



Etiquette of Golf

Etiquette is to do with manners. It is through the courtesy we show to others, that we show our respect for them, and we show how important we think they are.

The golf etiquette (or lack of it!) you display says more about you as a golfer than anything you ever do with your clubs. In a golfing context it also means respecting the traditions of the game, the course, practice, and other facilities and leaving them in the good condition you would like to find them. One of the traditions of the game is the high standard of etiquette between golfers. **EVERYONE CAN BE GOOD AT ETIQUETTE.**

Arrival

- Try to arrive well before your tee time and not to be a 'will I have a partner?' tension generator. Of course, sometimes a late or non-arrival can't be helped, but if you can't make a tee time, please ring the Pro Shop.
- Observe and obey any notices regarding etiquette on the course or around the premises.
- Mobiles phones should not be used anywhere, where they could be a distraction (course, Clubhouse, or practice facilities).
- Observe a good standard of dress on and around the golf course and in the Clubhouse.
- Green fees should be paid on arrival and **MUST** be paid before going out to play. Very early risers must make arrangements on the previous day, should they wish to tee off before the Pro Shop opens.

Rules

- Good behaviour, sportsmanship and fair play should be paramount in every golfer's thinking.
- Always show respect to other golfers and accept helpful comments and advice from more experienced golfers.
- It is only polite and fair to others, to have a reasonable knowledge of the game before setting foot on the course.
- Do not be offended if you are penalised for breaking a rule (or hopefully notified before you do so), it is against the rules of golf for your opponent(s) or playing partner(s) to ignore an infringement. If you are in doubt on a matter, consult with others in your group or, without holding up play, consult your rulebook or scorecard.

- Sharing a bag of clubs is not allowed at any time.

1st Tee

- If you meet someone on their own, it is good etiquette to ask them to join you regardless of ability. If you are asked and wish to refrain from doing so, a polite “no thank you” is all that is required.
- Do not take bags or trolleys onto teeing grounds.
- When starting, the order of play is determined by the official start sheet, or, if there is none, by the drawing of lots, e.g., by tossing a coin.
- It is common practice to mark your golf ball so it can be easily identified if later lost in the rough. Such markings should be mentioned to others in your group.
- Subsequently, the player or side winning a hole plays first at the next tee. The original order is maintained if a hole is ‘halved’ or drawn.
- The player or side with the right to play first is said to have the ‘honour.’

Tee Partners

- For safety reasons do not stand ahead (forward of the ball) of the player who is making a stroke.
- To avoid distracting the player, do not stand directly behind his line of play nor anywhere else in his peripheral vision.
- Generally, you should stand in front of (facing) the player teeing off, i.e., to the right-hand side of his line of play if the player is right-handed. If the player is left-handed, DO walk to the opposite side of the tee.
- Remain still and silent while your fellow players are playing.
- Check your shadow does not fall in an area which may distract a fellow player while making his swing.
- Do not walk into an area where you may be hit.
- Do your best to see where a fellow player’s ball finishes. Watch it in flight and help him find it if it is not readily found.

Tee Player

- Before swinging a club, make sure you won’t hit anyone.
- Don’t take any practice swings towards another person.
- Don’t play until all players ahead are out of range. If in doubt WAIT.
- Do not risk causing damage to teeing grounds, fairways, or your partner’s patience with excessive practice swings. Loosen up on the nets, not on the tee.
- If you think your ball might hit someone, warn them by shouting FORE, LOUDLY!
- Clearing the teeing area of your broken tees is a good idea.

Fairway

- In the fairway (*or rough!*), the players will be more spread out. It is important that you are aware of where other members of your group are located in order to:
 - a) determine if it is your turn to play next. The player furthest from the hole should normally play first.
 - b) avoid hitting your ball near where someone is standing or inadvertently looking for their ball.
- Generally speaking, it is safer not to walk ahead of golfers who have yet to play their shots. In practice, to save time, experienced golfers may be happy for each other to walk ahead, but the person ahead must keep well away from the playing golfer's line of play and also continually observe the state of readiness of the playing golfer to be able to stop moving when that golfer is starting to prepare for their shot. Likewise, the following golfer needs to stop moving when the player ahead starts to prepare for his shot.
- Always replace divots on the fairway and in the rough.

Wrong Fairway

- You should give priority to those golfers already on and playing that hole. If you have a lengthy wait, you may need to call through the group that is following your own group.
- Although you must drop your ball off any wrong green, in general play (*but NOT in competitions*), it is also recommended that you drop your ball off any green fringes, wrong tees and their banking so as to preserve the course.

Lost Ball

- If a ball is proving difficult to find and the following group are waiting to play, wave them through before continuing your search. This helps to keep play flowing and reduces the pressure to immediately find your ball.
- Occasionally, having just waved someone through, you will immediately find the offending ball. You should still let the following group play their shots and then consider whether your group could play on to minimise a delay. If the following group have hit their balls into places where they may be difficult to find, a total course hold up could ensue if you do not play on. You will need to judge a situation to the best of your ability. Generally, having called a group through you should then let them through.
- Remember the rules now permit a maximum of **three minutes** to look for a ball after which it is deemed lost. If you are not playing in a competition, you may wish to take less than this. If you are playing in a competition and you realise having played your shot the ball may be difficult to find, before going forward and after the others in

your group have played, DO play a provisional ball (*marked differently*) to potentially save time walking back to play a replacement ball.

Speed

- Play without delay. Do not spoil the enjoyment of others by holding them up.
- Plan your shot before it's your turn.
- Focus on staying a reasonable distance from the group ahead.
- Avoid unnecessarily 'pressing' the group ahead. Standing on a teeing ground whilst the group ahead are legitimately playing their next strokes could be classed as discourteous.
- It is understandable golfers can become impatient if the group ahead has lost ground on the group ahead of them and seem to be playing slowly. However, it is dangerous and never acceptable to send a message by hitting a ball at them. If you are tired of waiting, by all means walk ahead to their group and politely ask them to speed up play or to let you play through if they have clearly lost a complete hole on the group in front of them.
- Be additionally patient if you identify the group ahead are visitors who may not know their way around the course. Do offer help if appropriate.

Playing Through

- Playing through another group is one of the most difficult and contentious parts of golf. It is difficult because, often, there is an implication that the group who is "being played through" is guilty of slow play and they typically resent that implication – even if it is true. So, if you are going to ask another group to allow you to play through them, do so in a courteous manner and at a convenient time in the round.
- Be sure there is room for you to properly play through before you ask permission. If there is another group immediately ahead of the group you are asking, they will naturally decline to let you through and they will be annoyed that you bothered them.
- Be courteous as you hit your shots in playing through.
- If you are playing slowly (more than a hole between you and the group ahead of you) and you think the group behind might want to play through, invite them to do so. It might be convenient when you are on a green (par 3 holes are particularly good places). Wave them up, stand aside and let them hit up to the green. As they are walking up to the green you can putt out. Then allow them to tee off before you on the next tee.
- Always thank a group who have allowed you to play through.

Ready Golf

Play "Ready Golf" Whenever It's Appropriate

- If you are falling behind the group ahead and you are not playing golf in a match play tournament, it is okay to play “Ready Golf.” Ready golf means the golfer who is ready to hit can do so even though he or she may not be farthest away from the hole. Just agree with the others in your group that you will play ready golf when it makes sense. That way they won’t think you are just unaware of the rules. It is good courtesy to acknowledge that you are playing ready golf to move things along.
- Ready golf can really help to speed things along, but before you hit be sure everyone in your group knows you are going to hit, and you are aware of where everyone in your group is. You certainly do not want to hit someone who is not paying attention, nor do you want several people hitting at the same time.

Bunkers

- Enter a bunker from the low side of the bunker nearest your ball. Maintaining the high edge of bunkers is difficult and climbing down them is likely to cause damage both to the bunker and to yourself should you slip.
- When you have finished your bunker shot, use the rake to smooth out all evidence of your ball, shot and footprints, finally returning the rake to the rake holder, if provided, in each bunker.
- When raking a bunker, do make sure some sand is pushed back towards the face of a bunker to avoid the ‘No sand/Lots of sand’ unevenness which can result from a combination of bunker shot execution and simply dragging sand towards the back of a bunker on exit.

Greens

- Before you reach the green, determine in which direction the next tee is located as you can then leave bags and trolleys on the side of the green in that direction, so after putting, you will not delay any following players.
- Keep bags, trollies and buggies off all greens and their immediate surrounds.
- Do not take trollies (*or buggies!*) between greenside bunkers and the greens.
- Be aware of the location of all the balls on the green to avoid stepping on the line of a fellow player’s putt.
- Repair any pitch marks you make (*always carry your pitch mark repair tool*) and also any others that may have gone unrepaired. Remember to repair the mark by working the edges to the centre (*NOT by levering soil upwards – this creates fungus breeding air pockets*).
- Mark your ball with an acceptable ball marker (*e.g., a coin*) if the ball is anywhere near a partner’s putting line.
- Be careful where you stand so as not to distract a player. The rules of golf do not allow players to stand on the line of a player who is putting (*either behind the player or the opposite side of the hole*)
- Wait for all players to hit their balls onto the green before removing the flag (*unless specifically requested*)

- Be careful not to damage the hole or putting green when attending or when removing or replacing the flagstick. DO NOT DROP the flagstick on to the green, simply lower it.
- Generally, the player closest to the hole will attend the flagstick – although under the new rules, you can now leave it in the hole while putting.
- All players should remain on or around the green until the last putt has dropped.
- NEVER attempt to take the ball out of the hole with your putter head (*Hole edge damage risk*). Note: it is not always necessary to hole out. Doing so when your score does not count can hold up play on a busy day.
- When all players have holed out, the flagstick should be replaced correctly, ensuring the flag is left unfurled.

Next Tee

- Mark your scores on the next tee, not on the previous green.
- To save time, the person having the 'honour' should tee off before marking the card for which he is responsible.

Litter

- Litter bins are present at various holes. Please use them.
- Please do not leave cigarette butts on the course.

Buggies

- Drive with care and respect for your passenger, other golfers, the course, and maintaining the condition of the buggy for which you are liable.
- Never make sharp turns that may damage the grass.
- Stay out of bunkers and off grass mounds.
- Keep well away from tees and greens.
- Try to avoid wet areas.
- Don't drive the buggy whilst others in your group are playing a stroke.

General

- Do not lose your temper.
- Never drop your golf bag or throw clubs, especially on or around greens where irreparable damage may be caused.
- It is impolite and can be distracting to comment on an opponent's swing or stance during a game. In a competition you may be guilty of 'offering advice' which would be against the rules of golf and make you liable to a penalty.
- You may wish to sympathise with, or encourage any players not playing well, but be careful not to patronize them. Some would prefer to suffer in silence! In a competition, all competitors are expected to complete the stipulated round. If injury,

ill health, or any other reason make it necessary for you to prematurely end your round, you should make alternative arrangements for your playing partner's scorecard to be marked.

- At the end of a round, whether you win lose or finish all square, it is customary to shake hands with your fellow players in a spirit of good sportsmanship and fellowship. It is also a mark of courtesy to remove headgear before doing so.

Finally

- There is a public footpath and bridle path through the golf course which are marked by way posts. Look out for non-golfing individuals or groups as they may be unaware of their surroundings.
- Remember, it is not possible to cover every eventuality in the above notes. Try to make your decisions within the spirit of the game to mutually help each other and preserve the course.

Last but not least enjoy your game. Good luck!