

Article by Nancy Quarcelino



Tee Management

Overcoming The Hurdles Of Golf's Most Critical First Shot

YOUR FIRST SHOT OFF THE TEE IN GOLF IS VERY IMPORTANT. IT SETS UP YOUR REMAINING SHOTS TO THE HOLE AND ALSO GIVES YOU THE CONFIDENCE YOU NEED WITH THE REST OF YOUR GAME.

Regardless of the golf course you play, when you arrive at the tee, you will always encounter something different on every hole. The obstacles may be the same. There may be wind, water, trees, tall grass, bunkers, cart paths and pin positions that lure you to play a shot you may not be comfortable with. But, you will always have an opportunity to hit the ball in the fairway or on the green safely if

you follow some simple course management techniques. Although there are unlimited situations I can give you, I will cover just a few that I know will help your game the next time you play.

What if the tee box is not facing the middle of the fairway? You probably encounter this situation many times during your round and many of you will have

YOU ARRIVE AT THE TEE AND SURVEY THE SITUATION – DISTANCE TO THE GREEN, TRAPS, HAZARDS, WIND CONDITIONS, ETC. WHAT SHOULD YOUR STRATEGY BE IN GETTING THE ABSOLUTE MOST RIGHT OFF THE TEE? THIS MONTH, SOCIETY LIFE'S RESIDENT GOLF PRO NANCY QUARCELINO ADDRESSES JUST A FEW OF THE MANY SITUATIONS ONE MIGHT FACE WHILE PLAYING GOLF'S FIRST, AND IN SOME CASES, MOST IMPORTANT SHOT.



1 Tee Box Not Facing Middle Of Fairway



2 Green Situated Dogleg Left With Multiple Obstacles. Lay up, or go for it?



3 Aim for the middle of the green.



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trouble lining up to your shot because of this situation. You must rely on good solid alignment procedures to hit the ball to your target in the middle of the fairway.

As you can see in Photo 1 above, the tee box I encountered is facing to the right of the fairway toward the trees. I recommend that you tee off on the right side of the tee box to shoot away from the trees. You want your eyes to see the fairway, not the trees. So before you tee the ball up, look for an intermediate target on the right side of the tee box that will help you line your ball up to the middle of the fairway. Then tee your ball behind that intermediate target and point the logo of your ball toward that target. Now when you set up to the ball, you are giving yourself the best possible chance to hit the middle of the fairway.

What if you are on the tee of a hole that is a dogleg left? This hole happens to be

a short par 4. As shown in Photo 2 above, the hole is actually reachable for long hitters but there is a risk/reward in hitting this shot. As you can see, there are many obstacles which keep you from aiming to the green. There are trees on the left side of the fairway that you may hit if you draw the ball too much. There are bunkers keeping you from hitting a long ball with a draw as you might not draw the ball enough to get to the green. You even have water and rough to carry to get to a safe place in the fairway.

Many of you will take the risk and hope to reap the rewards of hitting the ball exactly the way you wish. But to the rest of us, we may just want to put the ball in the fairway, away from all the obstacles and take our chances on the longer approach shot to the green.

The key to hitting the shot correctly is to know what your distances are to every obstacle. You will want to know how far

you must carry the water and rough in front of you. You will also want to know the distance to those bunkers through the fairway. Are the trees you are trying to draw the ball around short or long of the hazard?

Range finders make it possible to help determine the distance you wish to hit your shot. Take advantage of this technology and a hole like this will become easy.

Now take a look at this par three I just recently encountered, (photo shown at top of page 45). There was every obstacle possible for you to see before you hit your shot. To add insult to injury we had 30 mile per hour winds the day I played this hole!

Just in case you topped your shot the tall grass would stop the ball before it reached the water. Yes, there is water on your left but luckily you could bail out to the right if you wanted to miss it. In order to hit

the green you must fly over a bunker. The flag is located just behind the bunker. You can also see bunkers on the right side of the green and in the back left side of the green. There are trees that run down the right side of this hole. Just in case you wanted to bail out to the right to miss the water and bunkers, you could go in the trees or land on the cart path. There is one lone tree in back of the green.

When I look at this green I see a green that is very big. The best place to hit this shot is in the middle of the green. I would not even try to hit the ball close to the flag. The best place to miss this green is long. If I hit the ball too far, I have plenty of green to work with for my next shot.

The course management techniques I have given you work best when you know three things about your game:

- ▶ How far you hit your clubs.
- ▶ How far are the obstacles away from you?
- ▶ What direction do you miss your golf shots?

The best advice I can recommend is for you to ask your coach for a playing lesson to help you learn how to manage your game on the golf course. Then ask for a session on determining the distances of each of your clubs using a launch monitor for accuracy. Understanding the importance of these two key factors will insure a more enjoyable experience on the course! ♦

For information about instruction call the Nancy Quarcelino School of Golf at 615-778-8823 or go to www.qsog.com.