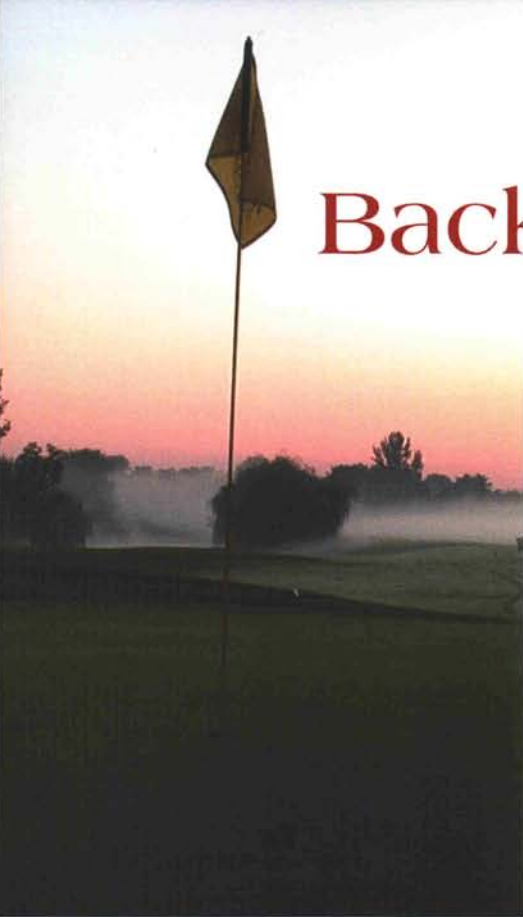


Back-Middle-Front . . . Where Is Your Hole Today?



A golf course superintendent has at his or her disposal many ways through which to provide hole locations on a daily basis. Many different systems have been invented and employed to allow the golfer to know the general location of the hole on a putting green on a specific day. As golf course superintendents, to what lengths should we go to give the golfer this information?

Pin Sheets

One system, and the most precise, allows the golfer to know the exact location of the hole on each putting green. This is the pin sheet. The pin sheet is a document that portrays each individual green and the number of paces front to back and left to right or right to left, if you prefer, to the hole placement for that day. (See image 1.) Drawbacks to this system include taking the time to pace off the locations, writing them down, transcribing to a legible format and photocopying for all to use. It also helps to have the same person pace off the locations from day to day as all "paces" are not equal. Preparing a pin sheet for daily play may not be an option at many courses, however a superintendent should not hesitate to offer pin sheets for special-play days. The pin sheet can be a great public relations tool for you and your staff. Put your name on it and take credit for the conditions you provide. Pin sheets, from the standpoint of the golfer, are more desirable than any other form of hole-location scheme.

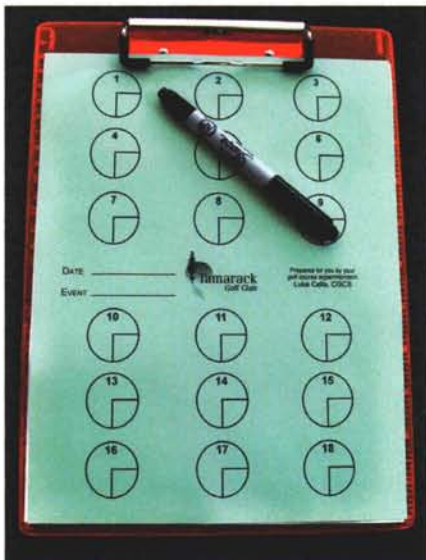


Image 1: The pin sheet.

Scheduling Techniques

Fixed schedules are another way to represent hole locations for a day. The schedule system is not as precise as the pin sheet, but does offer the next level of relaying pertinent information. The hole schedule rotates with each day. Each day is given a symbol to represent it; for my example, I'll use the numbers 1 through 6. Each number represents a set schedule of hole locations for each day on each specific golf hole. (See figure 1.) The green is usually divided into six areas or divisions: left front (LF), right front (RF), left middle (LM), right middle (RM), left back (LB), right back (RB). As each day changes, so does the schedule. One drawback to this method of hole loca-

(continued on page 10)

tion information is that each player has to know the correct day and the correct schedule for that day. It works best when the majority of players use golf carts and the schedules can be attached to each cart and rotated by attentive staff members. Another drawback to this method is setting up the hole-rotation method. It would seem to be fairly easy, but most golf courses have greens where there are fewer than six hole divisions due to slopes or other anomalies.

DAY 1		DAY 2	
HOLE	LOCATION	HOLE	LOCATION
1	LF	1	RF
2	RB	2	LB
3	LM	3	RB
4	RM	4	LM
5	LB	5	RM
6	RF	6	LB
7	LF	7	RF
8	RB	8	LF
9	LM	9	RB
10	RM	10	LM
11	LB	11	RM
12	RF	12	LB
13	LF	13	RF
14	RB	14	LF
15	LM	15	RB
16	RM	16	LM
17	LB	17	RM
18	RF	18	LB

Figure 1. Examples of set schedules for hole locations. Day 1 begins with the hole on the first green cut in the left front (LF) position. The schedule rotates to Day 2 on the next day, and so on.

Placement Flags and Grommets

The next method of hole location has been around for a while and is commercially available through most golf course amenity suppliers. They are known as pin indicator or placement flags. (See image 2.) These are very simple devices that enable the golfer to differentiate a front, middle or back hole location by the relative position of a small flag on the flagstick. A hole in the front of a green flies the small flag on the lower third of the flagstick, a middle hole location flies the small flag in the middle of the flagstick and you guessed it, a back hole location flies the small flag on the top third of the flagstick. There are a few drawbacks to this system. The grommet that holds the indicator flag up often wears out and slips, causing

inaccurate placement of the small flag. One remedy to this situation is to purchase grommets one size smaller than the diameter of the flagstick used. It might be more difficult for the staff to slide the indicator flag up and down, but accidental movement of the flag will be limited. Another remedy to this is to drill holes into the actual flagstick and use a cotter key to hold the indicator flag in its correct position. (See image 3.)



Image 2: Pin indicator, or placement, flags.



Image 3: Try using a cotter key to hold the placement flag in the correct position.

The Country's or Club's Colors

It seems the method that is most popular currently enables the

use of different-colored flags to represent hole locations. The red (front), white (middle) and blue (back) color scheme seems to be of choice at most golf courses. This is another system that is simple and gives the golfer ample information on hole location. Drawbacks to this method include the staff having to carry extra flags and changing them at each hole. Some will even carry complete flags and sticks from green to green as part of the rotation. Flags can get dirty, flagsticks banged up and the green that somehow needs a different color flag is always the farthest from the maintenance facility. If your club uses a flag with a logo, then three different flag colors need to be on hand, all with the logo, for the occasions when things are missing in the morning. It can be costly to maintain an inventory of "logoed" flags with minimum orders taken by suppliers.

A New Twist on the Red, White and Blue for Everyday Play

We used to employ the red, white and blue flag system at Tamarack, but necessity made us look elsewhere for a new system to advertise the hole location for each day. The flag fairy's evil twin visited our course weekly and always took the color flag and flagstick we had least of in stock. We wanted to keep the system simple but still provide the general location of the hole.

At Tamarack, we employ the use of 150-yard markers in the middle of our fairways. We use the Standard Golf® Company's Fairway Marking Pole (item no. 09700). And with a little retrofitting, this has now become the base to hold our new hole-location indicators. (See image 4.) The mini-flagsticks were constructed out of old flagsticks cut short and fitted with top studs (Par Aide® no 1732) to each end. One end was permanently fastened onto a new PVC cap via a locknut and then the whole cap was glued to the pole. The indicator flags are purchased 1/2" diameter practice green flags in sets of red, white and blue. (See image 5.) The system is the same; the golfer just looks elsewhere for the information.



Image 4: At Tamarack, golfers find hole-location indicators at the 150-yard mark on each hole. This "customized" system consists of mini-flagsticks constructed out of old flagsticks cut short and fitted with top studs to each end. The indicator flag is red, white or blue depending on hole position.



Image 5: Tamarack's hole-indicator flags are simply 1/2" diameter practice green flags in red, white or blue.

This system is simple and keeps the flagsticks on the putting green uniform and clean. Not many people tamper with the 150-yard marker so the red, white and blue flags don't get hassled. On par-3 holes, we use the tee sign to hold the indicator flag. (See image 6.) The system has been in place since June of last year and the feedback has been positive.



Image 6: On par-3 holes, Tamarack places the indicator flag with the tee sign.

The Final Analysis

Each of these systems works to different degrees, some are more accurate than others. The pin sheet gives exact locations, the rotating schedule gives a generalized area, and colored and small flags delineate one of three positions. A superintendent has many options to use to give away hole locations on his or her golf course. Once some type of system is in place, it can be difficult to take away, so give it some thought and keep it consistent and simple. As somewhat of a purist about the game, I personally don't agree with giving the hole locations away from afar. Perhaps because it doesn't make much difference with my skill level, but more so because of all the yardage information we provide nowadays. Part of the game used to be "clubbing" oneself, now golfers use yardage books, sprinkler heads and global-positioning systems to dial in shots. We do live in the age of information. Golfers want to know "where the pin is," and through many different systems we are able to give them that information.



COMMERCIAL TURF & TRACTOR

NORTH AMERICA'S LARGEST VERTI-DRAIN DISTRIBUTOR

BUILT ON EXPERIENCE, SERVICE & CUSTOMER SATISFACTION!

QUALITY CONTRACTING, SERVICE, and SALES!

- Verti-Drain® Deep-tine Aeration
- Fairway Overseeding
- Custom Putting Green Seeding
- Fairway Aeration - Deep or Shallow
- Complete Turf Renovation
- Verti-Drain® Core Collector

Redexim/
Charterhouse
VERTI-DRAIN



Redexim/
Charterhouse
OVERSEEDER



ROTADRAIN
SOIL RENOVATOR



Redexim/
Charterhouse
FAST/18" DEPTH



Redexim/
Charterhouse
TOP DRESSER



Redexim/
Charterhouse
VERTI-SEED



MASSEY
FERGUSON



Redexim/
Charterhouse
TURF TIDY



Home of Bryan's Blend Barbeque Sauce!

www.bryansblend.com

1-800-748-7497

Bryan Wood, Owner

Serving the Industry for over 20 years

Check out our demo and trade-in equipment for sale → www.commercialturfandtractor.com