

PUNCHBOWL RETURNS TO HACKENSACK

By Bill Brightly



As most of us have already seen, work has been completed on one of the most dramatic parts of our restoration plan: Hole 16 is once again a punchbowl green!

Punchbowl greens are a common element of many Macdonald-Raynor-Banks courses because they are so prevalent in the classic old courses in the United Kingdom. The first courses were built long before golf courses had irrigation, so greens were often located in natural hollows where moisture would be retained and the grass would grow

healthier. Here is one built by Old Tom Morris at Tain in the Scottish Highlands south of Dornoch.

So when C.B. Macdonald traveled abroad to study great holes before beginning his work on the National Golf Links in Southampton, it is understandable that he would build punchbowl greens in the US. The 16th at National shown below would



become the template that Seth Raynor and Charles Banks would look to re-create time and again.

Punchbowl greens on "MacRaynor" courses typically are downhill approaches on longer par fours, commonly built on "Alps" holes where the tee shot must be played uphill and the green is not visible. Aside from National, my favorite Macdonald punchbowls are at The Creek, the Chicago Golf Club, and Sleepy Hollow.





(Note Sleepy Hollow's "Short" in the background, a hole that inspired Banks to build our sixth hole.)



Seth Raynor's best punchbowl (above) is probably Fishers Island. Note the high directional marker that is required because the approach shot is totally blind!

Punchbowl greens are unique and harken back to a time when the first golf holes were built. The thrill of making a long walk to the green wondering just how close your ball might be to hole is something that is rarely experienced on inland courses in the United States, but it is a staple in the Macdonald school of golf course architecture. Perhaps as much as any hole, punchbowls can be whimsical and remind us that golf is supposed to be FUN! So when you get a friendly bounce off the mound on Hackensack's Hole #16 (photo right), or a bad bounce, remember that luck is an element that has always been part of the great game of golf!

