

A GREAT GOLF HOLE

by **ROB COLLINS**

BLACK CREEK CLUB, in the verdant highlands surrounding Chattanooga, Tenn., is a Brian Silva creation that borrows heavily from the design style of Seth Raynor, with a dose of C.B. Macdonald thrown in for good measure. It's a thrilling course with decisions to be made over every shot. It also has several of the boldest "template holes" you will find anywhere. These are renditions of classic holes that Macdonald and Raynor used in all of their designs. It's understandable that the 15th, a short Cape hole, would be overshadowed by the blustery Alps and the all-world Biarritz, but players in the know understand that this dramatic little hole frequently manages to have an outsized impact on matches, tournaments and casual rounds.

Measuring 347 yards from the tips, but usually playing around 300 yards from the main tees, the 15th offers a thrilling mix of temptation and danger at the perfect point in the round. Playing slightly downhill, the golfer immediately feels enticed to take the bold route to the hole, challenging a scruffy lateral hazard that runs the length of the left side. There is ample fairway to the right, but the brilliantly angled green – which is bunkered on the right side and only measures 18 paces wide – ensures that bailing away from the hazard ratchets up the difficulty of the second shot exponentially. Approaching from the right requires an extremely delicate shot across the long axis of the green, from an uneven lie, that must carry the bunker while avoiding the lateral hazard long and left.

For a lover of golf architecture, it's a lot of fun to see a nuanced short par 4 late in the round. This is a hole that can set the stage for wild swings of fortune – where any score from eagle to the dreaded "other" is entirely possible.

photos by **RUSSELL KIRK** • illustration by **GEOFF LEIGHLY**



THE 15th AT Black Creek Club

CHATTANOOGA, TENN.

PAR: 4

YARDAGE: 347 - 268

ARCHITECT: Brian Silva

THE WIDE FAIRWAY allows golfers to play away from trouble, but an approach from the right side is a very delicate shot.

THE TEE SHOT rewards golfers who play near the wetlands on the left with a better angle for their approach.

THE GREEN is defended by wetlands and a bunker. A depression in the front-left portion of the green creates a variety of challenging hole locations.

← Pull out gatefold

