



Pace of Play Policy

1. Introduction

The Flagstaff Hill Golf Club recognises the need to aim to ensure competition rounds are played in an appropriate duration to make golf more enjoyable for everyone, by:

- Ensuring players Keep Pace with the group ahead;
- Establishing 4 hours 15 minutes as the Target Time for a 4-player group to complete an 18 hole competition round;
- Introducing, educating and enforcing Ready Golf standards;
- Highlighting Timesaver Hints;
- Monitoring pace of play and enforcing Rule 6-7.

The Rules of Golf (Section 1: Etiquette and 6-7. Undue Delay; Slow Play) state:

The Committee may establish pace of play guidelines that all players should follow. It is a group's responsibility to keep up with the group in front.

A player shall play without undue delay and in accordance with any pace of play guidelines which may be laid down by the Committee.

It is a group's responsibility to keep pace with the group ahead.

2. Target Time - 4 Hours 15 minutes

Whilst it is accepted that many factors affect pace of play - relative ability, physical health and fitness, cart v's walking, type of competition, playing conditions - it is expected that all competition rounds should be completed within 4 hours 15 minutes.

A significant responsibility lies with early groups to ensure they 'lead' the field at a suitable pace to achieve the Target Time. From time to time circumstances may negatively influence the actual time taken; however all efforts should be made to meet the Target Time of 4 hours 15 minutes.

3. Target Interval - 7 Minutes

The starting interval time between groups is typically seven (7) minutes.

It is expected that all groups will maintain an interval time of seven (7) minutes with the group ahead throughout the round. From time to time circumstances (e.g. Par 3 holes) may cause the interval time to exceed seven minutes; however all efforts should then be made to catch up with the group in front.

4. Ready Golf

From Section 1 of the Rules of Golf:

It is a group's responsibility to keep up with the group in front. If it loses a clear hole and it is delaying the group behind, it should invite the group behind to play through, irrespective of the number of players in that group.

All groups should be expected that they will adopt Ready Golf.

Quite simply, Ready Golf is a common sense approach to play the ball when ready:

- Be at your 1st tee well before your designated tee time.
- Dismiss all honours;
- Don't wait for others before approaching the tee and hitting;
- Each player should play when ready, as long as doing so will not interfere with others, especially on the tee.
- Shorter hitters can often hit first, especially on the tee
- Proceed to your ball as quickly as possible;
- Play the ball as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Ensure that you have located your ball before looking for any lost balls with your playing partner
- If practical, play your ball before assisting your partners to find any lost balls

Some golf rules and etiquette address the order of play and which player has the "honour". Observance of the honour came about as a show of politeness to one's playing partners.

But out of politeness to all the golfers behind, the slow play problem requires that honours be abandoned if a group does not keep pace with the group ahead.

Note that honour must be maintained in match play.

5. Implementation

Whilst it is desirable that a satisfactory Pace of Play be achieved by education and awareness of players and the adoption of the principles set out in this policy, some action may be required by the Club in order to consistently achieve and maintain the Target Time

- (i) Routine monitoring of the pace of play via recording of starting and finishing times, with subsequent analysis
- (ii) Deployment of a marshal, as appropriate and available to monitor play on the course and assist groups in maintaining pace
- (iii) Follow up and implement actions for breach Rule 6-7 as follows:

STAGE 1 – Letter to Request Co-Operation

Each player in any group that finishes with a round time 10 minutes or more longer than the total round time recorded by the group ahead, will be sent a notice. The notice will request the player's co-operation to improve their pace of play by being aware of the situation and, if necessary, modifying their behaviour and/or their group's behaviour.

STAGE 2 – Further Letter to Request Co-Operation

Any player that has received a notice referred to in Stage 1 within the last 3 months and again plays in any group that finishes with a round time 10 minutes or more longer than the total round time recorded by the group ahead, will be sent a Stage 2 notice as a repeat offender. The notice will request the player's further co-operation to improve their pace of play by being aware of the situation and, if necessary, modifying their behaviour and/or their group's behaviour.

STAGE 3 – Report to Committee, Monitoring/Suspension

Note that these options may be implemented where required at the discretion of the Manager.

If a player is repeatedly identified to be in "slow" groups, they may be requested to attend a Match Committee meeting to explain their actions. The Match Committee shall not impose any penalties until the member has the opportunity to meet with the Match Committee to discuss the issue.

Failure to meet with or contact the Match Committee may result in a penalty automatically being applied. The Stage 3 penalty may include:

- i. For each future infringement, over a further twelve (12) week period, the player may receive a 2 shot penalty (or a loss of hole in Par, or a 2 point deduction in Stableford) in the competition of the day.
- ii. If the player has permanent booking status they may lose this privilege for a period of up to 3 months.
- iii. The player may not be able to book on the timesheet for two (2) weeks.

If a player is also put on a twelve (12) week probationary period. Two (2) further offences in that time will be penalised in accordance with Stage 4.

STAGE 4 – Subsequent Offences, Report to Committee - Suspension

If a player is identified in a slow group during the probationary period detailed in Stage 3, and as such is considered to have consistently disregarded the Policy, the player will again be requested to explain to the Match Committee. The player may be suspended from competition play for two (2) or more weeks.

At the Match Committee's discretion, extended suspensions may apply for multiple breaches.

Immediate Penalty – Severe Breach During Competition

As a further deterrent to slow play, any group that is identified as finishing their round 20 minutes or more with appropriate allowances for gaps in the field, relative number of players in the groups etc) behind the group ahead and with a round duration of over 4 hours 15 minutes, may receive an immediate penalty.

The penalty shall be 2 strokes (stroke event), 2 points (stableford) or 1 loss (par) in the competition of the day.

The decision of the Match Committee or its authorised representative shall be final.

Keep Pace – The Way To Make Golf More Enjoyable For Everyone!

Timesaver Hints

- Always be ready to hit.
- Proceed directly to your own ball, providing this does not interfere with others – be aware of fellow players.
- Plan your shot and select your club when approaching your ball.
- Prepare yourself while others are hitting.
- When in doubt as to whether your ball will be found, notify your marker and hit a provisional ball.
- If necessary, encourage your playing partners to maintain a good pace of play.
- Know the Rules of Golf, including those about out of bounds, water hazards & lost balls.
- Don't waste time.
- Even if starting after a gap in the field, your group should catch the group in front.
- Never record scores on or near the green unless whilst others are still putting out.
- Count strokes and write scores at the next tee at a time whilst others are hitting – do not delay hitting to complete your card.
- Don't leave a cart/bag in front of the green. Leave it to the side towards the next tee.
- Carry extra tees, balls and ball markers in your pocket.
- If safe to do so, encourage players on incorrect fairways to play through.
- Quickly purchase food/drink. If out of position, do not stop for a conversation.
- Do not give lessons/instruction on the course. Reserve that for a practice session. (Note that giving advice is a breach of the Rules of Golf)

On the tee.

- The first player ready to hit should do so as soon as it is safe.
- Encourage your playing partners to tee off as soon as they are ready.
- Other players should wait right next to the tee markers.
- After hitting, each player should return to their clubs and be ready to proceed to their ball whilst keeping watch of other shots to help pinpoint the position of your playing partner's ball.
- Shorter hitters should hit first if longer hitters need to wait.

On the green.

- Park clubs/cart beside the green in line with the next tee.
- Study the line, slope, grain, etc before it is your turn.
- Encourage your playing partners to putt, if they are ready to do so.
- Follow continuous putting rules until holed out, unless restricted by another player's line.
- When the first player is finished putting, they should proceed to the next tee (without disturbing the other players yet to putt).

In a cart.

- After playing your shot, move to the next player's ball before placing your club in your bag.
- If sharing a cart, after your passenger has selected their club, move to your own ball if possible.
- Players in carts should go forwards to help locate other player's balls where possible.