

**I**t's a busy week here at Lake Omigosh. The members are grumpy because the course is closed for one week to host the PGA's annual Orange Juice Open on the tour's Central Florida stop.

The event is viewed by some as the social event of the year, and others are miffed they can only play golf at the club 51 weeks a year, as if there weren't 149 other courses in the area they could play that week.

As for Duffy McDuffy and his crew, it means a week of double shifts with early-morning starts and late-night finishes and lots of prayers for good weather. A few of the local superintendents pitch in and volunteer to help out on the crew filling divots, raking bunkers and dragging the dew. Duffy and the club reciprocates with a golf outing and barbecue later in the summer when play slows down. Everyone has a good time; everyone except those pros who don't make the cut.

Of the 140 golfers teeing it up on Thursday morning, you'd think that half of them were playing a different golf course the way they complain about the conditions. The sad thing is the complaints and gripes made the headlines in the sports section of the paper even before the first ball was struck. There was talk that the course favors long hitters, that the greens are too firm, that the fairways are too soft, and on and on.

You can identify the complainers easily. Just look at the scores on the leaderboard. Guys who shoot over par are dishing the course in the press tent, calling for cows, corn and dynamite to make improvements.

Meanwhile, for the four dozen pros who shot minus 3 to minus 8 for the day, the course they were playing didn't seem to be in such bad shape. Not that they said so. "Well I hit my irons good all day and I was lucky to make some long putts," was a common refrain.

### Squeaky wheels

It reminded me of the time Duffy told me about playing golf on Men's Day: "You should have heard them in the grill after the round," he said. "It seems I had three sets of greens out

# Tournament Tales from Lake Omigosh

BY JOEL JACKSON



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there: too fast, too slow and just right. The 'just right' teams came in first and second."

I tried to console Duffy by reminding him he couldn't please everyone all the time. But he sighed and said, "Yeah, but the squeaky wheel gets the attention because it makes so much noise! If any of those guys get on the green committee, I'll be in for it."

As for the 2004 Orange Juice Open, the world-ranked contenders hit the ball too many times into bunkers, hazards and out of bounds, which is not a course conditioning problem.

Some young pro who hit the most fairways and greens in regulation and by luck or skill made most of his putts took home the winner's check. The fans applauded the skill and luck. The media yawned at the unknown winner and wrote as much or more about who lost instead of who won. The club members were just happy that the corporate tents were folding so they could get their course back.

### Oh, by the way, nice job

Duffy and his crew got their 15 seconds of recognition for all the hard work when the TV announcer mentioned that they had the course in good shape for the tournament.

Come Monday, Duffy and his crew will begin cutting down those ankle-deep roughs and repairing a couple of acres of divots and dirt on the par-3 tees, fairway landing areas and driving range. The hackers will tee it up from the tips and pretend to be Tiger and the greens will be too fast, too slow and just right once again.

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*Certified Superintendent Joel Jackson retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.*



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SCALPING 2004 NTEP 1 - 9; 9=NONE		Fall - % LIVING GROUND COVER GROWN ON A GREEN 2002 NTEP DATA		QUALITY - SOIL GREEN 2004 NTEP DATA 1 - 9; 9 = IDEAL TURF			QUALITY- SAND GREEN 2004 NTEP DATA 1 9: 9 = IDEAL TURF		
NAME	MA1	NAME	MEAN	NAME	TX2	VA1	NAME	AZ1	MN1
<b>LS - 44</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>LS - 44</b>	<b>97.6</b>	<b>LS - 44</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>LS - 44</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>6.7</b>
Penncross	7.0	Penncross	96.7	Penn A - 1	5.9	4.2	Penn A - 1	6.6	6.1
Benchmark DSR	6.0	Penn A-1	96.1	Benchmark DSR	5.5	4.1	Benchmark DSR	6.3	6.3
Penn A-1	4.7	Benchmark DSR	95.6	Penncross	4.4	4.5	Penncross	6.9	5.3
LSD Value	1.7	LSD Value	9.6	LSD Value	0.6	0.5	LSD Value	0.8	0.5

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**A**dhering to design formulas isn't always the best idea, unless you're Seth Raynor building another unique Redan par 3. Or if you've decided to evaluate the forward tees at your course.

It was Alice Dye who pressed her husband Pete and other architects to design better forward tees. The men and women in plaid responded appropriately. Most courses built since the late 1980s feature better forward tee placement since Dye's formula became widely accepted as an industry norm.

But too many older courses have not gone along, and lesser players are paying the price at clubs and munis across the land.

The National Golf Foundation — for what its numbers are worth — says the average woman player drives the ball 140 yards. Fairways woods travel on average around 120 yards. That's about 75 percent of the average man's distance.

So in this day of 7,000 yards barely clinging to its place as a "championship standard," that would mean the better female players will play a course "as it was intended" if it clocks in at around 5,250 yards. The average man would probably like his golf in the 6,400 yard range. So the average woman or older male player or youngster should be teeing off from a cumulative 5,000 yards or much less, depending on the terrain or hole design.

Sadly, as older courses struggle to deal with modern equipment and debate back-tee yardages, too many haven't gotten around to rethinking their forward tees.

Oh, sure, a few throw an extra forward set out and paint them everything but red so the cranky geezers might consider playing where they should. And we call them "forward" tees now. But has this really addressed the issue?

Probably not.

As courses look for more yardage to extend back tees, a subset of golfers may be embarrassed to ask if their courses should play shorter for some. Granted, we all know of the clubs where a few committee types argue that the forward tee placement isn't the problem, it's the fairway contour that doesn't reach the forward tee. Or the hazard that's in their way.

## Let's Get Back to the Forward Tees

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



GOOD PLAYERS  
WANT BACK TEES  
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WHY NOT USE THE  
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FORWARD TEES?

(Even though it's much easier to shift a tee than to move bunkers and creeks or to maintain extra acres of fairway.)

Golfers do have an uncanny ability to let pride get in their way, whether it's talk of moving tees back or forward.

So it's up to the superintendents, golf professionals and managers to seek the help of architects and re-evaluate their courses' forward tees. As always, the key is to quietly steer committees or course management toward better-designed forward tees because they will address a sizeable percentage of your regular play. And never forget that you have to make it their idea.

Here's a recap of Alice Dye's formula, which still works for forward tee design:

- ▶ Par 3 — 60 yards to 150 yards.
- ▶ Par 4 — 230 to 340 yards.
- ▶ Par 5 — 401 to 430 yards.
- ▶ Par 6 — Avoid.

Dye says: "Shorter yardages are not meant to take the challenge out of the game. Instead, its goal should be to adapt the playing characteristics of the holes to the ability of the player."

In other words, don't hesitate to roll out the "play the course as it was intended" speech. Good players want back tees to play their courses as architects meant them to play, so why not use the same logic with forward tees?

Remind golfers that you're not trying to cheat them out of a certain experience by moving them up and around faster, or away from improper playing angles. Instead, you're trying to get them to play the design the way it was meant to be played. Even if we can never be sure what that is.

And if they don't believe your intentions are pure, just blame Alice Dye and her revolutionary thoughts on forward tee placement.

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BY BRUCE ALLAR

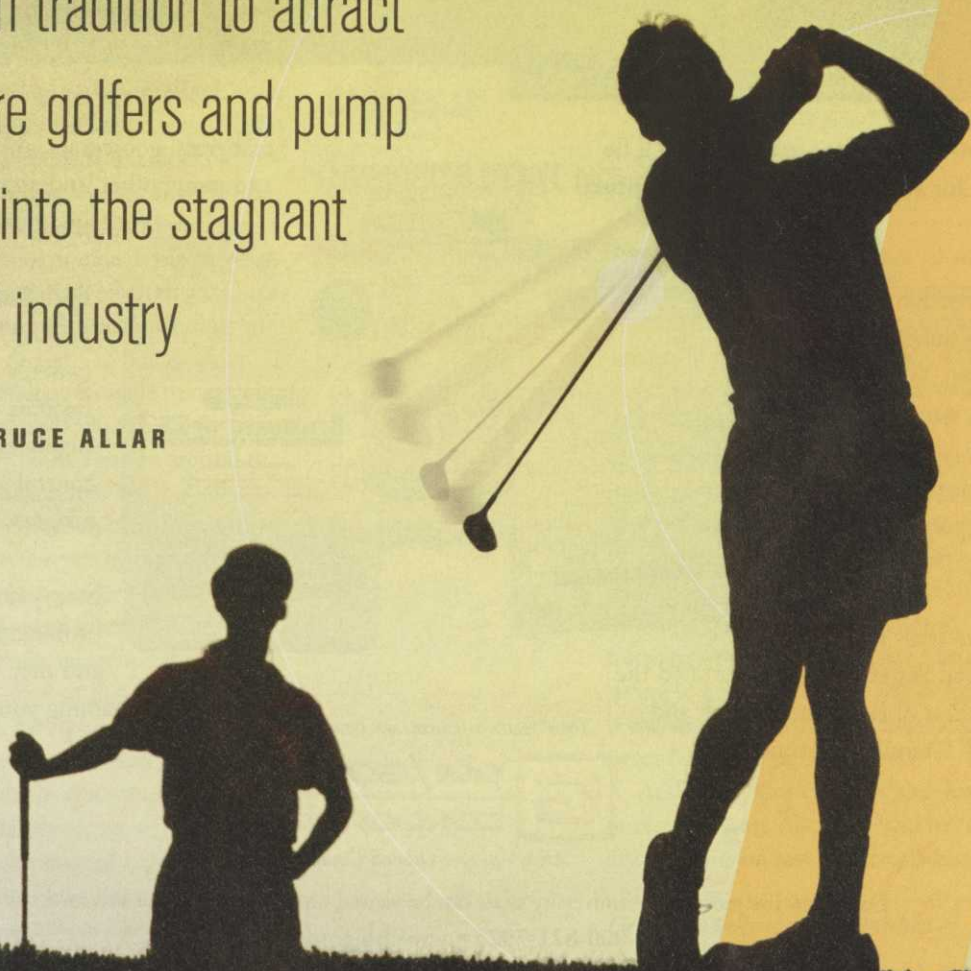


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