

Ken Venturi

Rancho Mirage, CA.

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Dear Friends of San Francisco Golf,

As a native San Franciscan, I was both thrilled and very proud this week as the greatest golfers from America and around the World met at Harding Park to contest the President's Cup. As I watched the competition unfold, I reflected back through my own seven decades playing golf in the great golfing town of San Francisco.

With my thoughts returning to my youth in San Francisco, however, I have been alarmed by news that the city's other wonderful 18-hole municipal courses, Sharp Park and Lincoln Park, are in jeopardy. The news of Sharp Park is particularly distressing. To me it is unthinkable that San Francisco would seriously contemplate the destruction of that Alister MacKenzie masterwork.

Sharp Park is a great course of the old school: a seaside course, designed by one of history's greatest architects, where the wind and weather dictate the play of the game. Dr. MacKenzie's beautiful design does not punish with narrow fairways and heavy rough, but rather charms and inspires and exhilarates with beauty. Dr. MacKenzie does not force golfers to hit any particular shot, but instead gives them options to challenge their imaginations. Sharp is an unpretentious place, where golfers enjoy a scenic walk in the salt air, then a sandwich and a beer in an old-fashioned pub. In these ways, Sharp connects golfers to the Scottish public course roots of the game. This is Dr. MacKenzie's great gift to the American public golfer.

Without the public courses, golf becomes inaccessible. The game shrivels and dies. The glorious restoration of Harding must not be at the expense of Sharp or Lincoln. So I write this letter to urge my friends and fellow-San Francisco Bay Area golfers to preserve Dr. MacKenzie's legacy, and defend San Francisco's golf heritage and public courses. Defend them with your time, your money, and your passion. Do not let anybody destroy Sharp or Lincoln.

See you around the links.



Ken Venturi

Honorary Chairman

San Francisco Public Golf Alliance