



Hitting A Home Run With Forward Tees

By Patrick O'Brien, agronomist, Southeast Region

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Forward tees are becoming an attractive feature of many golf courses, increasing pace of play while also improving golfer enjoyment. Implementing forward tees does not have to be an expensive or daunting task. The staff at Moss Creek Plantation in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, created a set of forward tees – which they named advantage tees – to make the game more enjoyable for golfers that would benefit from playing a shorter golf course.

Locating the advantage tees was a collaborative effort between the green committee, superintendent, golf professional and local golf course architect Clyde Johnston. The advantage tees are located in the fairways near cart paths to provide easy golfer access.



The new forward tees at Moss Creek Plantation are located in close proximity to cart paths to provide easy access for the golfers.

Building Forward Tees

The advantage tees were built by first removing sod and adding screened topsoil to create a level teeing surface. The tees initially were shaped using a mechanical bunker rake then finished by hand raking before being sodded with Celebration® bermudagrass. The project cost averaged about \$900 per tee. No advantage tees were built on par-3 holes because there already was enough available space for forward tees.

The advantage tees are slightly elevated above fairway surfaces and adapted to the surrounding terrain to allow for easy mowing with fairway mowers. Due to their location in the beginning of the fairways, advantage tees are not in the normal line of play. The average advantage tee size is 1,000 to 2,000 square feet and each advantage tee allows for spacing tee markers five to six paces apart. The advantage tees are mowed as part of routine fairway mowing operations, usually two to three times per week during the growing season. Aside from moving tee markers during mowing and occasionally filling divots, the advantage tees receive the same management as the fairways. There are no extra operational maintenance costs associated with the new forward tees.

Rating the Forward Tees

The new advantage tees have been rated by the South Carolina State Golf Association and the course rating and slope are on the scorecard. The rating and slope are 62.1/106 for the South Course and 61.2/107 for the North Course. Yardage plaques provided by the South Carolina State Golf Association are installed in each teeing ground to designate the official measurement to the center of the putting green. The total length of the North Course from the advantage tees is 4,022 yards and the total length of the South Course from the advantage tees is 4,238 yards. From the advantage tees par-4 yardages range from 188 yards to 272 yards, par-5 yardages are between 307 and 376 yards, and the par-3 holes range between 81 and 116 yards. The new forward tees haven't made the golf course easier, only more fun to play for the targeted players. Forward tees that look like the other tees, don't add to annual operational costs, improve pace of play and make golf more enjoyable are good for the game.

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