

STONETOP COUNTRY CLUB – Mountain Course



INTRODUCTION

In early 2000, Dan O Bunch (no relation) released a pre-made landplot for other designers to use in laying out a course. The Plot, as it was called, featured dramatic elevation change, tall pine trees, several rock formations, and some large dead grass/waste areas. I downloaded this plot and decided to take a run at laying out eighteen holes and seeing what could be done with it. At first I was discouraged as I could not find a decent set of eighteen holes. Problems included – too much elevation change, couldn't get holes 1, 9, 10, and 18 all in a general area, bridging the gaps between the holes I knew were there and those that I didn't immediately see. I put The Plot away for awhile, but was reminded of it after another designer posted some screen shots of their course. For some reason when I looked at The Plot again holes began to come to me. I abandoned my desire to have 4 holes meet at the clubhouse and just let the flow of the land dictate where the holes were going to be. I also realized that not every hole had to feature a rock formation or the water, and that there could be great holes in just the rolling elevation.

As I was laying out the course I realized that certain aspects of it became much easier. First off, having a clear view off the tee was desired (except for the first hole), and with the land already set to different heights, it was easy to find good areas for teeboxes and fairways. Also with that it was easy to place bunkers where they would be visible from the fairway. One thing I also notice about real courses is that from the fairway you can often see the sand in the bunkers guarding the green. This is an effect that is rarely pulled off well in fantasy courses. Maybe it is a camera angle thing, I don't know, but many times the bunkers are depressions that you really can't see. One designer who did an exceptional job of making the bunkers visible is Ken McHale on Augusta National.

However, there were still many difficult things about fitting a course over the land instead of building the land to fit the course. The greens have gone through a lot of change due to the severity of

some of the slopes they were originally placed. The fairways also have general slope and character, and at times this had to be smoothed and flattened out in order to make them playable.

Below I detail information about each hole. At the bottom are credits and acknowledgements and a reference as to where to comment on the course. I welcome any and all feedback.

Thanks,
Nick.

SCORECARD

HOLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	IN	TOTAL
PAR	4	5	4	3	4	5	4	3	5	37	4	4	4	3	5	3	4	4	4	35	72
GOLD	406	513	412	179	355	581	463	218	531	3658	456	433	392	160	583	146	368	400	445	3383	7041
BLUE	382	470	392	179	344	543	453	171	495	3429	408	389	346	153	558	145	338	352	406	3095	6524
WHITE	369	455	359	179	329	528	397	158	489	3263	392	371	339	127	544	145	325	335	395	2973	6230
RED	329	421	343	179	312	491	376	121	483	3055	375	330	332	110	518	145	303	300	366	2779	5834
HDCP	10	18	4	14	16	8	2	6	12		1	7	13	11	3	17	15	9	5		

HOLE DESCRIPTIONS

HOLE	1
PAR	4
YDG	406
HDCP	10

The first hole features an uphill teeshot that must avoid the lone tree in the middle of the fairway. As the course was being laid out this one tree somehow managed to avoid destruction by the vast deforestation done to the original plot. Because of this divine intervention the tree stayed and became the main hazard to the first teeshot. After a successful drive in the fairway the green bends to the right around the large waste bunker. Two other bunkers protect the left side of the green, although rarely come into play unless the wind is up. The green slopes from back right to front left and is an easy birdie chance for those finding the fairway.

HOLE	2
PAR	5
YDG	513
HDCP	18

The second hole is the first of three par 5s on the front nine. The teeshot drops to the fairway and bends slightly to the right. The approach to the green must carry several bunkers guarding the left side. The best way into the green is a draw around the bunkers to the front part of the green. The green is best described as partially folded. The front portion slopes from back-to-front while the back portion slopes front-to-back. With the pin on the back it becomes a much tougher hole to get it close and make eagle. However birdie should be expected on this short par 5.

HOLE	3
PAR	4
YDG	412
HDCP	4

The third hole is a difficult par 4. Players must choose to play to the left or right of the large bunker placed in the middle of the fairway. The green is perched upon a ridge surrounded by bushes and weeds. Anything short or right of the green is unplayable. This area was marked unplayable because of the

impossibility of hacking it out of the weeds. The green features two large mounds guarding the left side, and slopes slightly towards the right.

HOLE	4
PAR	3
YDG	179
HDCP	14

The most scenic hole on the course, this medium length par 3 features a fairly flat green guarded by two large bunkers. The hole should remind many players of the par 3 7th hole at Pebble Beach. While playing 80 yards longer, the shot often plays to one-or-two clubs less. Best strategy here is to play for the center of the green and make the straight put, rather than attack the pins when they are on the far edges of the green and risk going in the deep bunkers.

HOLE	5
PAR	4
YDG	355
HDCP	16

The fifth hole has gone through the most reconstruction over the course of development. At one point the fairway broke in the middle, then it didn't, then it did again, and now, on the final version it is connected. The green originally was much larger and feature a 5 foot change in elevation from the back left portion to the bottom right. However, much of this green was unplayable and had to be redone. Now the green is small, but not very undulated. Missing this green however can be disaster due to the steep slopes all around. The tee shot must carry 220 yards over three bunkers that are more there for intimidation than swallowing up golf balls. The safest play is to the left, leaving a short-iron approach into the green.

HOLE	6
PAR	5
YDG	581
HDCP	8

A long, bending left, par 5. The tee shot needs to top out at 295 yards, leaving a 300 yard approach to a small green guarded by three bunkers. The fairway in the landing area for the second shot slopes hard from left to right, so keeping it in the fairway isn't always easy to do. This is the first of three of the toughest holes on the course, so making a birdie here is a huge plus.

HOLE	7
PAR	4
YDG	463
HDCP	2

The most difficult course on the front nine is a long, hard, par 4. The tee shot must avoid the fairway bunker at 270 yards, and due to the drop off from tee-to-fairway, it does come into play. The approach is played off a sloped fairway to a green guarded by two bunkers and water on the right. The green slopes from left to right making a draw the best shot into it, however this is only for the brave. Getting out with par is a bonus.

HOLE	8
PAR	3
YDG	218
HDCP	6

The longest par 3 on the course can be a difficult par, or an easy birdie. The green slopes hard from back left to front right and is guarded by two bunkers in the front. Keeping it right and below the hole is a must for wanting to make a long putt.

HOLE	9
PAR	5
YDG	531
HDCP	12

The last hole on the front nine is the third par 5 also. This double-dogleg par 5 is reachable in two, but only with two good shots. The green is guarded all around by bunkers and water.

HOLE	10
PAR	4
YDG	456
HDCP	1

If you just made birdie on 9, come to 10 only hoping to give it back, and not a couple more. The hole is flanked by water all down the right side, and two large bunkers on the right pinching the driving area. The green is guarded by a large tree on the left, and water on the right. Anything right will be wet. Anything left is going to be a tough chip. Hit two good shots and you might walk away with par.

HOLE	11
PAR	4
YDG	433
HDCP	7

The 11th hole is an uphill par 4 to a green guarded by a collection of mounds. Nothing overly spectacular about this hole as it was designed to get you back into your game after the tough stretch you just played.

HOLE	12
PAR	4
YDG	392
HDCP	13

The 12th hole. What can I say about it. Many of you that have designed courses have probably had a 12th hole. You start off with one idea, but quickly realize it won't work. Then, in a moment of delusion you do something that you end up regretting. That's about all that needs to be said about the 12th. Make your own judgments.

HOLE	13
PAR	3
YDG	160
HDCP	11

The 13th hole is a nifty par 3. The green is guarded by water on the right, and a large cross bunker in the front. The bunker also sits above the green so the chip is sometimes not as conventional as it may seem.

HOLE	14
PAR	5
YDG	583
HDCP	3

One of my favorite holes I've ever done. The tee shot must avoid the rough on the left and the bunkers on the right. The second shot should be played out to the right of the green in order to have the best angle. The bunker short and left is huge and really cool looking. I like it. I hope you do.

HOLE	15
PAR	3
YDG	146
HDCP	17

This hole was a link hole. The 16th was there. So was the 14th. Somehow I had to connect the two. The teeshot on this short par 3 must carry a nice pond to a small green. Sometimes the game gives me the 9 iron. I'd suggest always over clubbing a little bit as the water seems to suck balls into it.

HOLE	16
PAR	4
YDG	368
HDCP	15

The 16th hole plays to a tight fairway and a green surrounded by one of DanO's rock structures. Avoid the fairway bunkers and you should have a good shot into the green.

HOLE	17
PAR	4
YDG	400
HDCP	9

The 17th hole is a nice hole that intends to follow one of Pete Dye's principals – Turn the teeshot one way, turn the approach the other. The teeshot should move from right to left, setting up a left-to-right approach into the green.

HOLE	18
PAR	4
YDG	445
HDCP	5

The final hole at the Mountain Course at Stonetop Country Club is a long par 4. With little wind, or a tail wind most players can carry the two fairway bunkers and get a good kick off the hill. This will leave them with a short approach into the green surrounded by 5 bunkers. Cautious players will play out the right and have a longer approach into the green off a sloping lie. A strong finishing hole and what I hope has been an enjoyable round of golf.

CREDITS

1. DanO Bunch for 'The Plot'
2. Brian Silvernail for his Beartooth Pass Textures/Objects/etc.
3. Ken McHale for his .WAV file from Magalloway Mountain.
4. Linda at the Copyright Club for playing the role of middleman as well as the PGA Communities Oracle.

**Thanks again,
Nick.**