redesign would force a long carry by positioning the water at the edge of the green eliminating any type of recovery play for slightly miss-hit shot along the front edge. A beautiful hole, but another landscape effect. Jones consistently built these types of beautiful landscape effects that create severe, unfair penalties for 95 percent of golfers who can't break 80.

Baltusrol GC, Lower Crs, No. 4

More than one-third of the landscape paintings in this book portray water scenes with many different light effects upon the water. Water scenes are most fascinating with reflected light that sparkles among an array of fused colors. Reflections observe the same laws of optics that were referred to over 200 years ago by Humphry Repton, one of the earlier landscape designers of the world-leading English landscape/garden design profession. Repton promised his clients that he would double their pleasure in viewing his landscape works if they would permit him to incorporate a body of water in their landscape/garden. Reflected light and images would sparkle and dance upon water surfaces with the aid of imperceptible earth tremors, thermals or a slight breeze, turning his landscape works into moving, color infused, imaginative, impressions.

Still, slightly moving or active waters are capable of reflecting a variety of visually delightful images depending upon view angles of incidence and reflection. Tiny wavelets produce the most intriguing reflections because their front sides reflect skylight and their back sides reflect low lying images. The result is super thin bands of light and colors of images fused together in impressionistic shapes. Control of water is essential to course maintenance, but where water is also contrived to add a look of beauty, sighting levels at water edges must be thoughtfully considered to enhance landscape effects. In construction of water ponds, for whatever reason, the selection of subjects to be reflected and design of wind breaks for management of disturbances of the water surfaces is important in achieving a dramatic look. Too much chop upon the surface of the water reflects only sky.

A simple law of physics, the angle of incidence equals the angle of reflection, must be observed to enable one to capture landscape reflections upon water. Too steep of an angle of incidence reflects only sky. A lower viewing angle of incidence presents opportunities to reflect landscape images.

The diagrams A & B illustrate the two situations. Repton's book, ***The Art of Landscape Gardening*** (1797), contained similar concepts. Repton's work was highly praised by C.B. Macdonald, the early American designer, as useful to golf course designers, so he added architecture to the title of Repton's book.

Lake Nona GC, No. 13
Orlando, FL

The Lake Nona scene of the 13th hole, shown, is blessed by the right time of day, late afternoon, which is a good time for viewing. The low sun creates enchanting light and long shadows that enhance contrasts of components of this interesting scene. The sky at the horizon, through breaks in the tree line of pines is a pleasant combination of scarlet and yellow colors. The low angled sun highlights the grass, putting surface, and sand. The eye, scanning the several passages in the scene, is quickly drawn to the piece' de resistance, the dark water with lively reflections upon its surface.

The physical transition of water to earth is often interrupted with a structural wall. Here there is simplicity in the forms where sand joins the water edges. There is no hard structural wall that would be out of character. The transition is a wonderful example of originality in the use of traditional materials of water to turf and sand. Tom Fazio, designer of Lake Nona, got into course design at age 17 working for his Uncle George Fazio (1912-1986). Tom said of his uncle, *"He was a dreamer. . .I think of him every day of my life."* (A2) His dreams are also in much of Tom's work.

Lake Nona No. 13, shown, is a beautiful hole, but a little too much of a landscape effect, and an unnecessary obstacle. Without changing the beauty of the effect, the pond might be moved to the left to improve the playability and the obstacle that confronts most all golfers. As you view the painting, imagine relocating a portion of the pond by placing your hand over the right side of the water. Would you agree that the aesthetic look remains the same, but qualities of chance, recovery, and fun would be improved for 95 percent of golfers without diminishing the challenge to better players? It is ludicrous to even think that a scratch player would hit it there, so what is the pond for? Purely for the look.

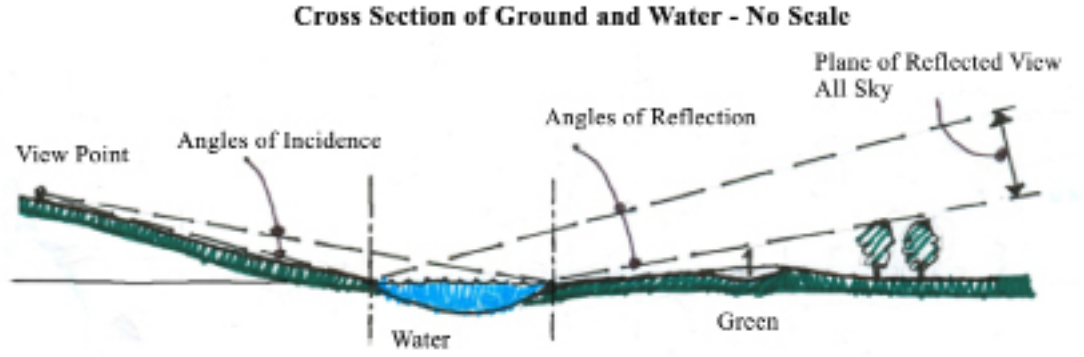


*Diagram **A**. Steep View Line Angle of Incidence*
Cross Section of Ground and Water- No Scale

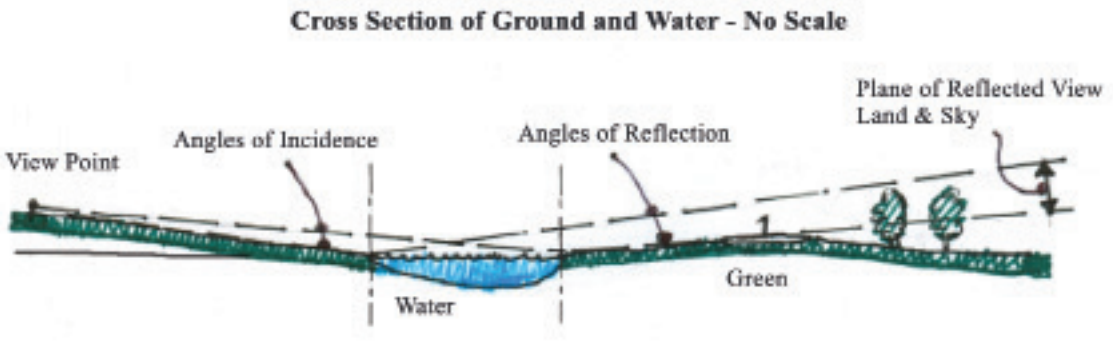


*Diagram **B**. Low View Line Angle of Incidence*
Cross Section of Ground and Water- No Scale

Lake Nona GC, No. 13

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