

## FOREWORD

Having grown up working at Crystal Downs in northern Michigan, I have had an appreciation of Perry Maxwell's work for a long time. Perry's work as Alister MacKenzie's associate on that venerable course certainly had a great effect on his work and philosophy, as he spent three seasons there building the course now regarded as one of the best in the world. Maxwell's respect for a landscape's inherent qualities and use of those features in its design is one of the great aspects of the golf course at Crystal Downs. I became enamored with golf at an early age and with golf course architecture because of my exposure to Crystal Downs. I am certain that the beauty of the natural landforms of the site were an inspiration to Perry Maxwell just as they are to me to this day and I am positive that he made the course better due to his recognition of the intricacies of the land.

Maxwell was a hands-on architect who spent a great deal of time in the field, searching out the best features of a parcel and the most natural green and tee sites to fit his courses to the land. This is still the best way to produce a great golf course that is unique to itself and has its own quirks and intimacies unlike any other golf course.

Prairie Dunes is arguably Perry Maxwell's greatest course, and certainly the best nine holes he ever designed. It was one of only two required stops on my long honeymoon camping trip and my wife doesn't even play golf! I had read about Prairie Dunes and longed to see it in person, as its long natural prairie roughs, fierce greens, and constant wind are similar to the conditions of Crystal Downs and I wanted to compare these two "sister" courses. Then superintendent Doug Petersan was very hospitable, welcoming my interest in the course and setting me up to play with his green chairman, Quentin Lorenz. Quentin asked which tees I wanted to play and I said the back and hit a fairly good tee shot at the first, to which he responded, "We have a player here!" Of course, I had the usual ups and downs of a 14 handicapper, but it couldn't have been more fun and educational as he was very interested in showing me all aspects of the course, what they were doing, and allowing me to explore the putting surfaces and other intricacies of the course's features. It is certainly one of my finest golf memories that is enhanced by my fondness for Maxwell's work and the friendly atmosphere of the club.

Although my wife, Annie, doesn't play golf, she has a very fine talent in recognizing the architects of golf courses, just from the exposure my obsession gives her. She frequently tours courses with me when we travel and I want to stop and look at a golf course that some famous architect designed. I noticed her penchant for recognizing designers when I was looking at pictures of courses with someone and she said, "Isn't that a Maxwell course?" How memorable Perry's work is!

Maxwell's courses are challenging for the best players – witness the numerous major championships at Southern Hills – and fun for all levels of golfers. His wild green contours, the famous "Maxwell Rolls," add interest to all the courses he did and provide a challenge that any golfer can improve upon regardless of their physical strength and ability to hit the ball a long way.

Perry was sought after by the best clubs in the country – Pine Valley, Augusta National, and Merion, to name just a few – to remodel portions of their courses and it is a tribute to his ability to synthesize his work with the existing features, improving upon great courses and making them even stronger. Perry may not have designed as many courses, great or common, as some of his contemporaries, but he was held in the highest regard by them and their designs to be given the responsibility to alter a masterpiece. Such respect deserves notice by players who may have an affection for his work but not know it, especially when courses by the other "old masters" of golf architecture are noted in publications and marketing.

Chris Clouser's extensive study of Perry Maxwell's work will certainly bring to light this important designer's work, opening it up to more study and the preservation of his concepts and unique qualities. Credit for Maxwell's contributions to golf course architecture is long overdue and Clouser demonstrates how important it is for us to study and respect the classic designers and their works.