Procedure for Course Rating

We usually meet at a course between 8:00 and 8:15 where books and information are distributed to each rater.

We then proceed in carts to the first tee, where the first thing we do is take an altimeter reading (one rater is assigned to do the altimeter readings) and get an overview of the hole. Is there water that has to be crossed? Is there a lot of rough between the tee and the fairway (if so the distance of the carry must be measured)? Is the tee elevated or are you hitting into a steep hill? Is there a dogleg or other obstacle that will require a lay up? Does the fairway tilt to one side thereby influencing the direction of the shot? These observations should only take a few minutes.

We then proceed in carts to assess the fairway landing areas. By definition, a bogie golfer hits her tee shot 150 yards (130 carry and 20 roll) and a scratch golfer hits her tee shot 210 yards (190 carry and 20 roll)

Our first stop is 150* yards from the tee which is the *bogie landing area*. We make an assessment of the landing area 20 yards before and after this spot.

- 1. What is the landing area like with regard to stance and difficulty of the next shot (is it a minor problem, moderately difficult or extremely difficult)?
- 2. Are there bunkers (how deep)?
- 3. Is there water? What is the distance from the center of the landing area? If the water has to be crossed on the next shot, the crossing (carry) yardage has to be measured also.
- 4. Out of bounds or unusual rough (how close to the center of the landing area)?
- 5. Trees, (how close and how difficult or easy to recover)?
- 6. Will the next shot be to the green? If so, is at least ½ of the green or the top of the flagstick visible? If bogie is going to the green on her next shot, an altimeter reading must also be taken from this landing area.

 Note: (Altimeter readings only need to be taken from the landing areas if the golfer is going to the green on her next (approach) shot).

Notes are made of all of these that apply.

Our next stop is the *scratch landing area* which is 210* yards from the tee. All the above assessments are repeated and notes taken. If this is a par 4 hole and scratch will be going to the green on her next shot an altimeter reading must also be taken here.

Again, by definition, a bogie hits her second shot 130 yards (110 carry and 20 roll) and the scratch golfer hits her second shot 190 yards (170 carry and 20 roll).

Our next stops along the fairway will be at 280* yards from the tee for bogie, and if it is a par 5 (or a long par 4) at 400* yards from the tee for scratch. In addition to all of the above assessments we additionally take an altimeter reading at these stops as it is most likely the golfer will be going to the green on her next shot. As you can see we make more stops for bogie readings than scratch. On a par 5 hole we may have to make and additional stop for bogie. Also under some circumstances an additional stop may have to be made for scratch as well.

*In the preliminary paperwork these distances are computed for you and are done in distance to the center of the green rather than from the tee.

Next we proceed to the green.

- 1. An altimeter reading is taken from the center of the green.
- 2. First we assess the bunkers. Does the golfer have to carry a bunker on her approach shot (i.e. is more than ½ the entrance to the green protected by bunkers)? How deep are they (we only need to measure the deepest one) and what percentage of the green do they cover?
- 3. Next we check for out of bounds, water, unusual rough, and trees (the distance to these from the center of the green has to be measured).
- 4. We also have to look for any rise and drop around the green. To be considered the rise and drop must cover more than ½ of the green (excluding bunkers) and be at least 5 feet or greater in depth.
- 5. Finally, the green surface is considered. This is determined based on the contouring and slope or tilt of the green surface and the stimp (speed) of the green. Is the green tiered? We are essentially determining how difficult it would be to putt on the green.

At the end of each hole, after we have made all our assessments we then convert our notes and measurements to numbers using our worksheets and the USGA Course Rating Guide.

We repeat this process until all 18 holes have been completed.

On par 3 holes our job is much easier as we don't have to make fairway assessments (unless the bogie golfer can't reach the green on her tee shot).

We need to get the elevation reading from the tee. Is at least ½ of the green or the tip of the flagstick visible? Is there water to be crossed? If so the distance has to be measured. Can the bogie golfer reach the green on her tee shot? Does it require a tee shot of more than 150 yards? Is there water to be crossed that is more than 130 yards and no bailout area? Is the hole so severely up-hill that her shot will not travel the 150 yards? If the bogie golfer cannot reach the green on her tee shot, an altimeter measurement and visibility assessment must be made from her approach shot as well as a fairway assessment (similar to regular holes above).

We then proceed to the green where all the previous assessments are made.

This may seem complicated at first but many holes are benign and don't require too long to assess. Also most of the assessments can be done fairly quickly. We do come upon some holes that take more time than others, but on average it shouldn't take more than 10 to 15 minutes per hole. Once you are familiar with the process it should move along very quickly. Not everyone has to make all notes or measurements. We usually assign one person to do the elevation (altimeter) readings and calculations and another to do the distance measurements. In the preliminary work, I have already done a great deal of the workbook calculations and only slight changes need to be made, when conditions unknown to me ahead of time are present.

For the first few times as new raters you will work with an experienced rater and just follow along with the process. Because we are training it will probably take us longer to do the ratings, but once you get the hang of it things should move along quickly. My goal is to do the rating in the morning and play the course in the afternoon. By playing the course the same day it gives us a chance to determine if we have made the correct assessments.