After depositing the token, which is obtained in the pro shop, the golfer has 45 seconds to hit his shot. If he makes a hole in one, he informs the starter at the end of his round. The Tee One Up Command Center, in California, which is linked via satellite to the course, is notified and reviews the tape to confirm the ace. If everything checks out, the golfer receives a video tape of his shot and an award check is issued within seven days.

"It's working very well," said Brandt Howard, assistant pro at Stoney Point Golf Club in Greenwood, S.C., one of the first courses to install the system. "No one has won, yet. A woman told us she had a hole-in-one, but forgot to put her token in. I think it's helped increase play."

Where does the prize money come from? Courses charge players a minimum of $1 per round for the Tee One Up system. The extra money is forwarded to the Greenville, S.C.-based firm, which uses it to pay the prize money and promote the program.

Ten percent of all Tee One Up revenues are put back into local and national advertising. One of the most effective promotions is providing the videotape of a winning golfer's shot to the local television stations, Elliman said.

The fee can be noted as a surcharge. But typically, courses simply add it into their regular greens or cart fee early in the season. The $1 per round charge entitles a golfer to a $2,500 prize for an ace. The course can up the prize money in $2,500 increments for every extra $1 paid for Tee One Up, e.g. $2 per round for a $5,000 prize, $3 for $7,500. A course could offer a $25,000 prize during a tournament by sending us $10 for every round played during that event," Elliman said.

Starting in 1995, all units will be tied together at the Command Center. By reviewing computer-generated information, the company can tell exactly when a hole-in-one is scored. That will allow Tee One Up to add another prize, an accumulator, as Elliman called it. Basically, Tee One Up will set aside an as-yet-undetermined amount for every round played. When a golfer scores an ace, in addition to the $2,500 prize, he will receive whatever has collected in the accumulator pot since the last ace was scored.

"Depending on when the last one occurred, the extra money could be anywhere from 50 cents to $50,000," said Elliman, who also anticipates some sort of year-end, closest-to-the-pin prize. "We want winners. We encourage the course to install the system on its easiest par-3. At Stoney Point they have it on a hole that plays 95 yards from the ladies tee and 120 from the men's tee."

In addition to increasing rounds, Elliman said, the Tee One Up system tracks all rounds played, offering owners an additional control measure to verify that all greens fees are being collected and deposited in the cash register. Tee One Up can be reached at 803-239-0141.