

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

It's the first place the player aims. For each player (Scratch and Bogey, Men and Women) we go to the Landing Zone.

Fairway is the evaluation of the difficulty of keeping the ball in the fairway from tee to green. We measure the width of the fairway where the ball lands and along the area until the point where the ball would stop. Average roll out is approximately 20 yards. On courses that are uphill or downhill, shot lengths are adjusted. We take into account fairways where mowing patterns change from narrow to wide or meander left to right. Fairways are **ONLY** rated for Par4s and 5s. Long par 3's where a Bogey player cannot reach the green in one full shot are evaluated elsewhere.

Fairway ratings are based on:

- Fairway width in all landing zones
- Hole Length
- Nearby trees, hazards and punitive rough

There is very little subjectivity in Fairways.

If a player **Lays Up** (either forced or by choice) it decreases the difficulty of the shot. Think about how the shorter the shot, the less trouble the player can get into!

Width Adjustments can INCREASE or DECREASE play

The following will INCREASE difficulty of a hole:

- Is the fairway width reduced by a dogleg?
- Are there tree limbs that overhang the edge of a fairway?
- Is the fairway so tilted that a ball may roll out of the fairway and into the rough?
- Are there severe obstacles (dense trees, deep bunkers, nearby water hazard, OB/extreme rough) on one side of the fairway that forces the player to play to only one side of the fairway?
- Is none of the landing zone visible from the tee, making it difficult to determine the line of play?

The following will DECREASE difficulty:

- Is there a hillside that will allow a golf ball to roll into the fairway? It virtually makes the fairway wider, less difficult to hit.
- Is the fairway landing zone narrow, but the area around it is mowed so that a player can hit out of the rough with ease?

Here is what **Fairways** are not:

- It does not include Stance, Lie or Swing issues, those are Topography (see March's topic)
- It is not the pond that has to be carried to reach the fairway, that is rated under Water
- It is not the area in front of the Green on a long Par 3 hole, that is adjusted in Rough & Recovery
- It is not tall grass or desert area that must be carried, depending on the situation, that may be Rough & Recovery and/or it may be OB/Extreme Rough.

Did you know that if the mowing pattern changes the width of fairways from 32 to 27 yards wide (or vice versa) it could impact the Course Rating by 0.3 and the Slope Rating by 1?

Next month, we'll cover **Green Target**, the ability to hit and hold the green. Until then, if you have any questions, contact Gretchen Yoder, gretchen@oga.org.