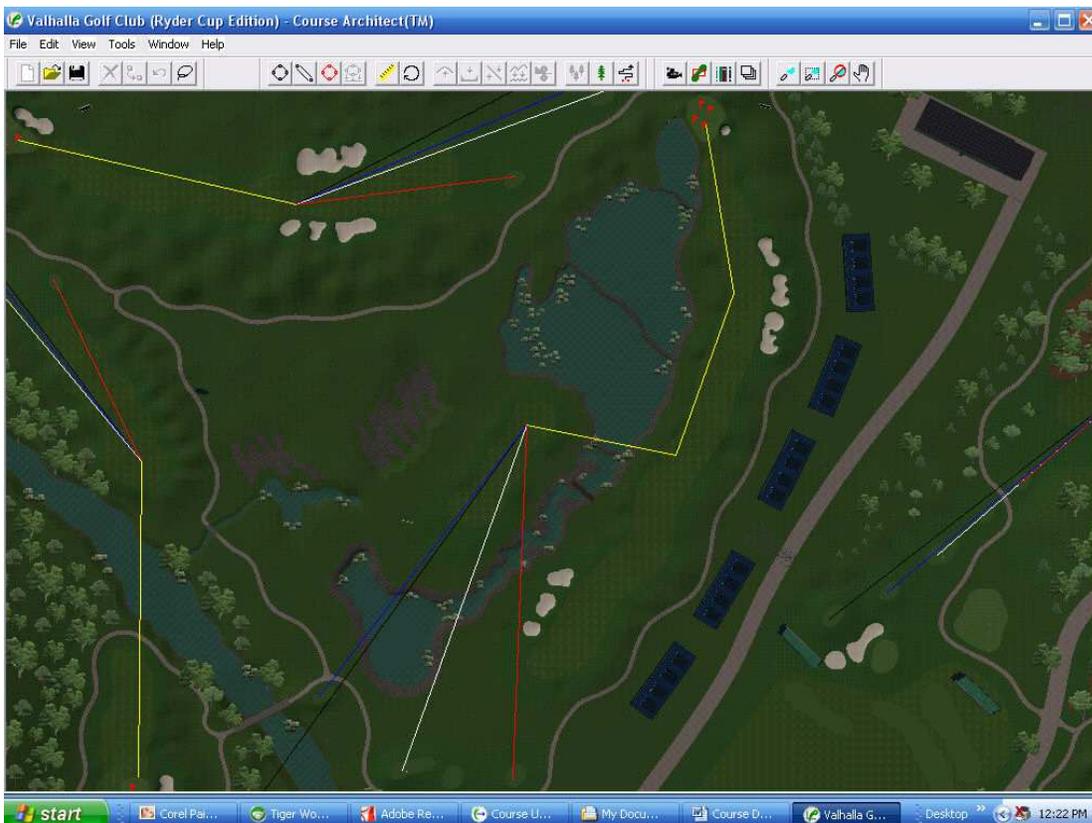


## COURSE DESIGN TIPS BY HOMEBOY

This is a list of 20 course design tips – an elaboration of a list of tips I put together a couple of years ago. These are things I wish I knew when I started designing, but I learned over the course of time from more experienced designers or through my own development as a designer.

### HOLE DEFINITION TOOL

1. When using the hole definition tool, uncheck the tournament tee – you can't play from that tee position on-line. So make the black tees the farthest back tee position.
2. If you want a long par 3, just stop the shot path short of the green (less than 240 yards). Same for long par 4's – stop the shot path short of the green so it does not become a par 5 (less than 480 yards).
3. When setting up pin positions for the green, the first pin is always easy, second is difficult, third is easy, fourth is difficult, etc. It is the opposite of what the hole definition says (because the first pin is actually numbered 0, then 1, then 2, etc.) Also, you should have at least 2 pin positions for each hole to prevent compiling errors, but ideally you should have 4 so that there is variety for tournaments playing multiple rounds. You can have more, but that just makes it harder to test each of the pin positions to make sure they are playable in very dry conditions.
4. On doglegs and other irregularly shaped holes, be sure to use several control points on your shot paths so that the entire fairway is visible in the overhead view. This is particularly important to expert players (who cannot hit the E key to preview the shot landing area) – instead, they need to use the overhead view to preview the landing area. You will typically need to use two control points before and after the corner of a dogleg. Sometimes you will need to zig-zag shot paths so that holes with double or alternate fairways will show up in the overhead view. For example, here's a pic of the shot paths on the 7<sup>th</sup> hole at Valhalla with the alternate "island" fairway:



## PLANTINGS

5. For plantings, stay away from the foresting tool; instead use the single planting (click-click) tool, pick a tree or bush, set a base height and then vary by a certain height for variety. For tall trees, I usually use 75 feet plus or minus 12 feet. For bushes, I use 7 feet plus or minus 3 feet. When I plant bushes, I try not to do the “polka dot” approach to planting, but rather plant in little clusters of 3-5 bushes. I think this gives a more natural look.
6. If you decide you don’t like a tree/bush that you planted or you want to switch to a different library, you can change all of them at once by holding CTRL and double-clicking on one of the objects. Then right-click and select the new tree/bush and the size range. Hit OK and all of the objects will be changed to the new tree/bush.

## COURSE REPAIR

7. Excessive optimizing or placing shapes too close together will often cause creases and tears. To fix these, draw a shape around it, elevate .1 feet, use as shape and increase 1 to 2 feet, smooth at minimum 1 or 2 times. This will get rid of the crease or tear. You'll need to optimize the underlying texture again.
8. For "holes" in the terrain, you can draw a shape around it and flatten around the contour. That will fix it and then you just need to smooth it out a bit.
9. Make it a habit to frequently run the Repair Course function under the Tools tab as you design. This removes invalid data on your course which will create performance issues.
10. As a preventative measure, always wait to drop your inner shapes until you are done with a hole – I mean the first cut and fringe textures. I start with the fairway shape and green shapes for designing and testing each hole. Then when I'm done with that hole, I change the green to fringe, use as shape, reduce by 2 feet and drop as a green texture. Similarly I change the fairway to first cut, use as shape, reduce by 3 feet and then drop as fairway texture. Do not optimize again.

The reason I do this is that if you drop the first cut, fairway, fringe and green textures at the beginning of elevation work, smoothing and optimizing, you will get a lot more creases and tears because you have so many shapes close together.

## CREATE PATH TOOL

11. When doing cartpaths, I always do mine in segments of no longer than 200 yards. I find that longer segments will tend to create jagged edges around curves. Also, I never use the default width of 6 feet – I think it is much more natural-looking to have the paths a couple of feet wider. Mine are always 8 feet wide. Use plenty of control points around curves to prevent jaggies.
12. Speaking of the Create Path tool, remember that you can use the tool to make nice square tee boxes. Use only 2 control points, select properties to change the width to 30 feet or so and, of course, change to a tee box texture. These tee boxes are great for links-style courses and will only be about 5-10 points each.

## SOUNDS

13. Be sure to add sounds to your course in order to add to the ambience. Right-click on the sound in the library to test it. Drag each sound onto your plot and then right-click to set the properties. I always turn the frequency down to about the 1/3 setting. Nothing ruins a round faster than having a crow “caw-cawing” in your ear incessantly.

Set the height of the sound so that it sounds like it's in the distance. Increase the radius so that it covers a

number of holes. I try not to put the sound of birds directly on the green/fairway/tee box, so they don't sound like they're on top of you. For water sounds, check the box to make it loop – e.g., babbling brooks or ocean waves.

## **GENERAL TIPS**

14. Keep the libraries to a minimum – but I'm sure you already know this from downloading courses. Even if a course is great, people will simply not download a course needing 20 libraries. Also, keep the number of stock libraries used to a minimum. The TW08 libraries are 40-60 MB each and are a drain on resources. A lot of libraries – especially stock libraries – will affect game performance.
15. For greens, always play-test your course on very dry while you are designing to make sure that all pin positions are playable and reasonably fair (since many tournaments are played on very dry) ... but challenge is good, especially on par 3's and eagle-able par 5's. Try not to put pin placements on top of a crown or on steep sidehill lies – these tend to be unfair.
16. To move an entire hole that has already been laid out, draw a shape around the hole and drop it. Then pick up that shape with children – you can move or rotate all of the shapes by holding the CTRL button. You can then hit the Drop Shapes button to drop all of the shapes simultaneously. Obviously, only the shapes will be moved – not any elevation work you may have done. Note that if you already set shot paths and pins with the hole definition tool, you will need to re-set them.
17. Use the camera to get a view of the course as you design. I always have my camera set at 6 feet high (eye level) to see whether bunkers are visible from the tee, elevations are high enough, trees are tall enough, etc. One of the few keyboard shortcuts I always use is CTRL + C to center the camera in the area on which I'm working.
18. Always wait until the very end of your design to set your course perimeter. Be sure to save it as a new version when you set the course perimeter! If you trim the perimeter too close to a hole, you will see a black area in the overhead view (similar to a missing texture). I always try to leave at least 200 yards from the outside of each hole to the edge of the plot.

## **BUFFER SHAPES**

19. Make a buffer shape around a group of holes prior to designing ... see Jimbo64's tutorial on buffer shapes at his website, [www.jimbo64.com](http://www.jimbo64.com). This helps avoid point count run-up and the dreaded transparent textures. It also helps to put a smaller buffer shape around smaller elevation work that you do – smooth and optimize within that shape and then delete it.
20. Speaking of missing textures, you need to understand that each texture on your plot can only hold about 65,000 points and then it will no longer fully render that texture – it will appear invisible and black in the overhead view. As Jimbo64 explains in his buffer tutorial, this will typically happen at the top right corner of your plot. Once you understand this, you will no longer fret over point count. The trick is: (1) using buffer shapes around small groups of holes, (2) proper smoothing/optimizing, and (3) blending textures to spread point count across various shapes. This, I believe, is the most important concept to grasp if you want to develop as a designer. Since I tend to put a lot of elevation work into my courses, I could probably devote another tutorial to my approach on dealing with point count.