

Too Redan, or not Too Redan

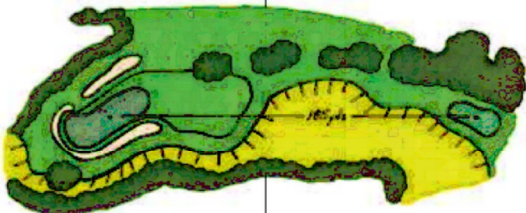
Discovering the strategies behind golf design can provide shot-saving approaches to playing certain types of holes or courses. Tremendous time and energy goes into the planning of golf course hazards, so a little background knowledge into the history of golf design can go a long way to enjoying the course and lowering your score.

While not the most famous par-3 in the world, the Redan hole, #15 at North Berwick Golf Club in Scotland may be the most copied hole in golf. In Chicago, the first true "redan" hole was built in 1916 at Shoreacres Golf Club in Lake Bluff. This green is forty yards deep by twelve yards wide and parallels a narrow front bunker, which starts at the beginning of the green and curls around the rear corner of the green. The back of the green is banked like a racetrack and funnels shots from right to left. Players over clubbing their approach past the closely mown back of the green will find themselves with a difficult up and down from the rear bunker. The ideal "miss" is short of the green.

The design concept became a trademark for Charles Blair MacDonald and Seth Raynor, prolific golf designers between 1910-1940. A little known fact is that the original Redan was laid out as a short, two-shot hole and was converted to a par-3 in 1902 when the long-flying Haskell ball made the hole reachable in a single shot. Two concepts separate a pure redan hole from other

weak imitations. First, a true redan must incorporate a long diagonal green around a deep-faced bunker or slope. Secondly, the ideal shot should be played to the front of the green allowing the banked slope to carry the shot to the back of the green, usually with the player swinging with a long iron or hybrid. Although most courses have angled greens protected with deep frontal bunkers, very few of these half-redans allow for the ball to feed along the slope.

Shoreacres Golf Club
Lake Bluff, IL
14th Hole - 185 yards
Designer: Seth Raynor - 1916



Due to limited pin positions, difficulty of maintenance, and the belief that true redans are too challenging for high-traffic public courses, North Berwick's Redan hole is often copied but rarely duplicated in spirit. Another great example of a pure redan in the Chicago area is the 7th hole at Chicago Golf in Wheaton, and another replica redan that you can play is the 12th hole at Lawsonia Links in Green Lake, Wisconsin. During your next trip around the links, look for half redans at your local course, share your wisdom, impress your partners, and then win the hole!