



Tee Marker Rotation—A Balancing Act



Spreading tee markers over a wide area helps promote healthy turf.

What does tee marker rotation have to do with your golf game? This seemingly easy task can have a significant impact on your round.

Golf course superintendents rotate tee markers on a regular basis to help turf on teeing grounds recover from traffic and give divots time to heal. Whether they move forward, backward, right or left, moving tee markers not only impacts turf health, it has a direct impact on your round of golf.

When the maintenance staff moves the tee markers on each hole, they must think about how the tee marker locations on all 18 holes affect the course yardage for each set of tees. Increasing or decreasing the total yardage from a set of tees by more than 22 yards for men and 18 yards for women will alter the USGA Course Rating™ by one-tenth of a stroke or more. The course rating reflects the yardage listed on the scorecard and is an integral part of calculating your handicap. So, if the tees are set up significantly shorter or longer than the USGA-rated yardage, there may be an effect on your Handicap Index®.

For instance, if you play 18 holes of golf every Tuesday and the tees on every hole are moved forward 10 yards from where they were rated, the overall course yardage for that set of tees will be 180 yards short of the rated length. If you do not adjust the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating®, this situation might lower your Handicap Index without any change to your skill. To put it another way, imagine playing every round from the forward tees and submitting scores as though you had played from the back tees. Your handicap might become lower, but it would not accurately represent your skill level.

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In summary, golf course superintendents ensure that tee markers are moved to maintain healthy turf, but they are also careful to avoid significantly altering overall course yardage.

For more information on how course setup impacts your game, watch the USGA video, "[The Impact of Maintenance on Course Rating](#)," and check out the USGA Green Section Collection, "[Course Setup](#)."

