United States Patent [19]

Thomas

[11] **3,904,209**

[45] **Sept. 9, 1975**

[54] **COMPACT GOLF COURSE**

[76] Inventor: **Clarence A. Thomas,** 48 Shafor Cir., Dayton, Ohio 45409

[22] Filed: **Mar. 25, 1974**

[21] Appl. No.: **454,371**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/176 A;** 273/178 B; 273/195 R

[51] **Int. Cl.²** **A63B 67/02;** A63B 69/36

[58] **Field of Search** 273/176, 35, 32, 178, 179, 273/180, 177, 195

[56] **References Cited**

UNITED STATES PATENTS

1,851,423	3/1932	Ely	273/176 A
1,852,948	4/1932	Warren et al.	273/176 A
2,003,074	5/1935	Gage	273/176 A
2,455,806	12/1948	Reach	273/176 A
3,129,943	4/1964	McKee	273/176 A
3,310,310	3/1967	McKee	273/176 A
3,599,980	8/1971	Harmond	273/176 A
3,685,832	8/1972	Johnson	273/176 A
3,708,173	1/1973	Hewson	273/176 A

Primary Examiner—George J. Marlo

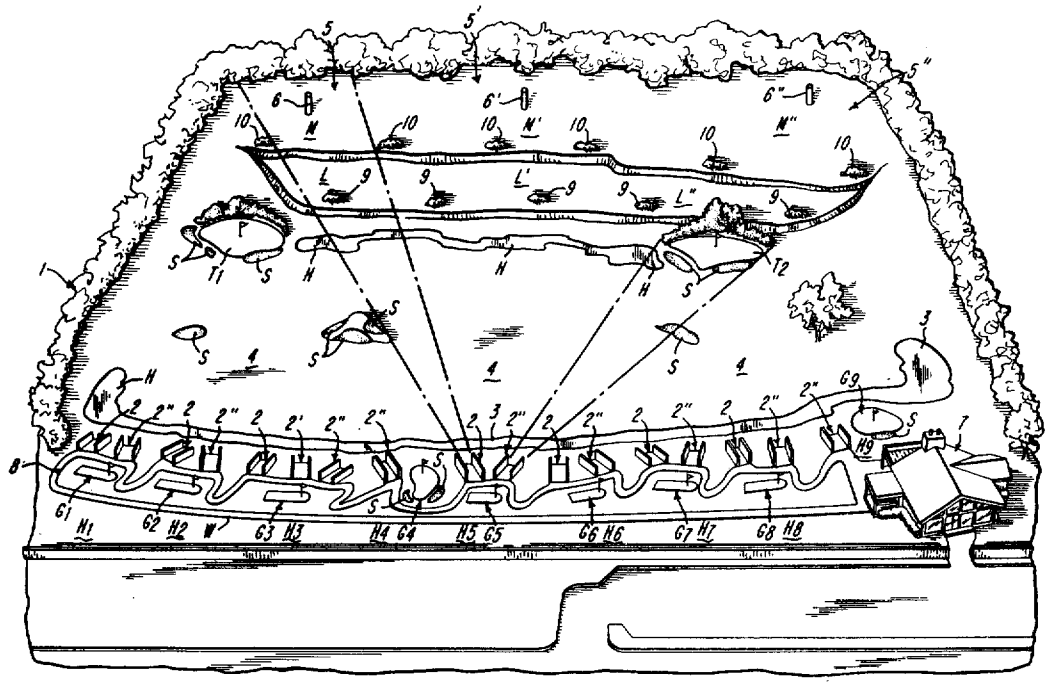
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Joseph Patrick Burke

[57] **ABSTRACT**

This disclosure is directed to an improved, compact golf course having non-walking fairways and greatly reduced area requirements compared to conventional courses yet wherein the player can utilize all of the golf clubs normally used on a conventional nine or eighteen hole golf course as their use was intended without having the need to walk the conventional distances required and without subjecting himself to the personal hazards attendant upon walking the fairways of conventional courses. This golf course is characterized by a plurality of hitting area chutes providing a "binder effect" by restricting the player's field of vision with respect of each fairway target area and each target green provided on the course, and a putting green for each hole. Each hitting chute is arranged to give a different angular orientation or "look" to each common target area on the golf course, be it fairway area or target green. The target green approach chutes are located either adjacent to their respective putting greens or intermediate the target green and putting green.

Where the golf course is a nine or eighteen hole course, there are a plurality of common fairway target areas and a plurality of common target greens with each fairway target area and each target green being seen from a different approach angle from each hitting chute. Moreover, a safety moat area is usually provided to discourage or prevent the player from walking the fairways.

8 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures



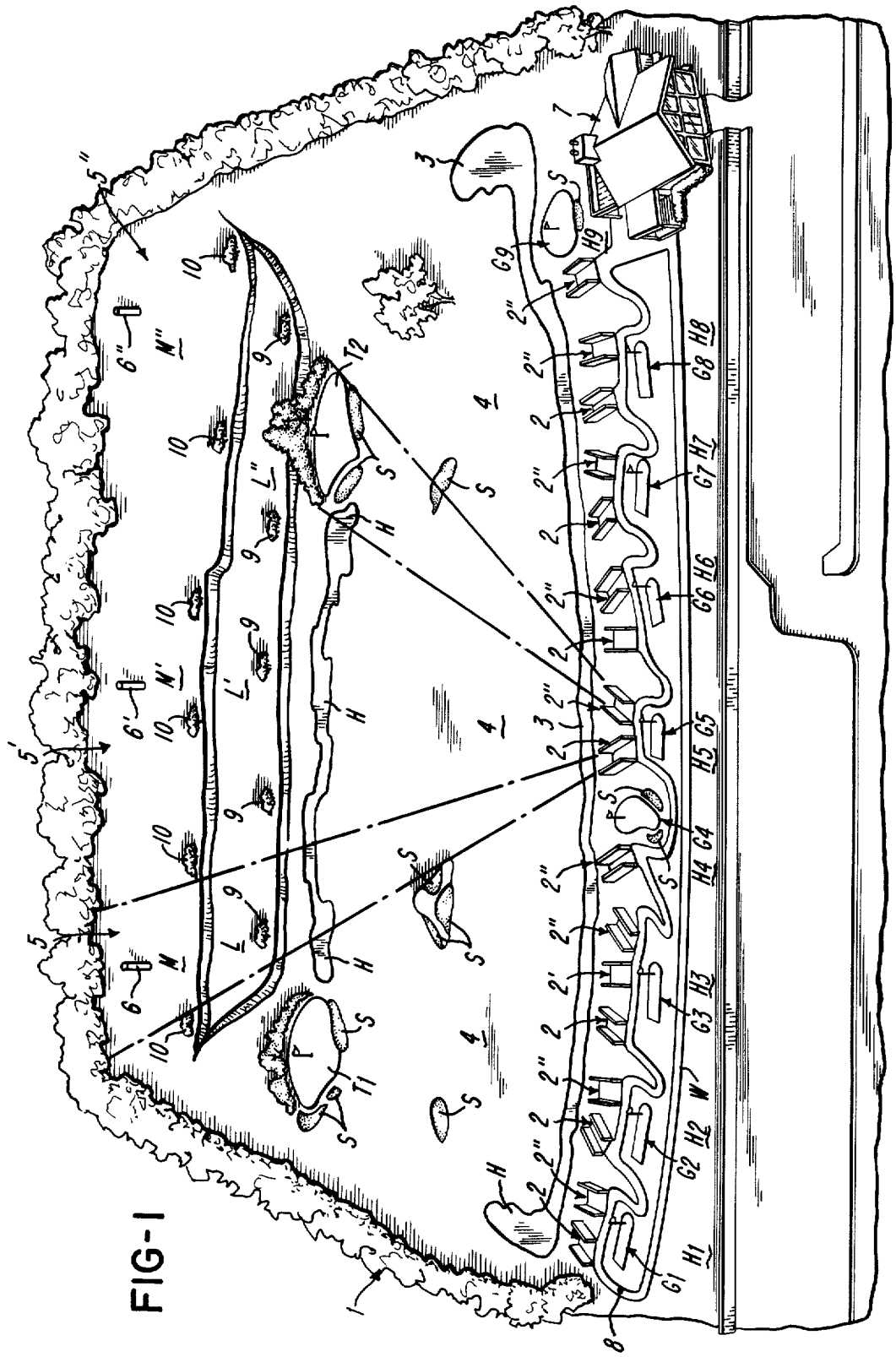


FIG-1

FIG-2

FIG-3

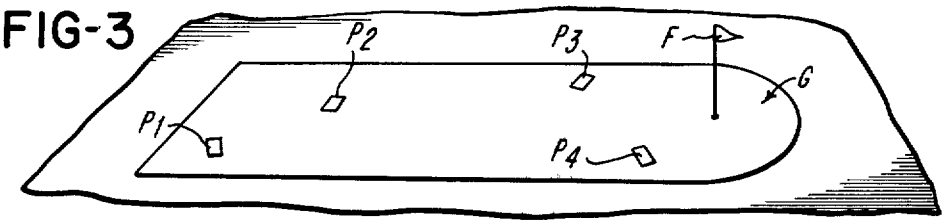


FIG-4

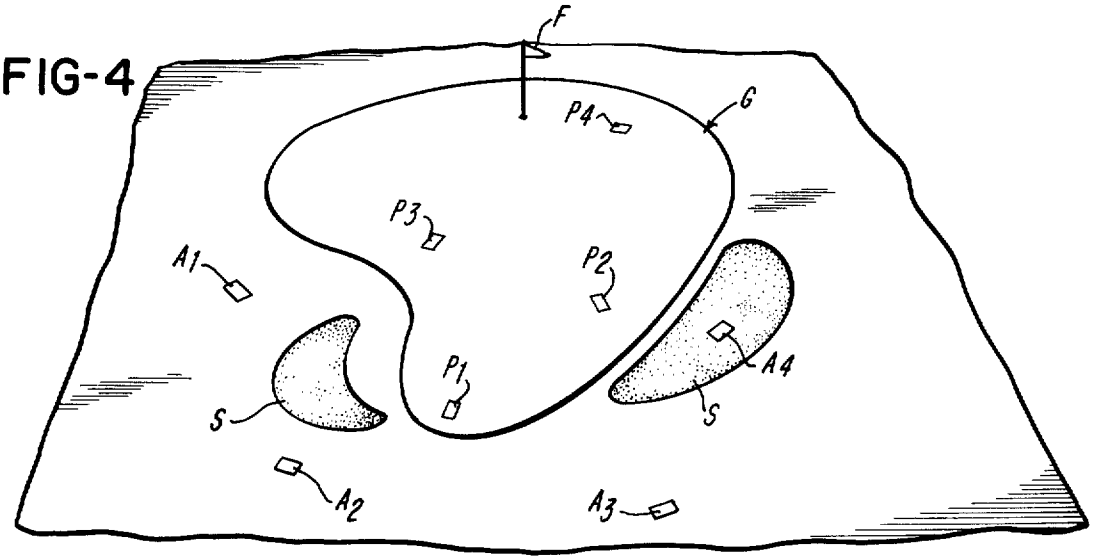
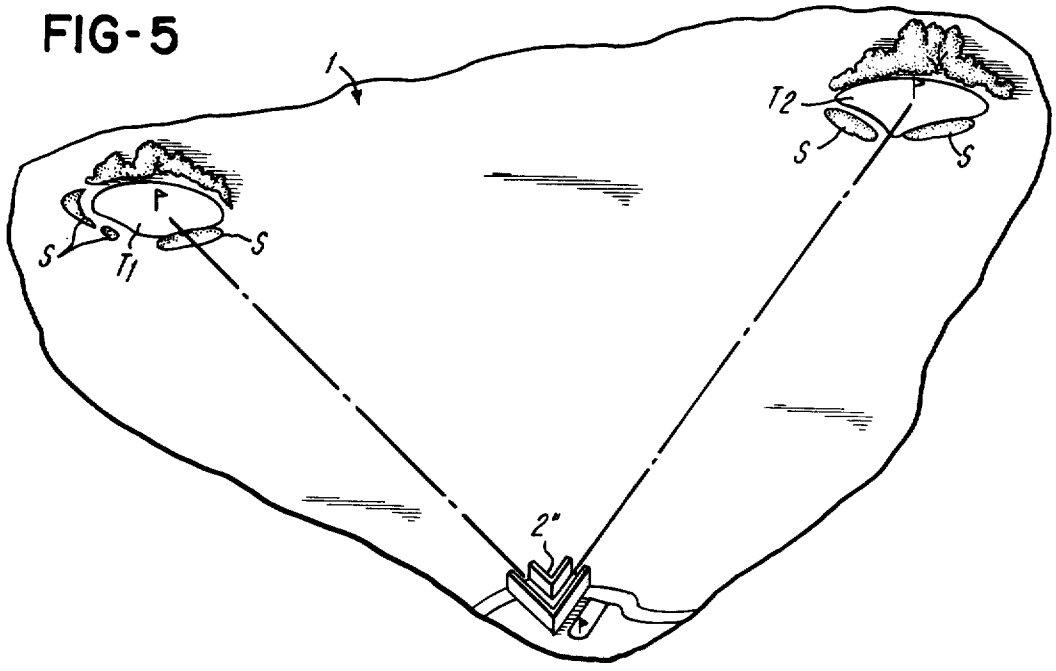


FIG-5



COMPACT GOLF COURSE

The present invention is directed to an improved golf course having greatly reduced area requirements yet permitting the player to utilize all or most of the clubs in his golf game striving for the same distances, skill and accuracy which he would normally utilize and strive for on a conventional nine or eighteen hole course having an area(s) anywhere from three to six times the area required for the golf course of this invention.

According to one aspect of the invention, the player can play this improved golf course without subjecting himself to personal hazards from the long, cross-fairway or poorly hit golf shots of other players, and play it in a more leisurely manner without walking great distances yet in a much shorter period of time thus enabling the golfer to hit more golf shots in a given period of time, if desired.

The present invention is further characterized by a plurality of hitting area chutes, each of which provides a "blinder effect" by restricting the vision of the player to a certain portion of a target fairway and/or target green so that on each shot to that target fairway area or target green, the golfer's view and perspective to that target is different from that presented at any other chute on the golf course. This "blinder effect" may also assist the golfer in training himself to be more directionally accurate in aiming and hitting the tee, fairway and green approach shots required in the "long game" phase of golfing.

One of the simplest embodiments of this invention is the case of a par three golf course having one target green with a plurality of target green approach (hitting area) chutes and a plurality of putting greens, which can correspond in number to the number of green approach chutes. Each green approach chute provides a "blinder effect" and presents a different angular and visual presentation of the same target green. Different hazards, e.g., sand traps, water hazards, trenches, trees, bushes, etc. can be located at different distances from the respective green approach chutes to enhance the difficulty of play. For example, in accordance withh this invention, in the case of a two-hole, par three, golf course, there are two green approach chutes, each one arranged at a different approach angle to the target green (when measured from a fixed location or point) with each such chute located either intermediate (between) the target green and the two putting greens or in an arrangement where one (or both) of the putting green(s) is (are) adjacent to each green approach chute. A safety moat can be positioned intermediate between the two green approach chutes and the target green.

The present invention will be described in greater particularity in accordance with the accompanying drawings.

FIG. 1 of the drawings is a perspective view illustrating a nine-hole golf course in accordance with this invention.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view illustrating what has been referred to as a target green approach chute. The player hits the green approach shot from such chutes.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view showing a putting green of the type located behind or adjacent to the hitting chutes. These greens can have one or a plurality of predesignated putting positions, P_1 through P_4.

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a putting green but one permitting practice of close approach (chip or sand) shots and having hazards adjacent thereto protecting said green. These greens can have one or more pre-designated approach shot positions, e.g., A_1 through A_4 where the player can drop his ball and play chip or sand shots to the green G. Such greens permit the player to vary the difficulty of the course on each given occasion of play. For example, it will be noted that the approach position A_4 is located in the sand trap S of putting green G. On the other hand, if a player does not desire to utilize any of the approach shot positions A_1, A_2, A_3 or A_4, he can place his ball elsewhere for an approach shot. Then once up on the green, the player can position his ball for putting on any one of the putting positions P_1 through P_4 or anywhere else on the green for that matter, e.g., putt from where the ball rested from the approach shot.

FIG. 5 is likewise a perspective view but illustrating the presence of a "V-shaped" multiple-option hitting chute having two chute sides, 2'', allowing variation in difficulty of shots on any given hole. For example, such a chute, as a green approach chute (2''), at par three hole H_4, permits the player to play to target green T_1 (short) or T_2 (long). Such chutes can also be used as tee hitting (2) and fairway hitting (2') chutes.

FIG. 1 shows the improved, compact golf course, 1, of this invention which contains a plurality of holes H_1 through H_9, each hole having at least one green approach shot hitting area chute 2'' located either approximately adjacent to its respective putting green G or generally intermediate said respective putting green and a target green T.

In FIG. 1 there are shown nine green approach chutes 2'', one for each hole; nine putting greens G_1 through G_9 and two target greens T_1 and T_2. It will be recognized that on holes H_4 and H_9, the respective putting greens G_4 and G_9 are located adjacent to the chutes for said holes whereas in the remaining holes, each green approach chute 2'' is located generally intermediate, viz., closer to its target green that each respective putting green G. The chutes 2, 2' and 2'' and putting greens G_1 through G_9 are remote from the target greens for those holes.

According to a preferred embodiment of this invention, one or more safety moats 3 are positioned intermediate between each chute 2, 2' and 2'' and the fairway target areas 5, 5' and 5'' and the target greens T_1 and T_2. The safety moat 3 can be continuous or discontinuous and discourages or prevents players from walking onto the fairway areas 4 of said golf course.

As will be observed from the par five hole H_3, viz., the area of the third hole on the golf course; there are three hitting area chutes, each of which restricts the field of vision of the player to only a limited portion and perspective of the golf course. At tee hitting chute, 2, the player hits a wood shot, usually a driver, from the chute 2 aiming for either specific distance target area M' or L' in the direction of pole 6'. After having hit the first shot, the player then advances to fairway hitting chute 2' aiming for fairway target area 5, located in the upper left-hand portion of FIG. 1. This fairway target area can have a similar direction target marker, e.g., pole 6 to define the desired angle of the shot. The third shot on the third hole will be a green approach shot from the green approach chute 2'' to target green T_1. After hitting these three shots, the player then proceeds

across the pathway W to the appropriate putting green G_3 and proceeds to "putt out" from this putting green. In determining where to place his ball on the putting green, the player may select one of the pre-designated areas P_1 through P_4 thereon. The distance of the numbered markers from the flag will vary on G_1 through G_9. The distance of a given putting position P from the flag F does not necessarily define the difficulty of the shot, however, as the topography and undulation of the green can vary the difficulty of the putt from any putting position.

According to another embodiment of this invention, various fairway target areas can be differentiated by any visually, readily distinguishable or recognizable differentiation means to enable players of various strength, accuracy and driving ability to participate in the game to the extent of their abilities. Thus, general fairway target area **5** of the fairway **4** can be differentiated into distance target areas L, L' and L'' (closer) and M, M' and M'' (further) by terracing (viz., providing fairway distance target areas of different height or topography), and/or by using different textures, different types or differently colored grasses, bushes, trees and/or by land-scaping or otherwise, into closer located target distance target areas L, L' and L'' and those of M, M' and M'' located further away from the driving and airway hitting chutes **2** and **2'**, respectively. Thus, e.g., red bushes **9** can be used to identify the front portion of closer areas L, L' and L'' and green bushes **10** can be used to signify the front portion of areas M, M' and M''.

The invention will be further described by describing how a player proceeds to play the course from the first through the ninth hole. The player proceeds from clubhouse **7** at the lower right-hand side of FIG. **1**, along walkway W from the right-hand lower side of FIG. **1** to the lower left-hand side to play hole H_1 (par four) where he would enter the driver hitting (tee) chute **2** and hit his first drive shot to the general target area **5**, either to the portion of this distance target area M' which is located further from said chute or that located closer at L' aiming at direction pole **6'**.

A suggested method of scoring is presented herein in accordance with a description of a typical manner of playing of the course. For example, in the event the player reaches the desired terraced portion M' or L' in general fairway target area **5**, a one shot score is taken. On the other hand, if the shot falls short or to the left or right thereof (e.g., out of the field of vision from the chute area from which it was hit), the player could score a **2** although hitting only one shot. Then the player proceeds to the green approach chute **2''** and hits the green approach shot for the first hole into target green T_1. If the player successfully hits this ball onto target green T_1, he scores only one additional stroke. In the event the approach shot fails to land on the green, the player scores two additional strokes although he actually made only one approach shot, on the assumption that it would take at least one other shot to get on the green. Then the player proceeds from the green approach chute **2''** on hole H_1 to the putting green G_1 located behind said chute area. The player can either position the ball as he desires or select any one of four pre-designated putting positions P_1 through P_4 and proceed to "putt out" adding to his previous score the number of strokes as he actually uses to putt the ball into the hole.

In accordance with this invention, one or a plurality of holes can be provided on each putting green, each hole preferably having a flag F. The location(s) of the hole(s) can be rotated in accordance with customary practice on a conventional golf course. Similarly, the hole (flag) positions of the target greens T_1 and T_2 can similarly be varied to vary the difficulty and angular presentation of the green approach shots from each respective green approach chute **2''**.

The player then proceeds to the second hole of the course, the area indicated in FIG. **1** as H_2, and enters its driving chute **2** and proceeds to drive the ball, e.g., toward distance target area M'' in the direction defined by directional pole **6''** located toward the rear of area M''. Alternatively, the drive can be aimed at distance target area L'' positioned closer to the player. As this hole is also a par four hole, the player's second shot will be to target green T_1 from the green approach chute **2''**.

The angular orientation or positioning of the green approach chutes **2''** is so arranged in accordance with the golf course of this invention that visual approach ("look"), viz,. the view presented to the golfer from the green approach chute **2''** of hole H_2 is different from that afforded from the equivalent green approach chute **2''** of hole H_1.

Thus, for example, the angle defined by starting with any fixed point on the golf course, e.g., imaginary fixed point **8**, (FIG. **1**, lower left) to the center of the hole on target green T_1 and thence to either the center of approach green chute **2''**, or the point of ball placement therein, on hole H_1 will differ from that angle on hole H_2. Similarly, said angle on hole H_2 will differ from that on hole H_4 which, in turn, will differ from that on hole H_6, etc. Correspondingly, the angles defined between fixed point **8** thence to the approximate center of the various target distance areas L, L', L'' or M, M', M'', respectively, and thence to either the center of each respective driving chute **2** or fairway hitting chute **2'** (or the position of ball placement therein) will each be different for each hole on the golf course.

Also, in accordance with one preferred embodiment of this invention, the distance of the central front portion of each respective green approach chute **2''** varies in respect to the hole on its target green. Therefore, not only varying angulation of the chutes **2''** to the target greens but also varying distance of chutes **2''** from the hole on the respective target green can be utilized in combination to vary the "look" and difficulty of each green approach golf shot whereby the player attempts to bring the ball onto the target green as close to the pin as possible.

Furthermore, according to a further preferred embodiment of this invention, the difficulty and "feel" of the green approach shot can be varied by providing different length and/or texture grass in the same green approach chute **2''** as is illustrated, e.g., in FIG. **2**. In the event the player selects the left-hand grass area F for his approach shot, he can hit the shot off fairway grass customarily cut lower to the ground. On the other hand, should the player desire a more difficult shot, he can hit from the longer rough grass area R for his approach shot into the target green T. As will be noted from FIG. **2**, the target greens can be protected by sand traps S and a water hazard(s) H.

Safety moat **3** can be filled with water, in which event it constitutes a water hazard H. While the embodiment

illustrated in FIG. 1 shows this safety moat to be positioned relatively close to the hitting area chutes 2, 2' and 2'', it is within the purview of this invention to space the safety moat in varying distances from said hitting area chutes. Instead of filling the moat 3 with water, it can be a trench or gulley-type hazard. Similarly, the safety moat 3 can be provided as a plurality of non-continuous areas, or no such safety moat need be employed at all.

The playing of par five hole H_3 has been already discussed hereinabove. From the hole H_3, after putting out on putting green G_3, the player proceeds to hole H_4, which is a par three hole. The player drives from green approach chute 2'' of H_4 and aims the shot to target green T_1 as the first golf shot on this hole. Again, if the golf ball lands on the target green T_1, the player would take a one score at this stage of the hole. If the green were missed, then the player would score two in accordance with one proposed scoring system even though only one shot was actually taken. The player then proceeds to the appropriate putting green G_4 which can be of the type shown in FIG. 4 permitting the player to practice close approach (chip and sand) shots. If desired, a plurality of all of the putting greens on the golf course of this invention can be of the type shown in FIG. 4. After sinking the putt on putting green G_4, the player then proceeds to the fifth hole, viz., in the general vicinity of H_5 and tees up in driving chute 2 and hits the first ball to target area 5 on this par four golf hole. The player's second shot is made from the green approach chute 2'' into the target green T_2 shown on the right hand side of FIG. 1.

After putting out on putting green G_5 of hole H_5, the player proceeds to the vicinity of the sixth hole H_6, a par four hole as illustrated in FIG. 1. The player's first shot is from driving chute 2 to either distance target area M' or L' and the second shot is from green approach chute 2'' to target green T_1. The hole is then completed by the player proceeding to putting green G_6 and putting.

The seventh hole H_7 is illustrated as a par four golf hole. The player enters tee driving chute 2 and drives for either distance target area L or M in the direction of pole 6. The second (green approach) shot will be from green approach chute 2'' to target green T_2. Then from chute 2'', the player moves to the rear of walkway W to the putting green G_7.

The eighth hole as illustrated in FIG. 1 is a par four golf hole and the player proceeds to the driving chute 2 to hit the first shot towards either distance target area L' or M' in the direction of pole 6'. Then the second shot is from green approach chute 2'' to target green T_2 after which the player proceeds to putting green G_8 to complete this hole.

The last hole illustrated on the nine hole course shown in FIG. 1 is hole H_9, which is a par three hole. The player proceeds to the green approach chute 2'' to aim the first golf shot towards target green T_2. The golfer then proceeds to adjacently positioned putting green G_9 to finish the putting for this hole and complete play.

Thus, it will be recognized that there has been described an improved golf course which: utilizes considerably less area than a conventional golf course having the corresponding number of holes; eliminates most of the walking and corresponding fatigue accompanying playing on a conventional course and also eliminates the possibility of player injury due to the non-walking fairways. The advantages of this golf course to persons having physical disabilities preventing them from the exercise involved in walking up and down the fairways of conventional golf courses will be readily apparent. Further advantages of conservations of time and money are involved in avoiding walking such distances and looking for "lost" golf balls.

Further advantages of this invention are not only that the player can utilize each of the golf clubs that he would utilize on a conventional nine or eighteen hole golf course, but also that the player will be required to hit each of the shots under the same surface and similar visual conditions as is required on a regular or conventional golf course. In the playing of the golf course of this invention, it is contemplated that the player will not use his own golf balls except for close approach shots to putting greens, e.g., as in FIG. 4, and, of course, putting on the putting greens G_1 through G_9, as shown in FIGS. 1, 3 and 4. It is contemplated that range balls will be used for tee shots, fairway shots and long approach shots to target greens.

The time required and fatigue associated with playing a round of golf can be substantially minimized in accordance with this invention. By allocation of a given number of range golf balls, with neither the opportunity nor the necessity to make up for badly handled shots, the total time required for play will be reduced substantially, allowing more players to play the course within given periods of time.

The utilization of the chutes 2, 2' and 2'' combined with the non-walking fairways also enhances the safety of the golf game played on the course of this invention. These chutes will virtually eliminate injuries due to tee or fairway shots being severely hooked, sliced, shanked or scuffed inasmuch as the player proceeds from the chutes to the putting greens without walking on the fairway. At the same time, the hitting area chutes 2, 2' and 2'' provide a desired "blinder effect" making it possible to have the illusion of a variety of fairway challenges in a minimum of fairway area.

The golf course of this invention while being characterized in the manner stated above, is capable of much variation. Thus, the course can be arranged to be entirely composed of par three holes, par four holes or par five holes, or a mixture of par threes and par fours; or, as is more customary, a mixture of par threes, par fours and par fives. Most standard par seventy-two, eighteen hole golf courses are arranged to have four par five holes, four par three holes and ten par four holes which play in varying degrees of length. This too can be achieved in eighteen hole golf courses in accordance with this invention and the corresponding objectives of nine hole conventional courses can be achieved in nine hole golf courses according to this invention. In accordance with this invention, the golf course can be comprised of any number of holes, usually from two to thirty-six, the main determining factors being the area available and the number of holes desired.

The hitting area chutes 2, 2' and 2'' can be constructed of any material providing adequate blinder effect whereby the player is presented with only a limited visual presentation of a portion of the golf course on each shot. Accordingly, a wide variety of materials can be utilized such as wood, metal, synthetic composites such as plastic-fiber glass composites and molded members and, even shrubbery.

Directional information and explanatory matter relating to how each of the holes H_1 through H_9 are to be played, e.g., which chute is to be entered for the tee shot to which fairway target area and which target green is to be utilized in conjunction with the appropriate green approach chute, can be placed on pedestals (not shown) located in the vicinity of holes H_1 through H_9, respectively; for example, in the respective hole areas of the walkway W.

The golf course of this invention can be lighted for evening play and the chute and putting green areas can be covered for playing in rain and other inclement weather. Similarly, these areas can be heated for winter play.

Artificial grass-like surfaces such as plastic grass for fairway areas, 4, 5, L, L', L'', M, M', M''; the tee and hitting areas in chutes 2, 2' and 2'' and the putting greens and/or target greens can be of plastic or other synthetic composition, e.g., "ASTRO-TURF" can be employed for any one or more of the aforementioned grassy areas. Alternatively, natural grasses or sod can be used.

The positioning, color, height and/or density of natural or artificial shrubberies can serve to mark or define the sub-target areas L and M in the fairway.

It is also within the purview of this invention to locate the putting greens all in the same general area and this area can be adjacent to or remote from the green approch chutes 2'' to accommodate division of the golf game into its respective long game and short game components.

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of this invention one or more of the putting greens can be of a generally rectangular shape to conserve area and grass requirements for putting greens and to facilitate what can be referred to as "in-line" putting, viz., putting within the same general approach line, such as illustrated in FIG. 3. It will be noted that putting positions, P_1 through P_4, offer the same general line to the flag although each putt constitutes a different angular presentation.

While a clockwise pattern of player flow has been illustrated in the nine hole course of FIG. 1, any desired player flow pattern, e.g., counter-clockwise, can be employed.

What is claimed is:

1. A compact golf course, comprising:

a common fairway for a plurality of distinct golf hole areas;

a plurality of non-walking fairway target areas formed in said common fairway and each having visually differentiated distance target portions;

a plurality of target greens spaced from one another and formed in said common fairway;

a plurality of fairway hitting chutes, one located at each of selected golf hole areas and aligned with a corresponding fairway target area;

a plurality of green approach hitting chutes, one located at each of said golf hole areas and aligned with a corresponding target green;

a divider means defining each of said hitting chute to restrict a player's view of said common fairway area substantially to the target area or target green with which the hitting chute is aligned, said golf hole areas and their corresponding hitting chutes being spaced along said common fairway and angled with respect thereto to present to a player's view different angular orientations of said fairway target areas and said target greens, said hitting chutes being further spaced and angled along said common fairway so that at least two fair-way hitting chutes corresponding to different golf hole areas are aligned with a common fairway target areas but from substantially different angular orientations, and so that at least two green approach hitting chutes corresponding to different golf hole areas are aligned with a common target green but from a substantially different angular orientation; and

a plurality of putting greens, one located at each of said golf hole areas, each putting green being remote from the target green to which its hole area corresponds, whereby a player may play a game of golf by hitting golf balls from said fairway hitting chute, for those hole areas having a fairway hitting chute, and from said green approach hitting chute, and thereafter putting on said putting green, in sequence for each golf hole area in turn.

2. The compact golf course of claim 1, wherein at least one of said hitting chutes is a multiple option chute aligned with at least two different, spaced target areas located at different distances from said multiple option chute in said common fairway.

3. The compact golf course of claim 1, wherein at least one of said golf hole areas includes two fairway hitting chutes, each aligned with a different fairway target area.

4. The compact golf course of claim 1, further including a close approach shot area adjacent at least one of said putting greens, whereby a player may play chip or sand shots to said at least one putting green.

5. The compact golf course of claim 1, wherein said putting greens include a plurality of predesignated putting positions.

6. The compact golf course of claim 1, further including a safety moat between said fairway area and said plurality of golf hole areas, whereby said non-walking fairway target areas and said target greens are separated from said hitting chutes and putting greens, and wherein said divider means defining said hitting chutes are of sufficient height and length to deflect balls away from adjacent hitting chutes, whereby the safety of the players is enhanced.

7. The compact golf course of claim 1, wherein said hitting chutes are located intermediate said fairway area and said putting greens and wherein at least one of said chutes contains a grassy hitting area, a portion of which has grass of one length and a portion of which has grass of greater length.

8. The compact golf course of claim 1, wherein each said non-walking fairway target area has a direction target marker.

* * * * *