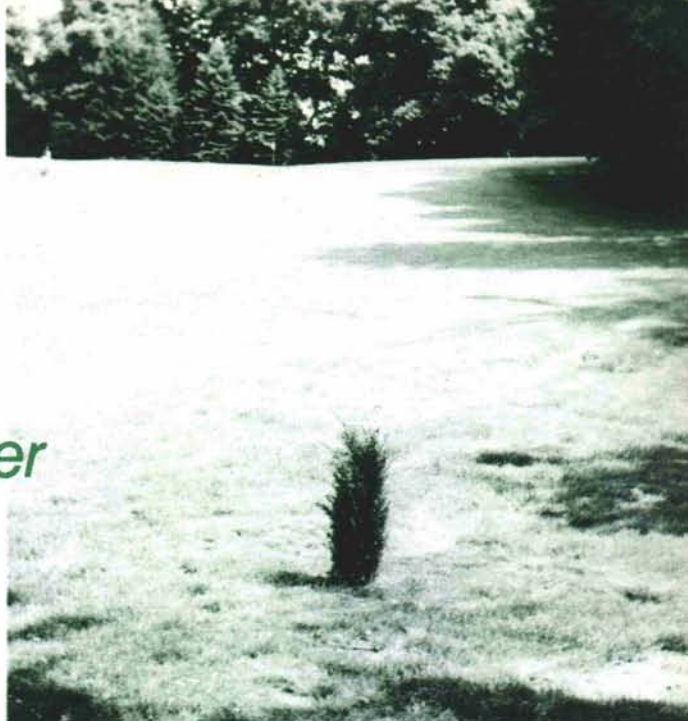


The 150-Yard Marker

Figure 1. Low-growing evergreen shrub-type marker set near the fairway.



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Golfers are always looking for an edge to improve their game. They like to have the latest equipment and the knowledge of the distance to the green from certain landmarks. Perhaps one of the most difficult decisions to make on a golf course (next to the size of the bet) is what club to use for the shot to the green. Not everyone is a good judge of distance, especially on a strange course that could be deceptively long or short, depending upon the terrain. So, one usually asks his caddie or partner for advice. These fellows know the course and should be able to help in club selection. Such information is fine if it is accurate. I'm certain almost everyone has played a course where he has been either well or poorly clubbed. Undoubtedly, this measurably helped or hurt your score.

What happens when caddies are not well trained or simply are no longer available for advice and yardages? This is becoming the case more and more with increasing use of powered golf cars. You can always legally ask your partner for such advice (but not your opponent or your opponent's caddie, if he has one) or you could search out any established yardage markers that might exist on the hole. More and more, the latter alternative grows in popularity.

THE FIXED YARDAGE MARKERS

The USGA at one time was opposed to established yardage markers intended to indicate distances from the fairway to the green. Today the USGA has no objection, except that if the markers are not natural (trees, shrubs, sand bunkers, mounds, etc.), the USGA may ask for their removal if any USGA tournament is to be held at the course.

For whatever reason, yardage markers set 150 yards from the center of the green have become the arbitrary standard. The following illustrations represent some of the 150-yard markers that we have seen. None of these are recommended by us, nor will they find use on every golf course. After all, there is no substitute for individuality. In fact, such illustrated yardage markers only serve to tickle one's imagination on how to best accomplish the same end. They could even be used to add a little uniqueness to the course besides helping to speed play (?!?) and helping guests puzzle out an unfamiliar course.

NATURAL MARKERS

Figure 1 (Rhode Island CC, West Barrington, R.I.) illustrates a type of low-growing evergreen shrub that is planted in the rough on one or both sides of the fairway to show yardage to the green. The natural markers have the advantage of being permanent, looking part of the course landscaping, and being almost vandal-proof. If the plant species is carefully chosen and placed well in the rough for the larger growing ones, such markers can even add to the aesthetics of the golf hole and indeed the whole course. This is especially true when the more unusual colored and foliated or flowering varieties are used. In the Northeast, any number of ornamental trees or shrubs could be used:

- 1) *Betula papyrifera*—Paper Birch or other Birch species.
- 2) *Acer* species like the Crimson King Maple variety.
- 3) *Cornus Florida*—Flowering dogwood, or

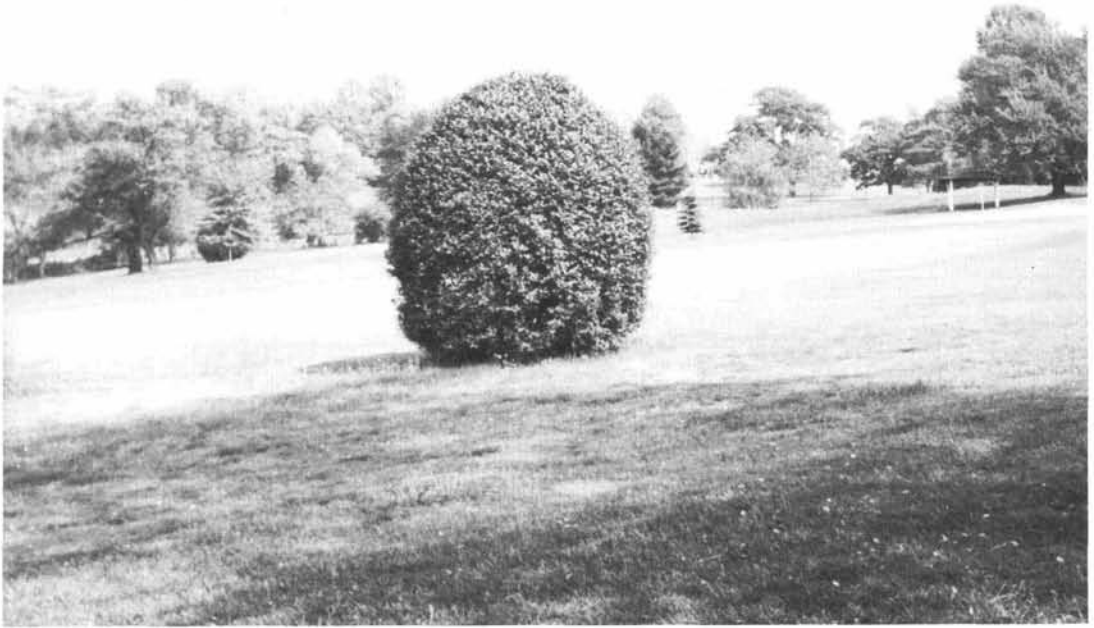


Figure 2. Larger evergreen shrub marker set well off the fairway.

- other dogwood species.
- 4) *Ilex opaca*—American holly, or other holly hybrids or species.
- 5) *Taxus cuspidata*—Upright Japanese yew.
Taxus cuspidata nana—Dwarf Japanese yew, or other yew species.
- 6) *Picea pungens glauca*—Blue Colorado spruce.
Picea pungens glauca compacta—Dwarf blue Colorado spruce.
Picea glauca—White spruce.
Picea abies pendula—Weeping Norway spruce, or other spruce species.
- 7) *Tsuga canadensis*—Canada hemlock, or other hemlock species.
- 8) *Juniperus* species—Especially the low-growing varieties.
- 9) *Azalea* species—Many different ones available.
- 10) *Thuja* species—Various arborvitae available.

- 11) *Pinus mugo mughus*—Mugho pine, or other pine species.

These are only a few examples of plant materials available through local nurserymen. Additional suggestions may be obtained from your local County Agent. This does not preclude the use of other plant materials that might suit the purpose. Individual choices however, are often limited by the region of adaptation for the various plants, membership likes and dislikes, finances, and even the imagination of the people planting the project.

Figure 2 (St. Davids Golf Club, Wayne, Pa.) shows another species of evergreen that serves the same purpose . . . i.e., indicating a set yardage to the putting green. Note that it was planted some distance off the fairway in the rough so that the shrub can grow unrestricted and have little affect on play except for poorly directed shots that should be penalized anyway.

Figure 3 illustrates a similar type of large shrub

Figure 3. Marker type and placement must be well considered so maintenance and play are little affected.





Figure 5. Imbedded type fairway marker.

situation except this particular shrub *could* cause a problem for play from the bunker, especially as it continues to grow in the future. When such naturally growing and spreading materials are used be sure they are either continually trimmed to maintain a small size (as in the case of Figure 1) or placed deep enough into the rough so when they do enlarge they will little affect play (as in the case of Figure 2).

ARTIFICIAL YARDAGE MARKERS

On many courses we have seen non-living yardage markers used to good advantage. They do not have the problem of growing or dying, are usually less expensive, and can be easily removed and replaced as the need dictates. However, this type of marker can be made so attractive as to be vandal and theft-prone unless it is very well secured.

Cover photograph (Blind Brook Club, Port Chester, N.Y.) illustrates a simple, good looking marker that shows exactly what it is . . . placed 150 yards from the center of the green. In the case of this particular marker, it is simply stuck in the ground and easily movable for mowing equipment and play.

Figure 5 (Old Oaks Country Club, Purchase, N.Y.) shows another type of marker that is simply imbedded in the center of the fairway 150 yards from the green. Because it lies flat, its effect on play and maintenance is minimal. Similarly, center row fairway irrigation heads could also serve this same purpose because they are usually uniformly placed out from the green, but not necessarily at exactly the 150-



Figure 6. Easily movable and replaceable artificial marker.

yard point . . . which is arbitrary anyway. The sprinkler heads could be trimmed and distinctively painted so they will stand out.

Figure 6 (from the Briar Hall Golf and Country Club, Briarcliff Manor, N.Y.) illustrates another artificial and inexpensive fairway yardage marker. It is simply a brightly colored pipe resting in another

Figure 7. Inexpensive yet effective wooden yardage marker.



SOMERSET HILLS COUNTRY CLUB GOLF COURSE DISTANCE CHART

Hole	Point of Measurement to Center of Green	Yards
1	Center of First Left Hand Trap	222
	Big Cherry Tree on Left	125
3	Front of Trap Left Fairway	145
4	End of Dolomites on Left	176
	Middle Fairway Bunker & Mound	84
5	End of Mound on Right	131
6	Back of Racetrack Dip	192
	Last Dogwood on Right	121
7	Furthest Dogwood on Left	215
	Middle of Trap Left Fairway	161
9	Lone Cedar Tree on Right	140
10	First Maple Tree on Left Opposite Bunker	204
	Tall Tulip Tree on Left	77
11	Direction Flag	170
	Brook	115
13	Large Oak in Clump of Trees on Right	150
14	First Pine Tree on Right	166
15	Front of Road	141
17	Last Spruce Tree in Left Rough	170
18	First Old Apple Tree on Right	164
	Front End of Bunker, Left Fairway	116

Figure 8. Separate card with yardages to the green from prominent hole landmarks.

larger diametered pipe sunk into the soil 150 yards from the green. This arrangement facilitates the marker's movement during maintenance or play and also assures that the distance will not be changed when the marker is replaced.

Figure 7 shows another inexpensive yet effective 150-yard marker (that is used at the Old Orchard Country Club, Eatontown, N.J.). This marker is a 4 x 4 piece of wood painted other than white so it is not confused with out-of-bounds markers and labeled with the appropriate yardage and placed in the rough along the fairway.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES TO YARDAGE MARKERS

The question can be asked . . . "Why indeed does the course need such markers that can be rather expensive to purchase, install, maintain, replace through vandalism, theft, or plant death?" We have seen several cases where the same end is accomplished by other means.

Figure 8 shows how a club (Somerset Hills Country Club, Bernardsville, N.J.) simply printed a separate card with yardages on it to be used in conjunction with the regular score card. This supplementary card uses already existing and prominent course landmarks, like mounds, trees, sand bunkers, brooks, etc. . . . to accomplish the same as a yardage marker installation program. The only cost is in the card itself. The card also has the advantages of listing two or perhaps more points of reference per

hole for even a more complete aid in determining yardage to the green.

Figure 9 illustrates another alternative that could be used on a score card to aid the golfer in determining yardage and thus what club to select. As in the above method, it involves no on-course planings or artificial markers but does require a redesign of the existing score card to include a map of the course layout. As the illustration shows, this map includes arcs from prominent hole landmarks listing the appropriate yardages to the green. Such a map can also aid the flow of play if the golf course is often used by many unfamiliar with it.

SUMMARY

This article is an attempt to update the situation on the usage of yardage markers on the course, if indeed the club feels they want to use them, and, admittedly many do not. It has also included some examples with associated pros and cons of the various types of markers seen in our visits to Green Section Turfgrass Service subscribing clubs. These examples and illustrations are by no means complete as this is usually a function of the tradition, industriousness, imagination, and ingenuity of the course and the individuals involved with the project.

By having a better idea as to the specific yardage, all the golfer now has to do is to hit the ball properly . . . and, "therein lies the rub."

Figure 9. Score card designed with the layout of the course and each hole's design with respective yardages from prominent hole landmarks to the green.

