

From Tee to Green and all Between: **Trees**

USGA Courses Rating System takes all of the factors of a golf course into account. The process involves assessing all of the features that impact a golfer. These are called **Obstacles** and include: Topography, Fairway, Green Target, Bunkers, Rough and Recovery, Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough, **Trees**, Green Surface and Psychology. These are all of the details beyond the length of a hole that impact play and difficulty.

This month's topic is **Trees**. Our mission is to evaluate how **Trees** come into play and how difficult it may be for the player to recover.

Tree rating is based on:

- Overall impact of the **trees** on the play of the hole
- Level of difficulty (Minor, Moderate, Significant or Extreme Problem)
- Existence of additional issues (Chute, Obstruction in Fairway or at Green)

The difficulty factor for **trees** is based on:

- Number, height and density of **trees** (at mid-season) near landing area and on the line of play
- Length of shot to be hit to the target landing zone or green (**trees** on a full tee shot are more likely to come into play than when a player lays up or hits less than a full tee shot)
- Distance of the **trees** from the center of the landing zone or green
- Presence of low-hanging branches that impact swing and obstruct recovery shots
- Conditions under the **trees** that impact the lie of the ball (roots, rocks, etc.)



Although many **trees** are on both of these courses the **trees** in the picture on the RIGHT would be rated more difficult than the **trees** on the LEFT. Also, depending how far back the tees are, we might even add a CHUTE to the **Tree** rating on the RIGHT.



Things to think about:

- Bushes, palmettos, gorse, cacti, scrub oak and the like are considered **trees** when their height exceeds 6 feet.
- **Trees** that are located within Extreme Rough will require balancing whether the **Trees** or Rough is more impactful
- If a golf course loses multiple **trees** due to planned maintenance or storm, it may or may not impact the Course Rating. Call Gretchen to see whether she will need to schedule a trip to the course.



Trees with low hanging branches and roots or ground cover that will create difficult lie, stance and swing problems will add to the difficulty of a player's recovery shot. **Trees** with high or few branches and no problem beneath would cause fewer recovery problems



Next month, we'll go over **Green Surface**. We're almost finished with the Tee to Green series. All of the **Obstacles** are online if you'd like to take a look. <http://oga.org/handicaps/tee-green-and-all-between-course-rating-primer>

If you have any questions, please contact Gretchen Yoder, Manager of Handicapping and Course Rating

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