

Shrink the Game !

Golf is a hard game. I love it. Being hard is part of the attraction. I love the challenge. I love the landscapes on which we play. I love the "journey" as I walk around. I love the grass: no matter the colour. In fact, I particularly love brown. I love the strategies and intrigue of great golf. I love the friends and the craic; the fresh air. But mostly I love the "feelings" when I play golf. Often, they are indescribable when really good. I just know when it's great.

But everything about golf today is BIG. "*Grow the game*": I don't get that. One of the biggest barriers to accessing golf is that golf has become too BIG.

Big golf course. Big land bank. Big machinery to maintain the big golf course. Big maintenance team to manage the big golf course. Big chemical inputs. Big water inputs. Big diesel bills to drive the big machinery that maintains the big golf course. Big budgets to maintain the big golf course.

Big golf clubs. Big hedges and big walls around the big golf clubs that sit on the big land banks. Big committees. Big greens. Big tees. Big bunkers. Big greens speeds.

Big cart paths for the big carts. Big trolleys with big batteries to transport the big golf bags around the big site. All combine to give a BIG annual subscription. Someone has to pay.

Big heads on big drivers. Big shafts. Big golf ball. Big golf bags. Big golf stores. Big golf companies.

What I remember and love about golf is the click of forged irons as I carried my golf bag; carrying on 6,000 yards was not a chore when tees were located beside greens and golf was "designed" for carrying and walking.

The sound of balata on persimmon. The beautifully contoured greens that "sat" comfortably on the land. Greens that ran smooth and not measured by an apparatus that told me 13 is better than 12 ! Who cares !

I love the intimate strategies of golf on 110 acres. The fun around the practice area. Playing 54 holes and more in one day.

Golf does not need to be big. We need 6 hole golf courses, 9 hole courses, 12 hole courses, 5,500 yard courses. But they must be clever, interesting, engaging and FUN.

We must make golf SMALLER. Allow people to grow to love all the things that are great about the game. We all own golf. Let's pass it to the next generation in a better place than we inherited it.

Less is more.

Shrink the game.

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