CCF Historical and Architectural Series Volume 8 By Geoffrey L. Manton

Two holes in the new contrae will be made similar to those at very famous courses; the third hole will be the the course Suhara and the seventh will be the description of the Redan.

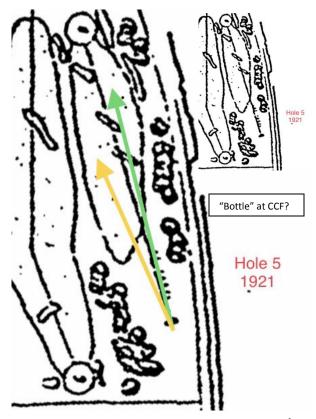
"...and the 7^{th} will be the Redan" stated 1921 Emmet routing of CCF. It's difficult to know

if the most famous and most duplicated of the par 3 template holes was ever built at The Country Club, Farmington, but it is possible that

the 7th hole referred to in the 1921 newspaper article was our former par 3 17th hole (that has since been converted into our current par 4). The landscape on that hole would be conducive to a redan hole with the green positioned short of the pond (at the site of the current fairway bunker) running down and away from front-right to back-left. Assuming the front left bunker in the 1934 version of the hole was located deeply below the green would further suggest the existence of a redan at CCF. However, since green elevations are indistinguishable on an aerial view, our 1934 photo of CCF cannot confirm any suspicions, but rather only provide fodder for theories. Despite the removal of our theoretical redan par 3, CCF today still has a template hole in addition to our Sahara 3rd hole.

To some, our 5th hole may be the most historically significant hole at CCF because of its connection to Connecticut history. Flanking the right side of the 5th green and along the right boundary of the 5^{th} fairway are remnants of the famous Farmington Canal, an engineered waterway that provided transportation from New Haven to Massachusetts in the early 1800s. From a golf architecture standpoint, however, our 5^{th} hole has an equally intriguing history.





Close examination of the 1921 routing diagram of the 5th hole demonstrates the classic echelon bunkers associated with C.B. MacDonald's "Bottle" template. Modeled after the 12th hole at the Old Course at Sunningdale Golf Club outside London, the Bottle template

describes a hole where a string of bunkers separates the fairway, often in step-wise Tubland Rd

"Bottle" at National Golf Links of America

fashion. A player who successfully challenges the bunkers will be left with a clear approach to the green [green arrows]. A tee shot that avoids the bunkers often will feed down to a tighter fairway with a more difficult angle to the green [yellow arrows]. Examples of the Bottle template exist at The National Golf Links of America (8th hole), Old MacDonald at Bandon Dunes (10th hole), and Country Club of Fairfield











Looking back to the "Bottle" fairway from the 12th green at the Old Course at Sunningdale Golf Club in England







For whatever reason, the "Bottle" bunkers crossing the fairway on Devereux Emmet's 1921 plan for CCF were never built.

Nevertheless, the 5th hole still has the features of a template hole.

With its severely elevated green surrounded by steep banks and false front, the 5^{th} hole at CCF can be accurately characterized as a "Knoll" hole. Inspired by the 4^{th} hole at Scotscraig Golf Club in Tayport, Fife, Scotland, the Knoll template will exacerbate the result of a marginally misplayed approach shot by a careening bounce off its greenside slope resulting in a blind pitch back to the putting surface.

C.B. MacDonald created perhaps the finest example of a Knoll hole in the U.S. on the 13^{th} hole at Piping Rock Club in Locust Valley, NY (Long Island). C.B. MacDonald and Seth Raynor also created a Knoll template hole in Connecticut at The Course at Yale when they built the bunkerless, perched, tabletop green at Yale's 14th hole. The fairway is dramatically canted at Yale's Knoll hole which draws another similarity to the 5^{th} hole at The Country Club, Farmington.



When Gil Hanse created his master plan for CCF, he emphasized making changes that would accentuate Devereux Emmet's original design. On the 5th hole, Hanse drew plans for tee boxes in line with the fairway so that the tee shot worked more across the slope rather than into it. Hanse didn't place "bottle" bunkers across the fairway, but instead, his plan called for 2 bunkers angled in a step-wise fashion at the left side of the fairway that would collect tee shots bounding down the slope. As is typical for classic restorations, Hanse's plan featured heavy tree removal. tree work suggested by Hanse on the 5th hole would have placed more emphasis on the natural landscape and his left fairway bunkers eliminated the need for vertical hazards in the left rough. More importantly, however, the removal of the trees around the green would not only improve the agronomy of the turf in that area but it would also highlight the Knoll

element of the 5th hole. For those that remember playing CCF over 15 years ago, the challenge of reaching the 5^{th} green was being able to guide the ball between the large guardian goalpost trees flanking the green. Although Hanse's plan did not suggest the removal of the large tree to the right of the green, this tree was eventually taken down. Now, the 5th green seems to float against the horizon and provides a different type of intimidation, that which is classic for a Knoll hole. A wayward approach no longer has a barrier to inhibit the ball from kicking off a steep slope into the nether reaches of the golf course. Furthermore, the Hanse version of the 5th hole calls for the restoration of a narrow trench-style bunker that is visible at the right side of the 5^{th} green on the 1934 aerial photograph. The shape of this greenside bunker is reminiscent of bunkers often built by C.B. MacDonald and may have been an additional nod by Devereux Emmet to his contemporary's style of design.

There's no way to know if Hanse's recommendations for the 5^{th} hole were based more on sympathy to the template design style, course aesthetics, or strategic architecture. However, given his master plan for the following hole, it's likely that strategic design played a heavy role.

(Up next: Hanse and Hole 6)

