As a kid I grew up playing a run-down municipal track, and I quickly absorbed the concept of playing "ready" golf. When we first started, my friends and I stood, but at least we played fast. Our choice was simple—you either kept pace or you ducked as tee shots from the group behind you sailed over your head. We learned etiquette by force.

With average rounds regularly exceeding five hours at many courses across the country, speed of play is cited as one of the top reasons people stop playing golf. In this issue, two articles discuss on-course solutions to the speed of play problem. (See page 20)

Attacking speed of play issues after the course is open is well and good, however, the industry should be paying more attention to solving the problem from the very beginning. The muni track I played was easy to cruise through because the greens (in some and good, however, the industry should be paying more attention to building a course that will allow for a faster round of golf. In many new courses. While these conditions may be unavoidable, cases dangerously so) were close to the next tee and the layout was smartly routed.

Admittedly, increased environmental regulations and more difficult sites dictate the increased distance between greens and tees at many new courses. While these conditions may be unavoidable, architect Dr. Michael Hurdzan has developed several simple design elements that developers and architects should consider when building a course that will allow for a faster round of golf.

- **LET 'EM HIT** — Try to work in at least five sets of tees that are roughly 30 to 40 yards apart. "If they are smart enough to choose the correct set of tees, then they can play the hole," said Hurdzan.
- **WIDE LANDING AREAS** — Fairways 50 to 60 yards wide would be ideal. "No one enjoys looking for a ball in the rough," he said. "At St. Andrews there is almost no rough, you can find a ball that is hit 100 yards off line." Hurdzan also suggested planting fairways and roughs with the same grass to allow courses to create their own fairway edge and make it easier to grow rough up for tournaments.
- **BE KIND TO THE SLICE** — "People tend to hit the ball right and short of the intended target," Hurdzan continued. "So we tend to avoid juncking up the right side of a green or put too many hazards on the right side of holes."
- **BUMPER AND BUNKER GREENS** — Hurdzan also advocates accessible greens that allow golfers to hop, skip and roll balls on the surface. The green should have a mixture of hard and easy pin placements and the speed of the green should match the slope of the green. Otherwise, he said, "you will get a lot of three and four putts."

- **DON'T SKIMP ON THE SAND** — The choice of bunker sand is crucial he said, because if a course uses sand that allows the ball to settle or stick in the face of a bunker, "play will slow down markedly."
- **MATCH THE PENALTY TO THE CRIME** — "Make bunkers fit the penalty," he said. "Sometimes we put bunkers in that are pretty fierce, but are meant more as intimidation. We try to balance the course so it looks hard and plays easy."

While Hurdzan admitted these criteria are not possible or appropriate on every hole on every course, he said these simple elements go a long way in improving the speed of play.

Superintendents also play a role in addressing speed of play problems, said Hurdzan. "With multiple tees and hole locations, superintendents need to develop a program so that on certain days of the week holes should be cut so that plays more quickly and the tees should be in a position that makes the hole play easier," he said. "I can't count how many times I have played a course and seen the tees

Continued on next page

**GCN WANTS YOUR FEEDBACK**

**WHAT IS YOUR NEW COURSE DOING TO ACCOUNT FOR SPEED OF PLAY ISSUES?**

**WHAT STEPS IS YOUR COURSE TAKING TO IMPROVE SPEED OF PLAY?**

**DO YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL DESIGN OR COURSE MAINTENANCE SUGGESTIONS THAT WOULD IMPROVE SPEED OF PLAY?**

SEND YOUR COMMENTS, IDEAS, OR SUGGESTIONS TO:

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