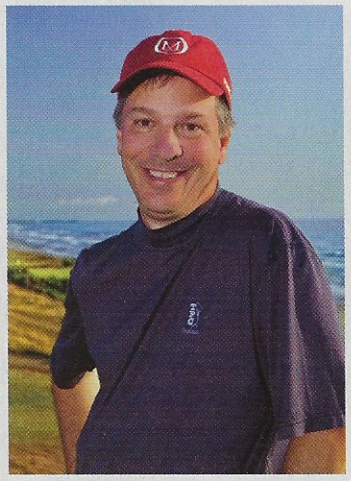
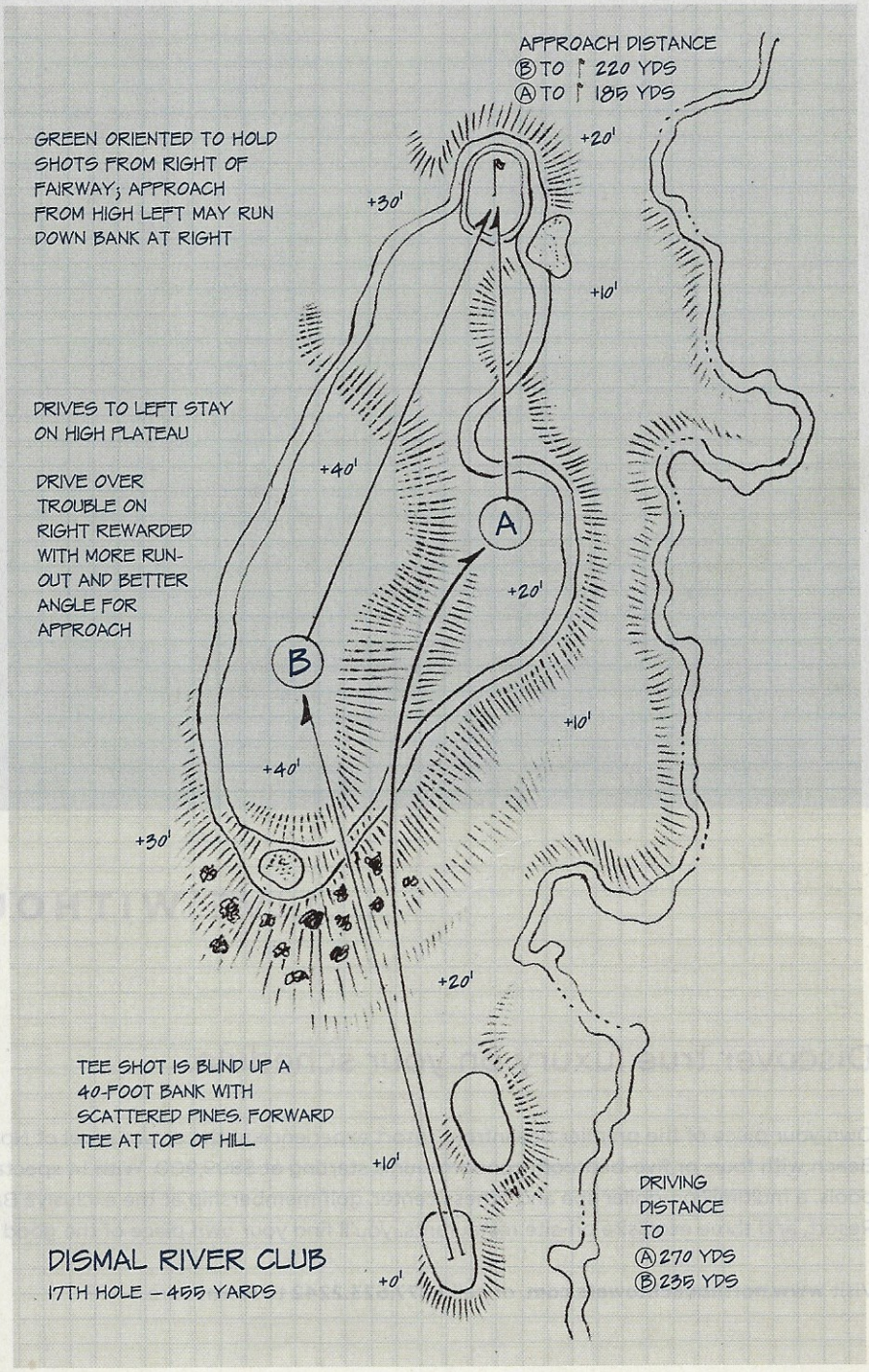


Best Approach

THE 455-YARD 17TH AT MY NEW NAMESAKE LAYOUT AT DISMAL RIVER WAS DICTATED BY THE LAND'S TOPOGRAPHY, THE ESSENCE OF MY DESIGN APPROACH



LOCATED near Mullen, Nebraska, just a few miles from Sand Hills Golf Club, this is the second course at Dismal River following the original 18 by Jack Nicklaus. The property for Dismal River is much hillier than at Sand Hills, so the trick of the design was to route the holes along a path of least resistance, maintain visibility, and make the course easy to walk. You might find blind approach shots at several holes if you hit a wayward drive, but there is only one shot on the golf course that is blind for everyone, and that's the tee shot here at 17. Like the 18th at Riviera, players must drive up to a plateau about 40 feet above the tee, but here the diagonal, two-tiered plateau provides options: A safe drive to the left will stay up top and leave a difficult, downhill second, while a drive to the right runs down to a lower area of fairway with a better angle of approach, but requires a much longer carry of 230 yards and with the elevation change, it plays more like 270 yards. In-between drives can use the slope to get down to the lower fairway, but long hitters who take a middle route may wind up through the fairway in the rough with a steep sidehill lie. The green sits on a small thumb of land that falls off left, right, and rear. The swale to the left is fairly soft, but the bunker on the right is 8–10 feet below the green, and the steep bank in the back leads down to native prairie grasses.