

A Case for “Tee it Forward” and Combo Tees:

Just last week OGA received an email from one of our OGA Members that we thought would be quite relevant to several different Course Rating and Handicapping issues that we have been trying to communicate over the last couple of years. The first being the “Tee it Forward” movement and the second is the use of Combo sets of tees, both permanent and for individual rounds of golf.

The email and response have been edited for general golf course and member understanding.

Here is the email:

Dear OGA-

I have used the OGA passport for the past 2-3 years and before that played over 1/2 my 50 rounds away from home. I am old and weak and am overjoyed to find a course which has instituted combination tees. A great idea which offers a multitude of combo tees [especially white/red in the 5700-5800 range] without the cost of building new tee boxes, just a new scorecard.

Alas there are a great many courses which have the whites at 6000- 6200 and the reds at 5500 or lower. It would seem to me that it should be a top of the table job for the OGA to get its member courses to at least pay attention to the "Play It Forward" (Note: PGA calls this “Tee it Forward”) philosophy.

I am probably mistaken, but from your articles about rating courses, I thought you visited each course and rated each hole, thus having a rating for each tee on each hole. IF that is so it would seem to me that you could suggest combo tees [black/blue; blue/white; white/ red] to each course and urge them to adopt a seven tee possibility scorecard. The combo tees would be rated by using your individual hole and tee rating in the combination.

Of course I could play any combination of tees [and occasionally do] but the score is not acceptable for GHIN.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bob Dickinson

OGA’s response:

USGA requires all courses to be rated at least once every 10 years. OGA rates courses in our region on a 7-8 year cycle. Since approximately 4 years ago, OGA’s policy going forward, is to rate ALL sets of measured tees for men. We have a little catching up until all courses have been properly rated. We rate between 30-35 courses per year. And if any course would like the forward tees rated before we get to the course for a physical rating, we can do a yardage adjustment that will be valid until the full rating can be performed. All that takes is a phone call!

For several years we have been working to quell the myths about ‘Men’s’ tees and ‘Women’s’ tees. There is no gender to the teeing area, there is, however, a gender to Course/Slope Ratings. This has been more daunting than expected. Many Men falsely believe that the Red tees are only for Women and then they won’t move forward. There is also no age differential to Course/Slope Ratings. You are considered a Man whether you are age 6 or 96. Having the forward tees rated for Men is not only for those who are living longer, yet hitting shorter. The forward tee is where beginner and young golfers should start their playing.

We’ve been sharing ways for golf courses to make the forward tees more enticing for those who would enjoy golf more if they would move forward. One method is simply changing the color of the tee marker from Red to any other color. Moving away from the traditional Blue/White/Red system is becoming more accepted, yet it is still a battle.

Another method of changing the course is using Combo tees. Combo tees serve multiple purposes. They can be used between any and all sets of tees. It is a way for a golf course to update the course for their players without the added expense of constructing new tee boxes. It allows the player to move forward, or back, to allow for their change in abilities, without shocking their system. Too much change too quickly might not be warranted. We have been encouraging courses to use Combo tees for several years.

With Combo tees, we need to have the golf course inform us of which tees they would like to use on a regular basis. While we encourage the use of Combo tees, we would not force any course to use them. Since each set of measured tees is rated individually, it is a quick and simple process to get a proper Course/Slope Rating. When the Combo tee info is sent to OGA, it takes about 5 minutes to enter the new info into the system. It will show up in GHIN for posting in 4 hours or less. The only hitch is if the Course Rating team is out of the office on a rating trip.

The financial impact to the course is minimal with Combo tees. No new tee boxes are constructed. No special markers are necessary. They just need to update their scorecard to indicate which tee is used on which hole. Or print up a simple hole-by-hole sheet for the golfers to use. Some courses will put a marker on the tee box that shows combo tees such as painting one of the markers with both colors.



Here is how Quail Ridge in Baker City marks a teeing area used by both Gold and Red tees. This would also work well with combined sets of tees.

If a player decides to play a combo set of tees while they are golfing and it is not in the GHIN system, there is a way to post a score that is acceptable. The USGA Handicap System not only allows, but encourages this. The player would find out the difference in the yardage for the combined set of tees that they played and adjust the Course Rating/Slope Rating up or down from the nearest set of tees.

For example, if a male golfer played Heron Lakes ~ Great Blue Course and played most of the White tees but shortened the course by playing a combo set that was 350 yards shorter than the White tees (total 5680) they would post their score and adjust from the nearest yardage which would be the White rating.

Men's Ratings:

White	69.9/131	6030 yards
Red	66.2/126	5258 yards

Using the chart below, a difference of 350 is between 341-362 and the rating adjustment would **reduce** 1.6 from the Course Rating and 4 from the Slope Rating.

Course Rating: $69.9 - 1.6 = 68.9$ Slope Rating: $131 - 4 = 127$

The player would post his score using the Manual option in GHIN and enter 68.9/127 as their Course/Slope rating for that round.

Here is a link to the USGA FAQ about "**Posting a Score From an Unrated Set of Tees**" on the USGA website: http://www.usga.org/handicapfaq/handicap_answer.asp?FAQidx=14

The following is the chart that you would use for Men.

The chart for Men and Women are both in the USGA Handicap System Manual as well as on the USGA website.

MEN'S RATINGS ADJUSTMENTS FROM UNRATED TEES

YARDS	CHANGE IN USGA COURSE RATING	CHANGE IN SLOPE RATING	YARDS	CHANGE IN USGA COURSE RATING	CHANGE IN SLOPE RATING
0 to 10	0.0	0	407 to 428	1.9	5
11 to 32	0.1	0	429 to 450	2.0	5
33 to 54	0.2	0	451 to 472	2.1	5
55 to 76	0.3	1	473 to 494	2.2	5
77 to 98	0.4	1	495 to 516	2.3	5
99 to 120	0.5	1	517 to 538	2.4	6
121 to 142	0.6	1	539 to 560	2.5	6
143 to 164	0.7	2	561 to 582	2.6	6
165 to 186	0.8	2	583 to 604	2.7	6
187 to 208	0.9	2	605 to 626	2.8	7
209 to 230	1.0	2	627 to 648	2.9	7
231 to 252	1.1	3	649 to 670	3.0	7
253 to 274	1.2	3	671 to 692	3.1	7
275 to 296	1.3	3	693 to 714	3.2	8
297 to 318	1.4	3	715 to 736	3.3	8
319 to 340	1.5	4	737 to 758	3.4	8
341 to 362	1.6	4	759 to 780	3.5	8
363 to 384	1.7	4	781 to 802	3.6	9
385 to 406	1.8	4			

For further information about the Tee it Forward program, here is a link to PGA and USGA's initiative on Tee it Forward:

<http://www.pga.com/pga-and-usga-step-new-sets-tees-in-nationwide-tee-it-forward-initiative>



Here are links to previous OGA articles about Tee it Forward and Combo tees:

[Tee it Forward](#)

[Combo Tees](#)

If you have any further questions or comments, please contact Gretchen Yoder, Manager of Handicapping and Course Rating gretchen@oga.org