

Green Section Record

REGIONAL UPDATE

October 5, 2018



Properly positioned forward tees offer golfers the ability to play from tees based on their swing speed; a good way to improve pace-of-play and golfer enjoyment.

SWING SPEED SHUFFLE

BY LARRY GILHULY | AGRONOMIST, WEST REGION

The Tee It Forward initiative is one of many ways to encourage improved pace of play and golfer enjoyment. Golfers can use [swing speed data](#) collected by the PGA and the USGA to estimate which set of tee markers to play based on their game. Unfortunately, many insist that they must play golf from a certain color of tees or from tees that play a minimum distance. Some simply resist the notion of [moving forward](#). Woodburn (Ore.) Estates & Golf took a creative approach to addressing these challenges.

Woodburn Estates & Golf is in the upper end of Oregon's Willamette Valley. A retirement community, their golf course plays 5,398 yards from the back tees. The course is a perfect distance for many male players, but the forward tees were far too long for the players with a swing speed of 60 MPH or slower. Often, golfers playing the forward tees were left with long fairway-wood shots into greens. To provide a proportional challenge for golfers with slower swing speeds, Woodburn decided to add a complete set of forward tees that play 4,064 yards. The new tees were well received by female golfers with slow swing speeds, but many golfers still resisted the idea of moving forward. With a semi-stalemate to deal with,

Head Golf Professional Jason Hoth implemented a simple, unique idea – the Swing Speed Shuffle.

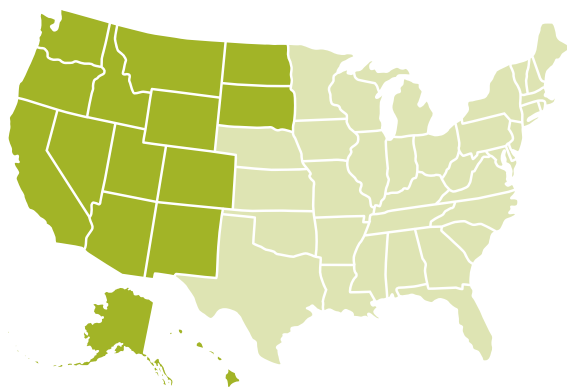
Hoth's initial concept was to hold a tournament played from the new set of tees. The response was less than enthusiastic. However, when Hoth came up with more than \$500 for prizes, it provided the impetus for a 50-player field – 30 males and 20 females. The only requirement to enter the tournament was to submit to a swing speed analysis. Golfers were then assigned to play the tournament from certain tee markers based on their swing speed and not their gender. Nearly 1/3 of the male field was assigned to play the new forward tees. Most of the female golfers also were assigned to play the new forward tees. Even shorter tees were placed in the fairways of certain holes for some golfers to use.

The tournament's goal was to provide golfers with a chance to play from the set of tee markers best-suited to their game based on swing speed rather than gender. Hoth also hopes that more golfers will use the new forward tees as their swing speeds slow. Thus far, the results have been positive. Many of golfers truly enjoy the experience of putts for par and birdie that simply did not exist when they played from tee markers that were too long. Ultimately, pace of play and golfer enjoyment are key to moving this great game forward. The Swing Speed Shuffle touches both of these focal points.



For information
on the USGA's Course
Consulting Service
Contact the Green
Section Staff.

[Learn More](#)



WEST REGION AGRONOMISTS:

Patrick Gross, Regional Director, pgross@usga.org

Larry Gilhuly, Agronomist, lgilhuly@usga.org

Brian Whitlark, Agronomist, bwhitlark@usga.org

[Information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service](#)

[Contact the Green Section Staff](#)