

SLOW PLAY GUIDELINES

Our association had several members leave the group this year and many mentioned **slow play** as a big part of the reason.

As Tournament Director when dealing with setting up tournaments, I am often asked "How long will it take for your group to finish?" Why do the courses care? They want us to play and enjoy, but they also want to maximize revenue and get the course open to the public as quickly as possible. When I can tell the pro he will have the course back in five hours we are likely to get a better value.

I need everyone's help:

Remember it is every golfer's duty to keep up with the game in front and not just ahead of the game behind

Note the following suggestions:

The tips below aren't designed to rush players but instead to help them be ready to play. With that in mind, here are eight tips for improving pace of play.

1. The easiest of all recommendations is to **play ready-golf**. There is no need to debate, particularly when you are in the fairway, who is furthest out. The first person who is ready should hit. That goes for the tee box as well.
2. **If you aren't hitting, get ready to play**. Know where and how far you want to hit the ball when it's your turn swing.
3. **Don't wait in the cart for your partner**. Drop him or her off, go to your ball and get ready for your shot. If you want to leave the cart, that's fine, too, but take a couple clubs and start walking. Nothing wastes more time than sitting in the cart watching someone else play.
4. **Play every lost ball as a lateral hazard**, assuming you aren't in a tournament stipulating otherwise. Stroke and distance is the worst penalty in the game and it's the nemesis of pace of play. If you must adhere strictly to the rules, hit a provisional if there is any doubt.
5. **Be aware of how much time you spend looking for balls in the woods**. Too many amateurs end up traipsing through the trees in search of a ball that will provide an unplayable lie even if found. Don't be afraid to declare a ball lost. Unfortunately, it's part of the game.
6. **Fill out the scorecard on the next tee box**, not beside the green where you just putted out.
7. **Take every precaution to avoid walking back to the cart**. Keep an extra ball in your pocket if you are in search of one; bring more than one club, particularly if you are chipping and have a variety of choices. Golf is a thinking man's game and using your head before you get to the ball will speed up play.
8. **Don't mark every putt**. If you have a two-footer or something just outside the leather, go ahead and knock the ball in the hole. You shouldn't rush, but conversely, there is no need to slave over every putt as if The Masters is at stake.

If one player squanders just 30 seconds per hole, which isn't hard to do, that's nine minutes per round. The reality is the difference between playing in 4:30 and 5 hours isn't as great as some might believe.

One guy can back up an entire golf course. Don't be that guy!