

ISSUE 39

QUARTERLY

SUMMER 2017

# Kingdom

THE MAJORS ISSUE

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## Designs on The Future

New horizons for  
the Ancient game

### Open Road

Amid the dunes  
of Royal Birkdale

### Kelly Tilghman

A driven life  
on course

### Palmer Country

Going west in  
Pennsylvania

\$20 where sold



# WHERE HISTORY UNFOLDS

There are not four majors each year in professional golf, there are 14—to bring in the women’s game and the senior men—from Augusta to Evian, where golf’s only major in continental Europe is played. In our latest fantasy course, an imaginary golf course made up of real golf holes, we travel around the major venues of 2017 to create a layout of such exceptional quality, history and variety that it’s impossibly fantastic. Oh that dreams were real...



Dinah Shore Tournament Course, Missions Hills, Ca.

*Par 4, 377 yards, Handicap 17*

We begin at a logical point, where the majors tee off each year, at the LPGA Tour’s cherished ANA Inspiration at Mission Hills. This is the spiritual home of women’s pro golf in the United States, and has been home to the ANA Inspiration—or the “Colgate Dinah Shore” as it was originally named—since its inception in 1972. Old-schoolers still call it the “Dinah” after the singer-TV personality who founded the tournament, which got major status in 1983.

The first hole of the Dinah Shore, lined by palms in keeping with much of the course, is a straight-away starter giving golfers a chance to find their stride. It reaches 450 yards from the back but we will go with the LPGA’s yardage of 377 in the spirit of fairness and majors authenticity. This is really a second-shot hole, with a green protected by three broad bunkers. Pin position makes all the difference.



2

Augusta National, Georgia

*Par 5, 575 yards, Handicap 9*

Some readers might be surprised that this is the only hole from the Masters in our 18. This is Augusta National after all—in a rush of Masters sentiment we could have included about a dozen of its holes—but in a quest for variety and in recognition of some other exquisite challenges on the majors circuit this year, we are holding back.

Like our first hole on the Dinah Shore, the second hole of this masterpiece by Alister MacKenzie and Bobby Jones—Pink Dogwood—presents an excellent scoring opportunity. This is such a naturally stunning par-5, with a broad, generous, sweeping dogleg turning from right to left and down the hill towards the heart of this golf course.

If we could choose, the pin position would be that Masters Sunday spot, behind the right-hand bunker, but to which the ball feeds down from the middle of the green.

3

3. Erin Hills, Wisconsin

*Par 4, 476 yards, Handicap 1*

The 2011 U.S. Amateur Championship was staged at Erin Hills—when Texan underdog Kelly Kraft ultimately defeated Patrick Cantlay in the final—the success of which convinced the USGA that the course is up to the test of staging its professional pride and joy this summer.

The long par-4 third hole is typical of the distinct test posed by Erin Hills. It runs uphill and doglegs from right to left, demanding that golfers cut-off as much as they dare over the corner of wetlands. Go in there and there is no coming out. Yet there is plenty of room on a generous fairway so greed on the third tee is your enemy. The challenge of the hole can be altered dramatically with pin position, with a raised green that has three distinct tiers and lots of options. Any birdie opportunities here in the U.S. Open will only be the result of two very assured strikes.



4

Greystone (Founders), Alabama

*Par 3, 155 yards, Handicap 15*

The 29th Regions Tradition—the first major of the year on the PGA Tour Champions—was held at Greystone Golf & Country Club for the second successive year in May, with Bernhard Langer successfully defending his title for his eighth senior major win.

The course was designed by Robert Cupp with two-time major champ Hubert Green and opened in 1991. Its heritage with seniors golf began almost immediately, hosting the Bruno's Memorial Classic from 1992 to 2005, in which Green himself was among the winners, along with fellow major champs Larry Nelson and Hale Irwin.

The par-three 4th hole is a beautiful challenge as long as right-handed golfers can avoid a hook off the tee. Anything more than a draw is in the lake and the allure of the hole is rapidly replaced by regret. It reaches 180 yards from the back but we are going to hop forward to a blue-tee yardage of 155, to give us the best chance of finding the green. Bunkers wait beyond the green but there is a clear run up to the green for anything that lands short.

5

Evian, Evian-les-Bains, France

*Par 3, 188 yards, Handicap 11*

The dramatic Evian Resort course—home to the final major of the women's season each year, the Evian Championship—sits majestically on a hillside far above the shores of Lake Geneva, at an altitude of 500 meters. The Evian golf course winds through 148 acres of verdant woodland, the first nine holes of which were built by the Evian mineral water company in 1904, making Evian one of the oldest golf courses in continental Europe. The nine became 18 in 1922, and Cabell B. Robinson renovated the course in the late '80s, before the Evian Masters—the predecessor of the Evian Championship—was first played there in 1994 on the Ladies European Tour. The course was lengthened in 2003 and the Evian was played there as a major for the first time in 2013.

The 5th hole at Evian is one of beguiling beauty, with views to the left of the green opening up across Lake Geneva and far beyond. Water in front of the green demands golfers strike a true tee shot, with bunkers in wait to the left and right of the green. We will stick with the championship yardage of 188 yards to grab golfers' attention on the tee.

**6****Royal Birkdale, Lancashire, England***Par 5, 488 yards, Handicap 5*

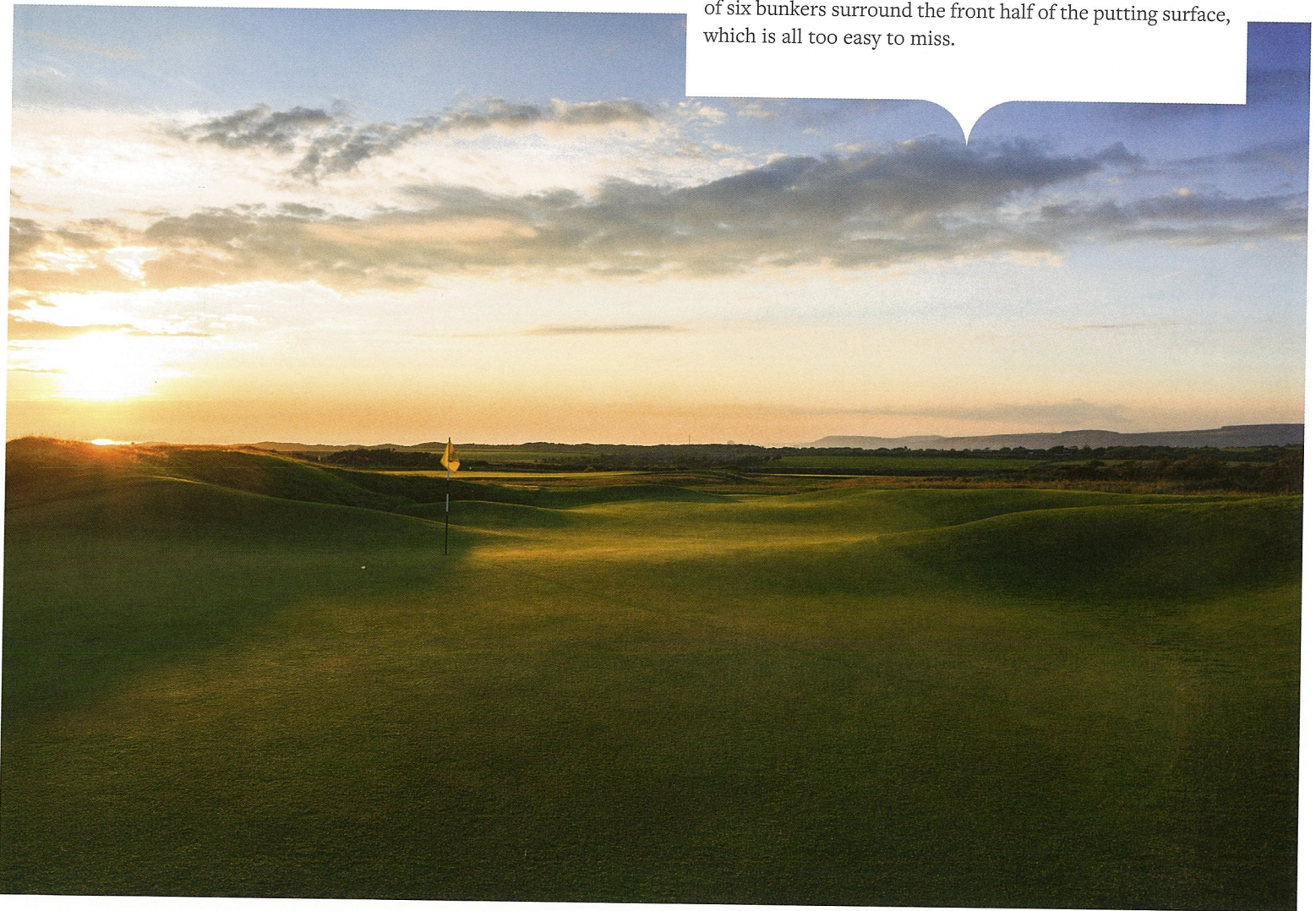
Like most mortal golfers on a daily basis, we are going to play Birkdale's mighty sixth hole as a par five, the way it should be, rather than calling it a 499-yard par-4, which is what golfers in The Open are faced with. Ultimately it does not matter in The Open—the golfer with the fewest shots wins whatever the par—but in The Open of 2008 the scoring average here was 4.77 and this left-to-right dogleg has been the hardest hole on the course in both The Opens of 2008 and 1998. Expect much gnashing of teeth here in July.

Thinking about trying to reach this green in two is how a golfer loses sleep. With the hole playing slightly uphill, and with a trio of pot bunkers positioned short of the green, this is a three-shotter all day long, and all night too if you value your rest.

**7****Royal Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan, Wales***Par 3, 122 yards, Handicap 13*

A truly great British links, Royal Porthcawl was established in 1891, and by 1895 it had become the first 18-hole course in South Wales. The championship heritage at Porthcawl began in 1951 when the R&A took the [British] Amateur Championship to Wales for the first time, and among many other famous events at Porthcawl, it staged the 1995 Walker Cup when Tiger Woods lost in the singles to Englishman Gary Wolstenholme. The Senior Open presented by Rolex returns to Porthcawl in July, three years after last being there, when Bernhard Langer posted one of the most dominant performances of his entire career in winning by 13 shots.

The seventh is the shortest hole at Porthcawl, at 122 yards from the back tee. But like the very short 'Postage Stamp' 8th at Royal Troon, the green here is small and has stronger protection than a medieval Welsh castle; a battalion of six bunkers surround the front half of the putting surface, which is all too easy to miss.



8

Royal Birkdale, Lancashire, England

Par 4, 413 yards, Handicap 3

Returning to The Open venue Birkdale, golfers who can strike their ball long and straight have a decent birdie chance here, but for the rest, take a four if you can, be happy and move on. At The Open the golfers will play the eighth to a yardage of 458, slightly uphill, but we are going to play off the member's medal tee at 413 yards, which is plenty as the fairway bends round to the left and up to a raised green. Four bunkers are placed precariously around the elbow of the hole to catch drives which are offline, with three more awaiting approach shots which fall short on the left and right.

As a reminder of just how long and straight most golfers in The Open can hit the ball, the eighth was ranked the 16th hardest hole at Birkdale last time around in 2008, when Padraig Harrington successfully defended his title. There were 46 birdies that week over four rounds, with a scoring average of 4.13.

9

Caves Valley, Baltimore, Maryland

Par 4, 400 yards, Handicap 7

The fourth of the PGA Champions Tour's five majors, the Constellation Senior Players Championship in July, heads to the stunning Caves Valley, outside Baltimore, for the first time. Caves Valley offers a Tom Fazio design which opened in 1991, and which held the 2002 U.S. Senior Open—won by Don Pooley—and the LPGA International Crown in 2014, a team event won by Spain.

From tee to green on Caves Valley's ninth a stream accompanies golfers, snaking in front of the green from right to left, before heading back to the right-hand side ahead of the fairway, where it remains for the remainder of the hole—not a good location for a right-handed slice off the tee or into the green. For golfers who stray left and away from the stream, five bunkers lie in wait up the left-hand side, towards a green shrouded in forest. The hole can play up to 435 yards, but there is plenty of golf from the blue tee at 400.



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10

Olympia Fields (North),  
Chicago, Illinois

Par 4, 429 yards,  
Handicap 2

Our back nine begins at an American classic, the North Course at Olympia Fields. Originally named the “No. 4 Course,” it was designed by two-time [British] Open champ, Scotsman Willie Park Jnr. The course opened in 1923 and Park went as far as to later write to the club to declare, “your number IV course is the equal of any golf course I have ever seen.” Park had good reason to show some bias towards his own design of course, although he has since received plenty of back-up from leading magazine rankings and the North Course will serve as a weighty challenge for this year’s Women’s PGA Championship.

The 10th hole is tree-lined although it opens up around 235 yards off the tee. Then the hole drops dramatically to a green which is surrounded by a horseshoe-shaped lake, so club selection is critical. Two bunkers also protect a green which demands unerring accuracy. The 10th can play to 444 yards but we have edged forward to the championship tee at 429 yards.

11

Royal Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan, Wales

Par 3, 180 yards, Handicap 16

Compared to the other links course in this collection of majors golf holes—Royal Birkdale—Porthcawl is a much flatter challenge, without the rocking and rolling of the Sefton Dune system which envelopes Birkdale. The dunes frame each hole at Birkdale, yet the trade-off at Porthcawl is the far-reaching panoramic views that the gentler topography affords. The course slopes down towards the Bristol Channel, with Somerset and Exmoor in England visible to the south, and Swansea Bay and the Gower Peninsula to the northwest.

The par-3 11th plays from 184 yards but we are taking four steps forward to the White tee and a distance of 180 yards. This is a real stunner of a links par-three, with a ridge to clear that runs diagonally in front of the plateau green. The ridge is armed with a strong of five pot bunkers so the instruction here is quite simple: don’t play short.

12

North Course, Olympia Fields, Illinois

Par 4, 389 yards, Handicap 6

The USGA and PGA of America rate the North Course at Olympia Fields very highly, and past champions here include Walter Hagen (1925 PGA Championship), Johnny Farrell (1928 U.S. Open), Jerry Barber (1961 PGA Championship), and Jim Furyk (2003 U.S. Open).

The club has worked hard to maintain the original features of its North Course, as it stretches over naturally rolling parkland and brings the babbling Butterfield Creek into play wherever possible, and nowhere more so than on the par-four 12th, where golfers need to be on their wits to avoid the creek from the tee and again before the green. At 432 yards from the tips—which is from where the LPGA’s finest will begin—we are opting for a more civilized 389 yards from the old tournament tee. There is enough room for most golfers to take driver off the tee before the creek cuts across ahead of a well defended, raised green.



13

Salem CC, Peabody, Massachusetts

Par 4, 344 yards, Handicap 8

This jetpack journey next lands in Salem, which sits amid a rich line of grand old clubs of Massachusetts. The club was founded back in 1895—two centuries after the famous Salem Witch Trials that inspired the club motif of a witch on a broomstick—although the golf club didn’t find its existing home in the Peabody countryside until 30 years later, where a Donald Ross design has provided sufficient golfing magic to ensure no further relocations were required. A long-standing alliance with the USGA has seen Salem host a variety of national-level championships and next up is the 2017 U.S. Senior Open.

Salem’s 13th is its signature hole. It does not look like much on the card—just up to 344 yards from the back today and 297 from the men’s tee—and a bowl shaped fairway could not be more inviting from the tee, with a long iron or fairway wood. But don’t be fooled—this hole had the highest stroke average on the course in the 1984 U.S. Women’s Open. Golfers need to be well placed from the tee as the fairway doglegs to the right and leads up to a three-tiered green that is well protected by a trio of bunkers.

14

Greystone (Founders),  
Alabama

Par 3, 165 yards,  
Handicap 18

We return to Greystone, Alabama and the signature hole of its Founders Course, the par-three 14th. Surrounded by woodlands and water, the hole stretches to 197 yards from the back and even though it is downhill, there is so much danger in store for inaccurate tee shots that we are stepping forward to the blue tee at 165 yards.

A stream that meanders right across the hole, separating the green complex from the approach, ensures this hole is a striking challenge, utterly unforgettable yet also treacherous. Over the stream a pair of bunkers offer stern protection for tee shots that are slightly short, while another bunker at the back ensures that golfers need to know their numbers and play to them. If golfers have to miss anywhere, make it back left, but a downhill up-and-down from there requires a deft touch.

15

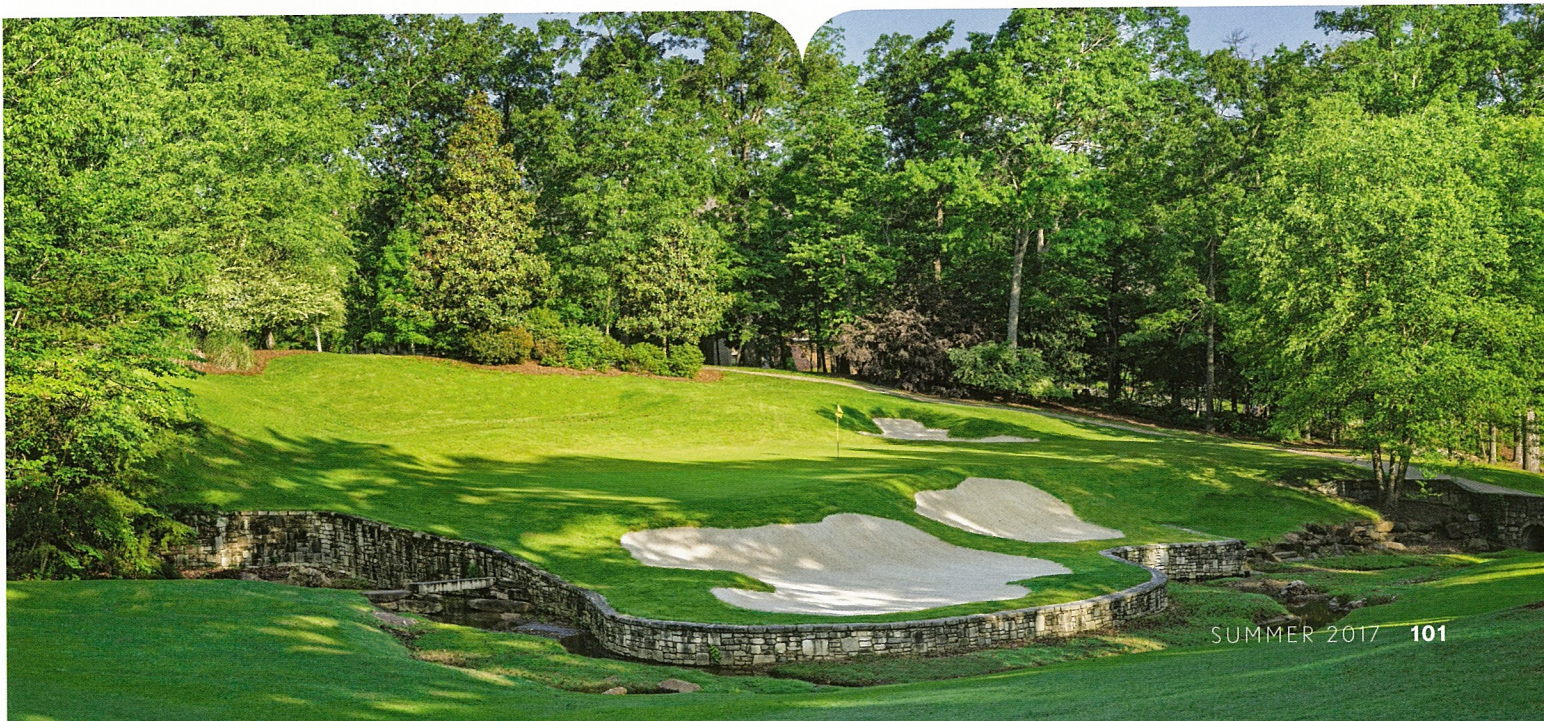
Trump National, Washington DC

Par 4, 419 yards, Handicap 4

May’s 2017 KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship was the first major held at Trump National, Washington D.C. The club previously was called the Lowes Island Club until Donald Trump bought it in 2009 and gave it a wholesale renovation. The 7,693-yard Championship course, branded a “Donald J. Trump Signature Course” (designed by Tom Fazio) is built alongside the Potomac River. Some 465 trees were removed to open up river views.

The par-four 15th hugs the Potomac to the right, so any tee shots that are sliced by right-handers are in grave danger. The uphill hole is straight and a fairway bunker waits on the left for balls played too cautiously away from the water. It is the same at the green, with a front-left bunker. It plays up to 476 yards from the back but we are opting for the more generous blue tee and a yardage of 419.

One curiosity, a controversial plaque by the tee, reads: “Many great American soldiers, both of the North and South, died at this spot. The casualties were so great that the water would turn red.” Compelling as it is, a number of Civil War historians concur that the claim is false.





**16****Kingsbarns, Kingdom of Fife, Scotland***Par 5, 504 yards, Handicap 14*

There was a theory that truly great links had to be ancient—an argument supported by the R&A's policy of only taking the Open to the most seasoned courses—but this argument was smashed emphatically when Kingsbarns opened. It occupies a spectacular stretch of Fife coastline on Scotland's east coast, seven miles south of St Andrews. Kingsbarns is built on a hillside that rises from the sea, with each hole laid out in front of the golfers and with far-reaching North Sea panoramas that St Andrews can't match.

While the original Kingsbarns Golf Society was formed in 1793, the championship course as it stands today was designed by Kyle Phillips and opened in 2000.

The 16th at Kingsbarns epitomizes this great course. The crescent shaped par-five hugs the rocky beach and golfers in the RICOH Women's British Open in July must play their tee shots over the beach. The Black tee extends the hole to 565 yards, although in the name of clemency we are playing off the White tee at 504 yards. If any kind of breeze picks up from the northwest this will be a long walk.

**17****Quail Hollow, Charlotte, North Carolina***Par 3, 190 yards, Handicap 10*

In preparation for hosting its first-ever major—the 99th PGA Championship—a few changes have been made to the 7,469-yard course at Quail Hollow, including the removal of an estimated 1,000 trees as part of a remodeling process that has opened up the golf course and allowed for new spectator areas. The front nine will be tougher for the PGA than it has been in the past.

The 17th hole is a famous par-3, in the middle of Quail Hollow's notorious "Green Mile" of closing three holes, with golfers required to clear the lake and its surrounding rock wall to reach the green. There is also a bunker front and center to clear so a clean strike is all that will work here. The hole can play to 223 yards from the back, but we wouldn't do that to you, we'll go with what remains a decent stretch at 190.

Traditionally home to the Wells Fargo Championship on the PGA Tour, the event will return to Quail Hollow for 2018 and 2019—at the very least—with the Presidents Cup arriving in 2021.

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**18**

Royal Birkdale, Lancashire, England

*Par 5, 473 yards, Handicap 12*

Famed for its magnificent sand dunes, Royal Birkdale was the scene of Arnold Palmer's first victory in the [British] Open in 1961 and the club owns an Open heritage that stretches far beyond. The Ryder Cup was played here twice, in 1965 and 1969, and it was on this 18th green where Jack Nicklaus made golf's most famous concession, picking up opponent Tony Jacklin's marker for a two-foot putt that the Englishman needed to secure a half in their decisive singles match. The halved point also halved the overall score for the first time in Ryder Cup history, at 16-16.

Birkdale has one of golf's toughest finishing holes. Played by the members as a par-5, is what we are going with, but as a par-4 in championship play Birkdale's 18th offers a true test of nerve. The best line off the tee is down the right of the fairway, but out of bounds also lurks. Playing safe with a 3-wood leaves a lengthy approach through a narrow entrance to a backwardly sloping green guarded by three bunkers.

KINGDOM SCORECARD				
Hole	Course	Par	Yards	H/cp
1	Dinah Shore	4	337	17
2	Augusta	5	575	9
3	Erin Hills	4	476	1
4	Greystone	3	155	15
5	Evian	3	188	11
6	R. Birkdale	5	488	5
7	R. Porthcawl	3	122	13
8	R. Birkdale	4	413	3
9	Caves Valley	4	400	7
<b>FRONT 9</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>3154</b>	
10	Olympia Fields	4	429	2
11	R. Porthcawl	3	180	16
12	Olympia Fields	4	389	6
13	Salem	4	344	8
14	Greystone	3	165	18
15	Trump National	4	419	4
16	Kingsbarns	5	504	14
17	Quail Hollow	3	190	10
18	R. Birkdale	5	473	12
<b>BACK 9</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>3093</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>6247</b>	