



Plenty of room on this tee, so a given spot need not be used again until the turf has had time to repair itself.

Tee Too Often Not Up to Fine Course Standards

By ARTHUR LANGTON

AS FINE AS the golf courses of California and other sections may be there is one feature of them all which only too often does not come up to standard. That is the tees. They are of tremendous importance if for no other reason than that they are the first section of course on every hole with which the player comes in contact, yet this importance seems to have been overlooked by architects, greenkeepers, and golfers alike. Just why this should be is problematical. It may be that architects have paid scant heed because none of their colleagues in the past have made names for themselves as builders of fine tees. Greensmen pay them little enough attention possibly because more expensive items are occupying their minds. And the players themselves may overlook the tees because their interest is centered upon the green. But whatever the reasons for this disregard, faulty tees rarely are justified.

Although players receive their first impression of a golf course on the tee, this does not contradict necessarily the statement that they are overlooked, and for an explanation one must visit the realm of

practical psychology. It is universally accepted that the region of marginal consciousness—the subconscious—receives and records impressions while the attention of the subject is fixed upon something entirely removed. It is also accepted that these subconscious impressions tend to modify or color conscious impressions. Therefore a golfer may play on a course with smooth fairways and velvety greens but the whole layout will suffer in his estimation if the tees, especially the first, are bad. This is no flighty hypothesis, but a matter of every-day psychology.

Tees Too Small

The main cause of trouble with tees in California is lack of size. It is true that a tee with an area of 1,500 square feet may be sufficient for 8 months in the year, but during the winter months when growth is slight and play is heaviest, such a tee would take a battering from which it might never recover. Especially on the short holes is it essential that the tees shall have an area of 2,500 square feet to give those parts of the tee dug up by iron clubs a chance to recuperate before it comes

their time to be used again. Another advantage of a large teeing ground is the resulting flexibility; that is, adjustments can be made to compensate for various playing conditions such as those brought about by tournaments, ladies' days, and the like. One southern California greenkeeper has found that by moving the markers back on the very short holes on days of heavy play he cuts down the number of pitch marks on the corresponding greens to a fraction of what they would be if the markers were left forward.

One consideration in the construction of tees that has not received sufficient attention is the direction in which they face. Time was when a teeing ground could not be distinguished from a part of the fairway except by the markers, but now the starting areas are situated on specially built elevations, almost always rectangular in shape, which has brought in an optical factor to cause confusion among golfing ranks. Consciously or unconsciously the direction in which a player drives is affected by the way in which a tee faces. Custom is to build tees geometrically square to the direction the shot is supposed to be played, regardless of topographical conditions and other physical features connected with the hole. This usually is what accounts for the unusual number of poor shots made from certain holes on every course.

As an example, one tee on a southern California course is a notorious offender in this respect. The hole is a 475-yard dog's-leg which swings to the left around a group of trees 300 yards from the tee. There is plenty of fairway to the left from the tee to accommodate a hook shot, but immediately to the right is a high bank rising out of bounds. Evidently it was the benevolent attention of the builder to have the players shoot as close as possible and parallel to the bank to allow for an open shot to the green. To this end the tee is faced slightly to the right of the center of the fairway. Although it does not actually do so, 9 out of 10 players will say that this tee is pointed directly into the bank. As a result more shots are played to the right and out of bounds on this hole than on any hole the writer has witnessed. A little money spent in refacing the front of this tee would make a fairer hole of one which already is a hard par 5 without the addition of an optical handicap.

Human Factor Rules

Course designers should not lean back-

wards to get tees exactly square with the fairways; rather they should take into consideration the human equation and make the tees look as if they are pointing in the right direction to the ordinary man standing upon them, regardless of actuality.

However there are places where a deliberate disregard of direction is advisable. At the second hole of the San Gabriel C. C. a concrete flume, constituting a water hazard, runs diagonally across the fairway. Players choose the point of crossing according to their imagined ability as drivers, because the more direct the route to the hole, the longer carry on the drive is required. Obviously any arbitrary facing of the tee on this hole would satisfy only a small proportion of the players; therefore, the tee front is rounded and the choice of direction is left up to the will of the individual golfers. But in most cases designers could do well to help the average golfer by showing him the path he should follow.

Beautifying Tees

Tees primarily are objects of utility and it is difficult to visualize their flat-topped figures as things of beauty. With this in mind one California golf architect had the surrounding ground to a distance of hundreds of feet graded evenly to the level of the teeing surface so that players would not be conscious of standing on an elevation. The chief objection to this procedure was that it multiplied the cost of construction and consequently the system has not been at all popular in late years.

But there are other methods of beautifying tees which do not require any great financial outlay. Many California greenkeepers have utilized the banks of the mound type of tees to plant shrubbery and flowers so that instead of resembling overgrown grave mounds the tees form a part of the decorative scheme. Where teeing grounds are situated in the middle of flat lands they are given an appearance of permanence by the addition of a few trees and shrubs in the background. Tees without an alleviating feature of some kind are an unnecessary eyesore.

In constructing a new tee it has been found that the foundation is of greatest importance. Too many times, at least in California, a place has been leveled off and planted without sufficient regard for the condition of the ground beneath the surface. Consequently the soil has settled unequally and has made undulations which defy the weary golfer to find a spot where

both his feet and his ball will be on the same horizontal plane. This unequal settling can be prevented in construction by making sure that the soil is the same throughout, allowing for proper drainage, and by giving the bed ample time to settle before the seed is planted.

Levelling Tees

But greenkeepers on those courses which have tees with surfaces like that of the ocean can avail themselves of a method to cure this evil which does not necessitate complete reconstruction. This in brief consists of relaying the turf on a level foundation. The turf is taken up in sections and piled in order very carefully. The denuded ground is then levelled off by taking soil from the high spots and placing it in the low. If very little leveling has to be done the ground can be rolled and the turf can be replaced immediately. If much soil has to be replaced it is best to water it down and allow it to settle before rolling it. Otherwise the completed tee might settle. With the establishment of a level foundation the turf can be replaced exactly as taken up, after which it is tamped and rolled. Finally a heavy top-dressing consisting mostly of sand to fill in remaining crevices must be administered. A perfect new tee should be ready for play inside of 2 weeks.

Four men equipped with a sod cutter, a tractor, a roller, and the usual assortment of tools can take up 1,000 square feet of turf an hour and can replace it even faster. The work could be speeded if the sod could be rolled instead of taken up in sections, but in California the turf does not have a sufficiently coarse root system to prevent it from crumbling.

The toughest grass that will grow is usually the best grass for tees. In the Pacific southwest Bermuda grass would be ideal were it not for the fact that it has no growth during the coldest months of the year when play is heaviest. The sowing of equal parts of Bermuda, blue grass, and Pacey's rye serves very well because the last two named grasses will be green when the other is dormant. Farther north the substitution of red top in this mixture for Bermuda makes an excellent teeing surface.

In bringing to a close this dissertation on tees and the attention thereof, the editor perhaps will pardon the writer if he quotes a true story with a Great Moral attached to it. A Central California golf

course suffered from a one-shot hole which was manifestly unfair and as such was a constant source of complaint. Luck decided the result of every tee shot. Despairing officials bewailed the fact that they would have to build a new green in a more favorable position but had resigned themselves to this expensive fate and were waiting for a favorable opportunity to have the work done. A total stranger visited the course one day in an unofficial capacity, heard the story, and looked into the situation. He solved the problem permanently by picking up the tee markers and placing them on a level spot about 50 yards away, thereby revealing a clear path to the much maligned green.

Tom Armour Being Booked on Golf Lecture Tour

TOMMY ARMOUR is being booked for a lecture tour by W. A. Fritschy, 600 Altman Bldg., Kansas City, Mo. Tom is going to teach four classes daily. One full term of the lessons will consist of 6 one-hour class lessons and will run 3 days of each of the 2 weeks for which Tom is being spotted in various cities. He works Kansas City starting April 11. Other cities now are being scheduled, with the tentative date for the beginning of the tour set for early in March. The class lessons will cost \$15 per person for the series of 6 lessons but Tom also will teach privately during open time of his stops, at the rate of \$25 per half hour with no one being accepted for less than 4 private lessons.

Fritschy says a number of pros have enrolled for the lessons. It looks like a great stunt.

We understand some of the boys have put up mild squawks at the prospect of Tom coming into their burgs and picking up lesson dough, but what golf instruction needs for pro good is some stunt like this to bring instruction into the spotlight. Armour dragging \$25 per lesson will be good for the cause too. It will build up the price for lessons.

On paper, the Armour "master class" proposition looks like a natural. If it proves out, it ought to mean a big thing for golf and the pro business. The way smart hard workers put over women's and children's classes at their clubs during 1931 shows that this class lesson idea is well worth a strong play for the development of the game.