

## An Architect's Opinion Multiple Tees for Everyone

by Bob Lohmann

A well-designed golf hole is playable by all classes of golfers, is easily maintained, and is pleasantly attractive to the eye. In our highly geometric and mechanical society, the golf course should provide a desirable diversity of natural landscape. We require diversity in the landscape. If we build a home in the forest, we will clear the backyard; if we build a home in a farmland subdivision, we will surround it with trees and shrubs. When people go to a golf course, it should be scenic and orderly, as well as diverse. The order present in a golf course is the progression from tee to green to succeeding tee. The diversity of the golf course is the different sizes, shapes, and locations of the design elements. This combination of order and natural diversity, if designed and built properly, is what makes a pleasingly scenic golf course.



As in everything, you have to start someplace, and as we all know, a golf hole starts with a tee. In earlier years, the tees were known as "starting boxes." Many people today still refer to them as "tee boxes." As I travel to many courses, especially older models, I see many of the "tee boxes." They are small, square or rectangular, and lack the natural beauty that should be present on a golf course. Not only are they unattractive, but they are hard to maintain as well. Because only one small fee is used, the superintendent is limited to where he can place the tee markers. He never has the opportunity to close off or rest part of the tee to allow the grass to grow properly.

The tees on the older courses have become surrounded by older trees that are large, full shade giving, and air blocking. No one enjoys removing trees, especially an older specimen. But the lack of air circulation and sunlight make it extremely difficult to grow grass on a small tee that is watered at night and walked on and cut up all day.

The tees begin to show wear about midway through the season, and if they are too small, the continued beating creates an eyesore that never has a chance to recover until fall when the golfing season is over. At this time, if the tee is only resurfaced and not enlarged, the problem reoccurs and not enlarged, the problem reoccurs the following season. If a country club would spend the time and money to enlarge the tees properly, or better yet to design and build additional tees, the wear problem would be alleviated. If properly planned and executed, the design of the golf hole could be improved at the same time. With the addition of multiple tees, the golf hole can vary in length and also in the line of the attack. With the new golf equipment and the better caliber of golf being played, shorter golf courses must change from being a challenge of length to being a challenge of shot making.

The good golf course is challenging and fair for all golfers and not always penal to the higher handicapper. The new tees should be placed relative to the location of the fairway hazards and landing areas. The tee locations are based upon the length

of the golfers' tee shot. A suggested range would be as follows:

back tee	225 to 275 yards
middle tee	175 to 225 yards
front tee	125 to 175 yards

Usually the tees would be placed so the fairway hazards come into play for tee shots landing in the latter part of each tee range. It is impractical and impossible to set up each hole the same for each golfer from each tee. But with the use of multiple tees, the shorter hitters are provided a fair and reasonable length golf course.

Each tee should be built large enough to allow for two and possibly three sets of tee markers to be placed on it. Depending on the wind direction and velocity, the pin placement on the green and the caliber of golfer on the tee, the markers can be set up to create a difficult or easy golf hole.

Many clubs contend that because of the limited amount of play on their courses, the tees do not need to be very large. But in the last ten years, even though the U.S. population has grown by only 10.5 percent, the number of frequent golfers has risen to 30 percent. Combining the probability of an increased amount of golfers and the possibility of creating a variety of golf shots from a single hole, multiple tees are a much needed improvement for all courses.

New larger multiple tees, if constructed properly, will fit naturally into the site and alleviate the eyesore of a small, square, continuously worn-out tee. Just as the entrance road gives a first impression when arriving at the country club, the tees should set the stage for each golf hole.

The design of tees, especially size and location, is as important as the construction techniques. Proper time allotted for both will reward you with tees that are unique and natural, that blend pleasantly into the golf course, and that improve the playability of the golf hole.



The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) is planning two war memorials February 11, 1985 during GCSAA's 56th Annual International Golf Course Conference and Show in Washington, D.C.

One of the ceremonies — planned with the assistance of U.S. Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) — will be at the Vietnam Memorial. The other will be at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in conjunction with the Spouse Program.

Wreaths will be laid at both shrines in honor of those who made the supreme sacrifice for their country. (Further details on the two ceremonies will be furnished later).

Veterans of all nations who served during the Vietnam War, the Korean Conflict, World War II and World War I, as well as others who are interested, are invited to participate in the ceremonies. Veterans of these wars are especially needed to assist with the wreath laying.

Anyone, especially veterans, interested in assisting with the ceremonies are asked to contact GCSAA Associate Executive Director James G. Prusa, CGCS, by calling toll free 1-800-GSA-SUPT.