

Multiple tees an industrywide doctrine, says Hurdzan

By MARK LESLIE

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Designing golf holes with five sets of tees soon will be standard practice, according to course architect Mike Hurdzan.

"We believe that's the current way to go. If this is already not industrywide, it is going to be," said Hurdzan, citing his latest layout, Annbriar Golf Course in Waterloo, Ill., which boasts at least five sets of tees, and in many instances six or seven.

Alice Dye, wife and co-designer with architect Pete Dye and a longtime proponent of "forward tees," was Hurdzan's "primary influence" for designing multiple tees.

"She said we need more than two sets of tees. And I said, 'She's right,'" Hurdzan said. "Then it struck me that we need more than two sets of men's tees. We need a set of pros' tees."



Mike Hurdzan

"It was common for us to have two sets of tees for men. But we only had one set for ladies, which made no sense. Likewise, it doesn't make any sense to have the pro play with the better amateur," he said.

"We're trying to set up the course so that the shot values tend to be relatively the same. Once you reach the landing area, there's

nothing you can do to equate the course. It has to be done with multiple sets of tees.

"Women who play the front tees love the golf course. With the slope ratings, all women don't have to play the same set of tees. Some play one set of tees and it doesn't affect their handicap. Another group plays another set and it doesn't affect their handicap."

Ideally, Hurdzan wants his courses to play as short as 5,000

yards to as long as 7,200.

The National Golf Foundation says the average male player hits the driver 199 yards roll and carry. The average woman hits a driver 131 yards.

Hurdzan and his lead architects select the prime landing areas on each hole. From the pro tees to the prime landing areas is 270 yards. From the next set of tees — for A players — it is about 240 yards to the same landing area. The next set of tees — for the average male golfer and professional lady golfer — is about 210 to 215 yards.

The next set — for seniors, A ladies and middle-aged juniors — is 175 yards. The forward tees are set at 140 to 150 yards for beginners, super-seniors and people with not a lot of upper-body strength.

"We design from the back tees to the green, then fit the front tees in. If you make the terrain fit for the back set, it works well for forward tees," Hurdzan said.

AnnBriar

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"We went to bluegrass-rye in the rough; tall fescues in the secondary rough; then hard fescues, chewings fescues and native grasses in accent areas, the tops of mounds, and in the out-of-play areas," Hurdzan said.

He chose fescues, he said, because "they add color and those are going to be the driest, hottest areas. Those grasses can survive better than anything else. They are environmentally sound. You don't have to worry about pesticides, water, fertilizer and mowing."

Steve Maas, who was on board for construction and grow-in of Coeur d'Alene Resort in Idaho and the Country Club at Castle Pines in Colorado, is superintendent at AnnBriar.

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Visit AnnBriar and, depending on who's in town playing the St. Louis Cardinals, you could spot the Atlanta Braves' Tom Glavine and John Smoltz, or Turner Broadcaster Network's Don Sutton, or Herzog, a country boy who knows a number of people in the area.

"Evidently, there's something about the course in the Cardinal visitors' clubhouse," Nancy Nobbe said. "We're close to St. Louis. Five of the Atlanta Braves played here. It was fabulous."

"Some Phillies came out to play last week but it rained. Whitey Herzog and his wife were out last night..."

The future of AnnBriar bodes well, gauging from results of its seven-day advance tee time.

"Usually, a half hour or 45 minutes after we open on a Sunday morning, we've sold all the tee times for the next Sunday," William Nobbe said. "Last Monday 315 people played here. But we don't want that much play."

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