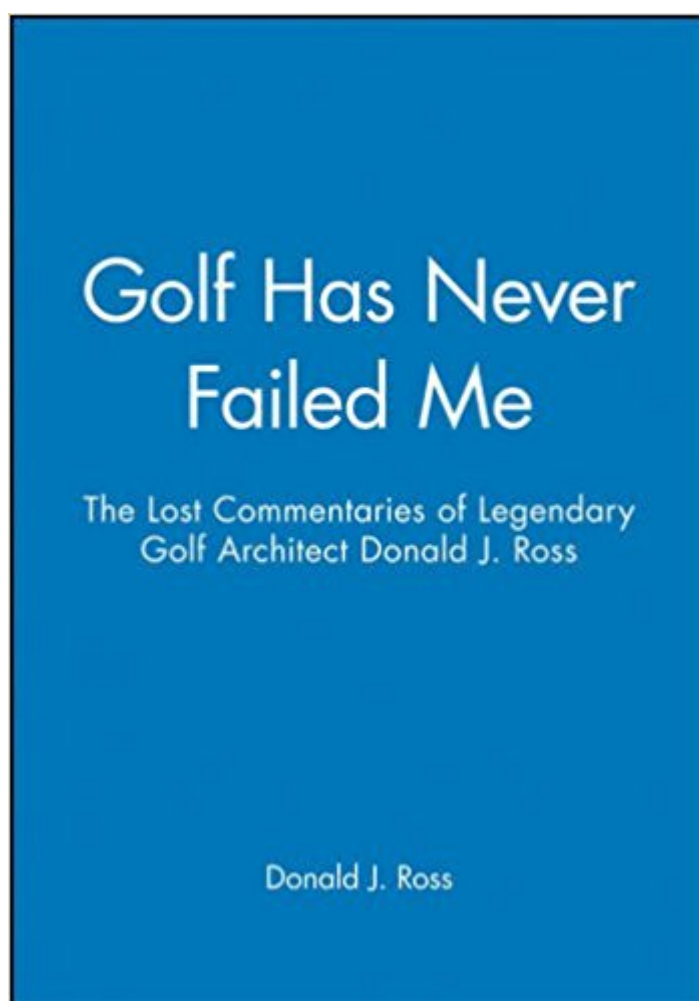


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Golf Has Never Failed Me: The Lost Commentaries Of Legendary Golf Architect Donald J. Ross



Synopsis

Many years before his death in 1948, legendary golf course architect Donald Ross wrote a book that was never published. Within the manuscript, Ross offered many of his thoughts on the game that he so dearly loved. In the mid-1990s, the book was miraculously rediscovered and published to great acclaim. *Golf Has Never Failed Me* is an insightful look at the game by one of its most famous and beloved people. And what may surprise you is that many of the astute observations that he made so long ago still hold true today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Donald Ross, one of Scotland's great exports to America, has designed or remodeled some of the most magnificent and challenging courses on the planet. His commentaries on the rationale behind his architecture, penned before World War I but only recently rediscovered, present a continuous fairway of graceful and thoughtful insights into the game. Is there a golfer alive who can't make use of such gems as "Holes should be trapped so that par golf depends upon skill rather than upon strength," or "Hazards are placed so as to force a (golfer) to use judgment and to exercise mental control in making the correct shot"?

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Excellent book by Donald Ross, the best golf course designer ever.

I really enjoyed this book. It is dated but still has resonance. Mr. Ross talks about golf course design and gives pictured examples of good and bad designs. It identifies the courses around the U.S. that he has designed or improved. This is not a golf instruction book, fascinating none the less

Great book! I liked looking into the reasons why and why not from an architects standpoint! One of the greatest golf course architects ever

Finally someone has put together a wonderful collection of Mr. Ross thoughts on golf. Nicely done and a easy read!

of courses....this is a must read book. It follows the outline of a book that the subject wrote years earlier, but never published. The historic angles are very interesting. Good stuff for those interested in the history of early course design work....Enjoy....

Sparsely written notes from such a productive architect. Wish there was much more. But very meaningful and to the point.

In the introduction to this book, Donald Ross's daughter says, ". . .he approached every new course with the idea that the golf player, champion or duffer, should complete his round challenged by the layout and enriched by the beauty of nature." In his career, Donald Ross designed more than 400 courses in the United States. His most famous is Pinehurst No. 2, considered one of the ultimate tests of tournament golf. This book was created from an old manuscript Mr. Ross wrote in 1914 that was never published, intended as a guide to future golf architects, supplemented with other published commentaries by and about Ross. Mr. Ross had an unusual background for a golf course architect. In a time when engineers usually designed and built the courses, he had served as the pro and greenskeeper at Dornoch in Scotland, after training at St. Andrews with Old Tom Morris and at Carnoustie. The lure of much higher income and the opportunity to build lots of golf courses drew

him to the United States with his first job of rebuilding Oakley in Watertown, Massachusetts. Here are some of the ideas he shares in the book: "These are my standards to laying out a golf course. Make each hole a different problem. So arrange it that each stroke must be made with full concentration and attention necessary to good golf. Build each hole in such a manner that it wastes none of the ground at my disposal, and takes advantage of every possibility I see." A sandy loamy soil is best, with very little humus. This gives you better playing conditions and a longer season. Long Island and Cape Cod are best. Avoid clay soils because they are hard to drain. Unfortunately, most land around major cities is clay soiled. Favor fan-shaped and oblong tracts of land so that the clubhouse can be returned to with little wasted land after 9 holes. Start out with two or more easy holes. Favor par 4s unless people insist on par 5s. Par 4s make a better test, especially 425-450 yard ones. On par 5s, provide two paths to the green -- one for reaching in 2 and one for reaching in 3. "Select your putting green locations, if possible, to give desirable undulating surfaces." "Make all the short holes difficult." "The holes should be trapped so that par golf depends on skill rather than physical strength." "Bunkers should so be placed as to be clearly in view, and in such locations as to make all classes of golfers think." He recommends designing from the land, rather than on paper. He also suggests building the best few holes the land will allow, because golfers are attracted and retained by memories of great and challenging holes. He ends humbly with "I am not much of a writer. I find my thoughts run far ahead of my hand and figures when I sit down to write." There are about 60 pages in the book that will be valuable to architects and greenskeepers, but will not do much for golfers. You may choose to skip those. The book lists the known Donald Ross courses, and has many beautiful black and white photographs and illustrations. One of the pleasures of reading this book for me relates to having played on many Donald Ross courses, and belonging to a country club (Brae Burn in West Newton, Massachusetts) that has a Donald Ross course. The book features 3 photographs from our course (the 1st, 2nd, and 17th holes). I will certainly have many new thoughts whenever I play this course after reading this interesting book. To golf's pleasures, I can now add thinking about what the architect was trying to accomplish. I also came away with a greater appreciation for Donald Ross, because he was trying to make golf more challenging and less frustrating for the average club golfer like me. This made me want to play many more Donald Ross courses in the future. I hope you have that reaction, too. Use this book to help you pick courses that will improve your enjoyment of golf! What else do you enjoy doing where the designer or architect makes a difference to you? If you like this book, there is a new book out with color photographs of 18 of Mr. Ross's finest holes that you should see entitled: *Golf as It Was Meant to Be Played* which I also reviewed.

Donald Ross was the pivotal figure in the establishment of golf as a recreational sport in the U.S. His courses remain as challenging today as they were during his times. This book gives the reader insights into how to view a course with a critical eye. And after reading it, one can quickly identify the trademark features of a Ross design and perhaps score a little better on it. The book also provides a comprehensive listing of courses.--The man who is going to play every Donald Ross course.

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