



Course Corrections and the Mile-high View

Alex Findlay designed RCC’s 17th hole as a 420-yard par 4. Today, the hole is a 510-yard par 5. The easy assumption is that the current red and gold tee was Findlay’s tee. This is incorrect because the hole plays only 350 yards from there.

The architect described the 420-yard hole thusly: “A fine two shotter, a delightful view is afforded one standing on the tee; the drive is down hill; a long straight brassy will reach home, which is open and wide, inviting a wood shot to the pin; the green is properly bunkered and calls for accurate golf. Par 4.”

Finding 17. Brian Aherns, course superintendent, knows the location of the Findlay’s 17th tee. It is easy to find. Walk down the hill toward the present white and blue tee. Stop when you get even with the front of the 16th green. About 20 feet from the cart path, you can see an object that looks like a rock but is not. Brian says this covers the hook-up for the old watering system, a gravity-fed technology that nurtured the tees and greens. The water tank was on the ridge beyond the 14th fairway. Water was pumped to the tank from a spring near the old clubhouse, which was in the building still standing at the club entrance.

Further evidence as to the tee’s location is provided in the program book for the 1949 Reading Open (see page 2). The drawing shows the 17th tee opposite the 16th green. It also credits number 17 as a 400 yard hole, in contrast to Findlay’s 420 yards. There is no explanation for the discrepancy.

When was the current tee built? A scorecard from the **Henry Clay Poe** years (1940 to 1965) shows a 420-yard par 4 from the blue tee. A card from the **Bob DeMarco** years (1974 to 1986) shows a 480-yard hole from the blue tee. The card also shows 17 playing 410 yards form the white, which means the Findlay tee was still in use. The scorecards are not dated.

Jimmy knows. This is where **Jimmy Hafer** comes in. Jimmy has been working on the golf course since, well, forever. You have most likely seen him mowing greens. He recalls that the back tee was added by **Henry Poe**, probably after 1958. Henry’s tee was small. Today’s larger tee was built in the Filippini years, which began in 1979. Thank you, Jimmy.

Let us also consider hole number 4. In *The Golf Chronicles* number 13, July 17, 2015, an aerial photo from 1924 suggests that the hole was a par 4 in those days. Let’s examine Alex Findlay’s description of the 4th hole:

“No. 4, 265 yards – The drive may effect the weak-hearted mentally, inasmuch as the shot must be placed between large trees, 50 feet apart and over a nice wide babbling brook; both hazards being at least 300 feet from the tee. A mashy pitch should be lobbed onto the green, where a 4 will be recorded. This is the easiest par on the links, providing the tee shot is hit. Birds will be made and also eagles. The drive reaches a flat and the pitch to a nicely trapped green by the Old Mill Dam site.”

Ready to play from the original 17th tee.

POST YOUR SCORES FOR HANDICAP									
Hole No.	Blue Markers	Men's Par	White Markers	White Markers	White Markers	White Markers	White Markers	Ladies' Par	Red Markers
1	365	4		350	5			4	330
2	375	4		360	9			4	275
3	340	4		324	11			4	316
4	180	3		170	17			3	160
5	520	5		500	1			5	455
6	168	3		155	15			3	145
7	435	4		410	3			4	365
8	194	3		175	13			3	140
9	315	4		305	7			4	266
OUT	2892	34		2749				34	2452
10	275	4		265	18			4	253
11	430	4		420	8			5	420
12	451	4		441	4			5	411
13	390	4		360	10			4	350
14	520	5		510	2			5	500
15	212	3		192	12			3	156
16	330	4		310	14			4	290
17	420	4		410	6			4	375
18	340	4		330	16			4	290
TOTAL	3368	36		3222				38	3045
NET	6260	70		5971				72	5497
HDCP.									
DATE									
SCORER									
ATTESTED									

A scorecard from the **Henry Poe** era shows the 17th hole as a 420-yard par 4. The 10th hole was a par 4, as designed by Alex Findlay. It became a par 3 in about 1980. The card also shows the 12th hole at 450 yards; it was shortened to 360 yards when Gibraltar road was rerouted in 1986. Scorecard is courtesy of Richard Findlay.



The Golf Chronicles

The story of golf at Reading Country Club and in Berks County

Byron Nelson
RCC Pro
1937-39



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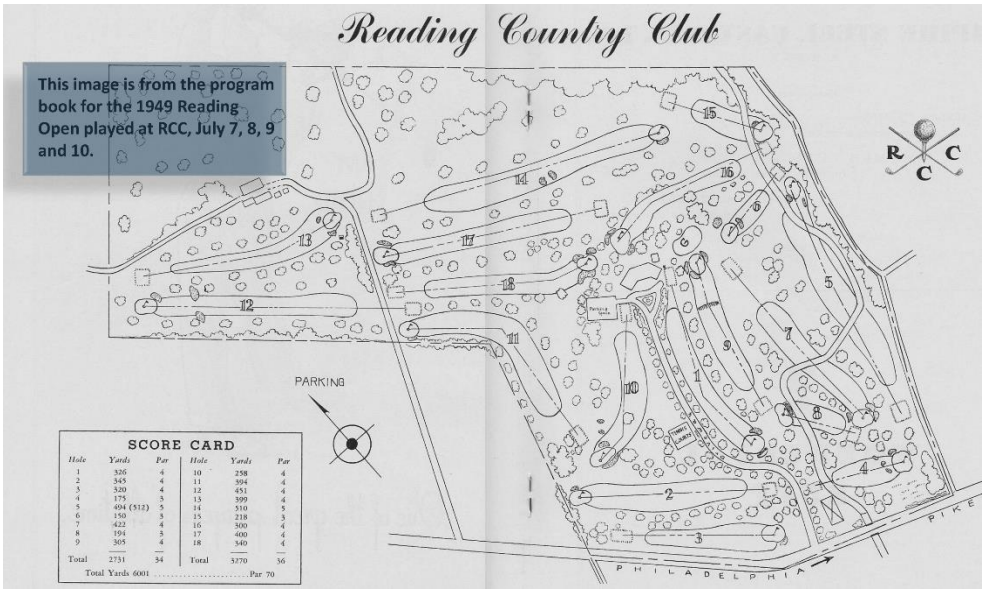
So, where was Findlay’s tee?

The hole now plays as a par 3, 200 yards from the blue tee and 180 yards from the white (175 yards during the ’49 Reading Open). The scorecards mentioned above each show a 180/170-yard fourth hole.

The photo below shows a flat area to the left of the 3rd green that looks like a tee. My 21st century GPS tells me—yes, she talks—that the center of the green is but 200 yards. Further, the line to the green is blocked by several large trees evident on the 1931 aerial photo. What’s more, this line of play would have required a shot over the edge of the parking lot, which was behind the 3rd green.

Common courtesy. Another possibility is the area behind the 1st green. This location would have required golfers walking from the 1st green to the 2nd tee to cross in front of the 4th tee but this would have posed a problem no more severe than common courtesy. Aerial photos from 1924 and 1931 show the current tee but there is no evidence of a tee to support the short par 4 as Findlay described.

So, again, where was Findlay’s par 4 tee? The most likely answer is that it was never built.



The 17th tee is shown opposite the 16th green, the 10th hole is a par 4 and the 12th tee is on the west side of Gibraltar Road.



A scorecard from the **Bob DiMarco** era shows 17 as a 490-yard par 5 (blue tee) and a 410-yard par 4 (white tee). The card is courtesy of Richard Findlay.



The level ground to the left of the 3rd green has the appearance of an abandoned tee. It is not. The line to the green would have been blocked by trees, as it is today, by cars in the parking lot and by the addition to the clubhouse, as it would have been between 1923 and 1931 when the new clubhouse was completed. Plus, the 4th green is but 200 yards from here, not the 265 yards described by Alex Findlay.



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The top photo shows one of the Dallin Company's aircraft, a Fairchild, in front of the hangar at Philadelphia Municipal Airport.

In the center photo, **Victor Dallin**, on the left, poses with the company's photographers and pilots, who are displaying their cameras.

The bottom image shows the Dallin company logo.

Up in the air. The aerial photographs shown in this and other issues of *The Golf Chronicles* were taken by **Victor Dallin** (1897-1991) of Dallin Aerial Survey Company. The collection is housed in the Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Del. The Hagley Museum is located on the banks of the Brandywine Creek on the site of the gunpowder works founded by E. I. du Pont in 1802.

Dallin was born in England in 1897. He and his family moved to Canada when he was eight years old. Dallin enlisted into the Canadian military at age 18 and eventually joined the Royal Air Corps where he received pilot's training.

In 1924, Dallin formed the Dallin Aerial Survey Company, operating out of the Philadelphia Municipal Airport, now Philadelphia International Airport. The company took thousands of aerial photographs throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, most in the Philadelphia area.

The company shut down in 1939 soon after three of Dallin's staff joined the armed forces. Dallin went back into the service, commanding air bases in Jamaica, the West Indies, Brazil and Spanish Guiana during World War II. He went on to command the Air Force Navigational School in San Marcos, Texas. In 1945 he was named Chief for the Bureau of Aeronautics by the City of Philadelphia. Dallin worked for the National Association of Manufacturers and then as technician for an optical firm until his retirement in 1970. He died in 1991, age 92, at his home in North Carolina.

Dallin's photos are critical to our understanding of what has changed, and what has not, at RCC over the years. Let's enjoy some of Dallin's work.



The 11th hole from a Dallin photo taken July 5, 1932. Note the trees and the two sand traps that protect Alex Findlay's dogleg design. The traps and the two trees in the fairway are gone. The original 10th hole can be seen at the bottom of the photo. The tee, which is to the right, remains in place. The hole was changed to a par 3 in the early 1980s.



The buildings that housed the Reading Country Club Riding Stables are in the trees on the right of the photo. A bridal path to the riding ring on the left can be seen passing in front of the 13th tee and behind the 12th green.

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An aerial view of Reading Country Club taken February 27, 1931.

The photo to the right, taken July 5, 1932, shows the fourth hole appearing much as it does today. Note the sand trap in front of the first green at the top of the photo. The trap does not appear in the above photo from 1931. The trap is no longer there.

