



May 7, 2025

Good morning everyone,

You'll soon notice a change on Hole #17—specifically, the White Tee deck will be moved forward. This adjustment is intended to better accommodate most players assigned to the White Tees.

This particular change has been suggested often over the years, and not without lively debate on both sides. About a month ago, I conducted a detailed analysis of Cedar Brae's playing data to assess whether the White Tee placement on #17 was indeed an outlier—as many of us have long suspected. After thorough discussion at the Golf Committee (formerly known as the Captain's Committee), we agreed the data supported the move.

We believe this will be a welcome shift for many players who find themselves treating #17 as something closer to a Par 6. This change also brings us in line with practices from external events like the GTA AM Tour, which has consistently shortened that tee deck when they visit Cedar Brae.

For those interested, **I've attached a PDF** to this email outlining the rationale that was presented to the Committee. As always, feel free to reach out if you have any questions or feedback.

See you on the course,

Scott Mackenzie
Club Captain

Cedar Brae Golf Club

Rationale to Adjust Hole 17 – White Tee Placement

Prepared by: Scott Mackenzie, Club Captain

Date: April, 2025

Executive Summary

Hole 17 is tough—no surprise there. But from the **White Tees**, it goes from tough to borderline unreasonable. This tee box is the default for mid- to high-handicap players and is commonly used on Men's Day and for other club events. From this position, the hole demands a shot sequence that just doesn't match the skill level of the average player. The second shot, in particular, is a forced carry over water that most of these players can't make—even on a good day. Performance data and on-course experience both point to a straightforward fix: shift the tee forward slightly.

The Hole

- The first fairway ends at 290 yards from the White Tee, just before the river penalty area. There is a 65-yard gap from that point, over the river to the beginning of the second fairway. From there it's another 186 yards uphill to the middle of the green.
- Players with average drives of 180–200 yards are left with a second-shot carry of 155–175 yards over water.
- This forced carry, often from a downhill or uneven lie, exceeds the realistic shot distance for most players in this group.
- With no intermediate layup or safe route, players are compelled to lay up short of the river, converting a par 5 into a de facto par 6.

Statistical Outlier

- Hole 17 **from the White Tees** is the most statistically difficult hole on the course—by a wide margin. No other hole, from any tee, comes anywhere close to this level of difficulty.
- Further, with respect to just Hole 17, no other tee box is a statistical outlier in terms of difficulty. (See Scoring Chart below.)

Player Profile Bias

The White Tee data includes scores from a mix of players, including some low-handicap golfers who typically play from longer tees **but shift forward for Men's Day and other club events**. This skews the numbers downward and likely understates how challenging the hole is for the intended White Tee player. If the data were limited to mid- to high-handicap players, the difficulty would almost certainly be even higher.



Scoring Chart

The Scoring Chart below analyzes 13,885 rounds played last year, showing average scores **relative to par** from each tee box. As expected, scores improve from the forward tees to the back tees—better players typically choose longer tees.

By comparing the average score to par for each hole and tee, we've ranked hole difficulty within each tee set (see the rank beside each tee). We also looked at how consistent the difficulty is across holes from each tee. If a hole's difficulty is more than 2 standard deviations away from the tee's average, it's marked as an "outlier."

This analysis revealed a consistent pattern across all tees—*except for one glaring exception*.

Only one clear outlier stood out: **Hole 17 from the White tees**. It's 2.1 standard deviations more difficult than the White tee average—making it significantly tougher than any other hole from any tee.

The only other statistical quirk is Hole 2 from the Red tees, which shows up as unusually easy... though we doubt anyone's losing sleep over that. 😊

	RED 249 rounds (2%)			WHITE 9,136 rounds (66%)			SILVER 3,177 rounds (23%)			BLUE 1,323 rounds (10%)			Weighted Average 13,885 rounds (100%)		
Hole	Rank	Avg To Par	Outlier?	Rank	Avg To Par	Outlier?	Rank	Avg To Par	Outlier?	Rank	Avg To Par	Outlier?	Rank	Avg To Par	Outlier?
1	5	1.61	Low (2.2 SD)	2	1.30		5	0.93		1	0.74		2	1.17	
2	18	0.86		18	0.72		14	0.68		10	0.46		18	0.69	
3	8	1.43		9	1.07		11	0.78		2	0.71		10	0.98	
4	14	1.20		17	0.86		17	0.60		13	0.42		16	0.76	
5	10	1.41		12	1.01		18	0.59		17	0.22		13	0.85	
6	16	1.11		11	1.02		3	0.96		5	0.61		11	0.97	
7	13	1.35		6	1.19		8	0.84		7	0.54		6	1.05	
8	1	1.84		3	1.26		2	0.97		8	0.50		3	1.13	
9	3	1.69		5	1.21		10	0.80		12	0.43		7	1.05	
10	14	1.20		15	0.87		13	0.76		16	0.38		15	0.80	
11	17	1.05	14	0.90	12	0.77	11	0.45	14	0.83					
12	8	1.43	9	1.07	5	0.93	9	0.48	9	0.99					
13	6	1.52	8	1.13	8	0.84	15	0.39	8	1.00					
14	7	1.49	4	1.22	5	0.93	4	0.61	5	1.10					
15	11	1.38	15	0.87	16	0.62	18	0.21	17	0.76					
16	11	1.38	13	0.92	14	0.68	3	0.64	12	0.85					
17	4	1.68	1	1.45	High (2.1 SD)	4	0.95	14	0.41	1	1.24				
18	2	1.72	6	1.19		1	1.07	6	0.56	4	1.11				
Average		1.41			1.07			0.82			0.49			0.96	
StDev		0.25			0.18			0.14			0.14			0.15	

Note: The colour shading (green → red) reflects the relative difficulty of each hole **from that specific tee** only. It does **not** compare difficulty across different tees. A deeper red indicates a more challenging hole from that tee; a deeper green indicates an easier one.

Carry Expectations from a 200-Yard Drive

Most players who drive the ball 200 yards do not consistently carry a fairway wood over 160 yards—especially from a tough lie. Reaching the second fairway in two is outside the expected performance range. The current tee position effectively removes any chance of hitting the green in regulation.

In short, the current tee placement creates an unrealistic challenge and takes regulation play off the table for most White Tee golfers.

Recommendation

Move the White Tee forward by 20–30 yards (to the **back** of the new forward deck) to:

- Reduce the second-shot carry to a more manageable 130–140 yards
- Allow average players a chance to reach the second fairway in two shots
- Preserve the hole’s identity as the toughest on the course
- Promote consistency and fairness during Men’s Day and competition play

Closing Thought

Hole 17 should be difficult—but not unplayable. This modest adjustment aligns tee placement with player ability, improves pace and fairness, and enhances the overall member experience without compromising the hole’s strategic value.