

## Tips for Fighting Slow Play

What follows are some basic tips for fighting slow play. Please print and post at your club to help all of those who enjoy the game

- It all starts at the first tee: First of all, arrive in plenty of time to figure out your match, talk about the day, and receive the local rules and other materials from the starter in championship play. Not only is it a violation of the Rules of Golf to miss your tee time in competition, it's just rude in everyday play. Secondly, make sure you choose an appropriate set of tees from which to compete. You'll enjoy your round more if you're not over-challenged. And you'll speed up your round considerably. If you're not a single-digit handicap, stay away from those back tees! It's okay for players in the same group to compete from different tees – the USGA handicap system adjusts accordingly. So make sure you make the right selection before you even tee off.
- If you're playing in a stroke play event and you're ready to play, hit it! Don't wait for your fellow competitor who may be trying to select the right club. Ready golf means playing when you're ready. Of course, in match play, honors are observed, but even then your opponent can allow you to hit if you're ready and she's not.
- If you hit a ball toward the woods, or another spot, visually mark that spot and then walk (or ride) directly to it. You'll have a much better chance of finding your ball this way. And don't forget, the Rules of Golf say that no matter how much time you take looking for a lost ball, after five minutes, it's lost – so go play your provisional.
- Speaking of playing a provisional, one should be employed whenever there's ever a question as to whether the ball may be lost. It may even be hit if you hit your ball toward a hazard if there's a chance the ball may be lost outside a hazard. And golf course personnel, consider invoking the local rule that lets a player hit a provisional for a ball that may be unplayable in a hazard (see the Rules of Golf book, page 92, Appendix I, A-2-B. Provisional Ball) especially if the player would have to walk back over a bridge to proceed correctly if the rule were not in place.
- If you're playing in a stroke play event and have doubt as to procedure, play a second ball under Rule 3-3 (don't know what this is? You should also have a Rules of Golf book in your golf bag to cover any points of contention while you're out there).
- If you're sharing a cart, be aware of where your fellow competitor's ball is, take a few clubs that you may need and walk to your ball, allowing the driver of the cart to proceed to her ball. Then when you're ready to hit, start walking back toward the cart, ready to go to your next shot.
- Don't wait until you get to your ball to decide what you'll hit next – make that decision on the way to your ball, especially if you're walking. Pace off the distance from the nearest marker behind your ball so by the time you reach your ball, you know what you're going to hit and can do so in a timely fashion.
- Limit your pre-shot routine. If your average round is 80 shots and you take a practice swing for every shot, you've swung the club 160 times. No wonder you're tired! Don't rush your shot, but there's no need to overanalyze it either – the ball's not moving, hit it! Plumb bobbing from 150 yards is absolutely useless.
- Read your putt while your fellow competitors are putting. And if you're putting first, start to read your putt on the way to the ball. Also, fix ball marks while your fellow competitor is preparing to putt. And while you're at it, fix yours and another. You won't believe the difference it will make in green conditions.
- Limit your conversations to when you're walking or driving to your ball. You should NEVER delay hitting because you're waiting for someone to finish a conversation, or worse yet, because you're talking yourself.
- Park your golf cart or set your clubs down on the way to the next tee. You should never have to walk back to get your clubs. Then mark your score down on the way to the next tee, or at the next tee while you're waiting to hit.
- Don't give your opponents or fellow competitors advice. Not only is it annoying, it's against the Rules of Golf.
- Watch to see where the people in your playing group hit the ball. The more eyes on the ball, the better the chance of finding it when you get there.

- If you're waiting to hit a long shot that you potentially can reach, let the shorter hitter play the approach shot that she can't reach. Order of play means nothing if you're not on the green in a stroke play event.
- If you're not standing in someone's line, putt out. More time is wasted marking putts, and replacing the ball than in any other place on the golf course.
- Not only are cell phones annoying, they're against the etiquette of the game and are potential cause for disqualification if they're continually a problem. Shut the ringer off, or better yet, leave the phone in the car.
- Walk quickly to your ball!!!
- Have enough stuff in your pockets – tees, ball marker, extra ball, divot repair tool – so that you may play quickly. But don't have so much stuff that you can't find your ball marker.
- If you're hitting a chip shot, take the club you will use and your putter – don't return to your bag for the putter after taking your shot. Do it all in one step.
- If your playing partner just hit from a bunker, go ahead and putt your ball while you're waiting for her to "do the housework," as Mark Plummer would say. The rest of us call it raking the bunker.
- Finally, if you're playing and the ranger or player assistant comes up to tell you that you're out of position – and you're not playing in a tournament – absolutely DO NOT get belligerent. They're just trying to make the game more enjoyable for everyone. Pick up your ball and go to the next tee, taking the score that you most likely would have made on that hole, for handicap purposes. If you can't keep pace, you need to reexamine your game. While you may be frustrated, you need to be aware that those behind you are even more so. Common courtesy is a staple of the game of golf. Observe it in your pace of play.

## Slow Play Suggestions

It is suggested that a round of golf should take around four hours but this will depend on the length of the golf courses. It takes less than that on many foreign courses so we could learn some of the suggestions on how to improve our game and play ready golf. Many of us amateurs play the game for the enjoyment and exercise. That does not mean we should dawdle over every shot or scrutinize every putt. Do your practicing on the driving range and putting green it should not be done on the course.

1. Be ready to hit immediately when it's your turn.
2. Line up your putt before it's your turn.
3. Determine yardage before you arrive at your ball.
4. Select your club while approaching your ball.
5. Carry a spare ball; when in doubt, play a provisional ball.
6. Limit conversation on the green.
7. After finishing a hole, don't take practice putts.
8. Fill in your scorecard while walking to the next tee, not on the green.
9. Give instruction to your friends on the driving range or the practice green, not on the course.
10. Leave your cart or bag off to the side of the green and toward the next tee.
11. If you can't find your ball within two minutes, wave the group behind you through.
12. Look for your ball alone. Let the rest of the group get ready to hit their shots.
13. On the tee, let the first player who is ready hit.
14. If your group gives you a "gimme," don't try to make it, anyway.
15. Take a maximum of eight strokes on any fairway.
16. Reduce or eliminate practice swings.
17. Putt out (on short putts) rather than marking and waiting.
18. Reduce or eliminate the use of [cell phones](#).
19. Watch others' players drives so you can help them locate their balls.
20. Walk (briskly), don't ride. It's good for your health and, believe it or not, it'll speed up play.

Too many practice swings, too many waggles before hitting the ball, never ready with the right club, never carry an extra ball in their pocket and the most irritating is never know where their shot went. Poor eyesight can be the problem but it does slow down play.