

Recognizing the return on golf investments

Marc Whitney reports on the ASGCA Foundation's recent event at Pinehurst Resort

Golf industry decision makers from across North America—including architects, golf course owners, operators, managers, professionals and superintendents—recently gathered at Longleaf Golf & Family Club and Pinehurst Resort for an ASGCA Foundation event, *From Tees to Green: A Symposium on Forward Tees and Other High-ROI Ideas*. The two-day event included golf at the 'living laboratory' that is Longleaf and a day of education highlighted by quality presentations.

Hunki Yun of the United States Golf Association provided data from a USGA survey of golfers, designed to help facilities provide a better experience for their customers.

"Did you know that from the time a golfer drives onto a property until they leave, there are 1,000 touchpoints that impact the experience and their satisfaction? That's far more than other industries experience, including hotels," Yun said.

Lynn Baugher, a member at Rancho Murieta Country Club in California, provided a golfer's perspective. Baugher, who worked with ASGCA **Past President Damian Pascuzzo** to add tees at the club, detailed steps the club has taken to encourage members to move forward and give the new tees a try. Small-group discussions and one-on-one conversations have proven valuable, she said, and the result is the club sees more golfers playing more often.

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Jan Bel Jan, ASGCA, provided 'A Retrospective on Tees,' including the views of a number of golf course architects, including:

- H.S. Colt promoted a variety of teeing grounds over 100 years ago to account for wind or other aspects of play, and additional tees to adjust for play in winter vs. summer.
- Marion Hollins created a course for women that brought out their best. "Not the same design as men, because women cannot compete with men on equal terms for par or bogey."
- In 1935, A.W. Tillinghast bemoaned the tendency to create greater length: "The fetish of distance is worshipped all too often."

Marty Deangelo of Medinah Country Club reported impressive increases thanks to the new "Golf for Life" program:

- Mixed-couples participation is up 30 percent
- Annual number of golf lessons is up 60 percent
- Junior golf program is up 65 percent
- Senior participation is up 15 percent

"I finally broke 90!" is what I hear from senior groups," Deangelo said.





RECOMMENDED COURSE YARDAGE

TEE LOCATION	DRIVER CARRY DISTANCE	TOTAL DISTANCE WITH ROLL	RECOMMENDED 18-HOLE YARDAGE
1	100	125	3000-3200
2	125	150	3600-3800
3	150	175	4200-4400
4	175	200	4800-5000
5	200	220	5400-5600
6	225	245	6000-6200
7	250	270	6600-6800
8	275	295	7200-7400

Left: Bill Coore, ASGCA, spoke on the value of alternate courses he has designed, with Ben Crenshaw, for Mike Keiser. Above: Recommended course yardages based on driver carry

Brian Conley, of Bobby Jones Golf Course in Atlanta, updated attendees on several unique aspects of their new “reversible nines” course, designed by **ASGCA Past President Bob Cupp**. “At least three women said to our staff in the first month, ‘I made my first ever birdie today.’”

“The elimination of irrelevant shots.” That was the key point from **Dan Van Horn** and **Bill Bergin**, **ASGCA**, who shared data on what was developed at Longleaf and key results to date. Today, more than 80 percent of rounds at Longleaf are played at 5,400 yards or less.

Arthur Little and **Jan Leeming**, **ASGCA Foundation**, who have spent decades in the golf industry, including time as golf course owners, summarized their presentation by defining Design Fairness as “Courses, properly designed, on which all golfers can reach greens in regulation.” To achieve this:

- Golfers play the set of tees matching their swing speed.
- If golfers play the tees/yardage that fits their swing speed they will have the same or similar clubs for their approach shots.

ASGCA Past President John LaFoy and **Scott Brown**, **CGCS**, highlighted challenges and opportunities following natural disasters. “Know your insurance policies,” Brown stressed. “Some policies pay for a course ‘interruption.’ But if you keep nine holes open because the damage was not ‘too bad,’ that is not considered an interruption and will not be paid out.” LaFoy noted hurricanes and other storms sometimes allow facilities to rethink some aspects of the course and expedite Master Plan projects.

The symposium featured the release of the latest ASGCA Foundation publication, **Forward Tee: Case Studies in Additional Tees**. The book includes details on more than a dozen golf courses that have seen positive results following the addition of more teeing options for players of all ages, and a look at the history of innovative thinking when it comes to tees and golf course architecture. **Forward Tee** is free to download at <https://tinyurl.com/y8j8o55m>. ●

ASGCA Foundation President Bruce Charlton, ASGCA, (top) welcomed attendees and Dan Van Horn of U.S. Kids Golf spoke about forward tees

