

Maintaining Pace of Play on the Golf Course

Play Ready Golf

Forget about the Honors System because it only wastes time. Be ready to make your shot when it is your turn to play. Have your club ready before your partner has hit. When approaching a green, return your cart as close to the next tee box as possible. This can save about one-half hour per round. Limit time searching for lost balls. Maximum search time is 3 minutes, but you do not need to take all of that time. When a hole is completed, leave the green promptly and proceed to the next tee without delay. Do the scoring for the previous hole while others in your group are playing the next tee. Only take one practice swing per shot.

Plan your shot before you get to your ball

Once you are off the tee, think ahead. Determine your yardage and make your club selection before it is your turn to play. Very often, you can do this while others are playing, without disruption.

Keep your pre-shot routine short

Pick your line of play once and trust yourself. Try to take no more than one practice swing, then set up to the ball and play your shot. Most importantly, be ready to hit when it is your turn. Be efficient after your shot too. Start moving toward your next shot promptly.

Aim to play in 20 seconds

From club selection to pre-shot routine to execution, strive to hit your shot in 20 seconds when it is your turn to play. Help keep play moving at a brisk pace.

Develop an eye for distance

Try to find a yardage marker before you reach your ball or consider investing in an electronic range-finder or global positioning system for golf. If others you are playing with are not familiar with the course, then exchange yardage information.

When sharing a cart, use a buddy system

Don't wait in the cart while your cart mate hits and then drive to your ball. Get out and walk to your ball with a few clubs. Be ready to play when it is your turn and then let your cart mate pick you up. Or, drive to your ball after you drop your cart mate off and then pick him or her up after you hit.

Be helpful to others in your group

Follow the flight of all tee shots, not just your own. Once in the fairway, if another player is looking for their ball, play your ball first if you already know its location. Help others look for their ball after you hit. Volunteer to fill in a divot or rake a bunker for another player, if needed. Pick up your teammates' clubs on the green.

Keep up with the group in front of you

Your correct position on the course is immediately behind the group in front of you, not immediately in front of the group behind you. Arrive at your next shot just before the group in front leaves the area in front of you. If there is no group in front of you, keep pace with the course pace. (On average, it should take no more than 15 minutes per hole.)

Be efficient on the putting green

Mark your ball and lift and clean it when you arrive at the putting green so you will be ready to replace it when it is your turn to play. You can usually line up your putt while others are putting, without disturbing them. Leave your clubs on the side of the putting green closest to the next tee (and cart), and leave the green promptly after holing out. Wait until the next tee to record your score.

Socialize around your play

Don't let a good conversation delay your play or prevent you from moving promptly to your next shot. Temporarily stop the conversation, then resume it while you are moving to the next shot.