

The Rules of Ready Golf

Introduction

We all know what Ready Golf is, don't we?

It means playing our shots when we're ready. Right? WRONG?

Ready Golf means THINKING AHEAD so that you're READY TO PLAY when it is YOUR TURN.

Ready Golf applies EVERYWHERE on the golf course -- on the tees, on the fairways and on the greens.

On The Tee

Ready Golf, we often hear, means that the person who is ready at the tee should hit first.

That is simply not true. Ready Golf means that the player with the honour should be READY to HIT FIRST. If the player with the honour isn't ready, only then should someone else hit first.

On The Fairway

Golfers are typically at their worst AFTER they have hit their tee shots. How often do you see players watch other players hit first, and start thinking about their shot only when it's their turn? How often do you see drivers of buggys wait for their partners to hit before driving to their own balls? How many times do you see four golfers walk to the player's ball that is farthest from the hole and wait for that player to hit, then move down the fairway to the other balls as if they were a caravan?

Ready Golf means that ALL golfers should go to their balls as soon as possible and get READY to play their shots. While waiting to hit, PLAYERS should SURVEY their shot, SELECT their clubs, TAKE them from their bags, and STAND at their balls READY to step up and make the shot when it is their turn. That's Ready Golf!

Ready Golf particularly means that the DRIVERS of buggys should DROP OFF their partners, let them CHOOSE their clubs (take extra ones if required), DRIVE to their own balls, and then get READY to play. DRIVERS should NOT wait for their partners to hit the shot, and then drive to their own balls to make their shots.

All players should GO TO THEIR BALLS as soon as possible. The only time players should wait for other players is if the first player's ball is in front of the other players' in such a way that the other players could be hit by the first player's shot. In particular, a CARAVAN of players should NEVER CONVERGE unless their balls are all in the same location. The only time players should stop in a group and wait for a player to hit is if the line of flight of that player's shot prevents the other players from going to their own balls.

Hint: Walk down the sides of the fairway to reach your ball, determine your club selection while waiting, and then move towards the centre to your ball. You can usually get close to your ball and get ready to play the shot, while players behind you can still make their shots.

Helping To Find Lost Balls

It is important that everyone try to help out to find a lost ball in order to keep playing moving. But players should do it AFTER hitting their shots, not BEFORE. How often do you see four players searching for a lost ball, while NONE of them are getting ready to hit?

Use common sense. The player who is closest to the pin and scheduled to hit last should be the first to help the player whose ball is lost, while the players who are farthest away from the pin should PLAY THEIR SHOTS FIRST. When the players farthest away have played their shots, they should resume looking for the lost ball, while the players who are closest should get ready to PLAY THEIR SHOTS. In this way, slow play is not compounded because of a lost ball.

Entering And Exiting Greens

How many times do you see players leave their clubs in front of a Green? When the players finish, they then walk to the front to get their clubs. ALWAYS, and we mean ALWAYS, leave clubs at the back or side of the Green closest to the next tee. If a shot is played in front of the Green first, the player should move his or her clubs to the back or side of the Green before playing the next shot. NOTHING is MORE ANNOYING than watching players walk to the FRONT of a Green to retrieve their clubs AFTER everyone has putted out. AND don't stand around chatting and writing down scores either. After the group has putted, go to the next tee, so the group behind can play their shots.

Speeding Up Play On The Greens

Emulating the pros around the putting green has done more to slow down golf than any other single event. How often do you see players waiting until it is their turn to play, and then walking around the putt as though they were putting to win a green jacket at the Master's?

Playing Ready Golf around the Greens means getting READY to putt BEFORE it is your turn! Players should line up their putts WHILE other players are putting, so they're ready to putt when it's their turn.

Ready Golf also means putting CONTINUOUSLY if the ball is not in someone else's line, and if the player does not have to spend a lot of time surveying the putt. If you miss a putt by one or two feet, for example, and have an open stance to make the next putt, you should MAKE the putt INSTEAD of MARKING the ball and waiting for another turn -- unless it is a tricky putt and you want extra time to survey it. In that case, mark the ball and survey the putt while someone else putts. When it is your turn, walk up to the ball, take your stance and make your putt.

While there are no time rules associated with putting, a rule of thumb is to get off your putt within 20 seconds from when it is your turn. This means you should be able to approach the ball, take your stance and make your putt within 20 seconds.

Obviously, you can only do this if you SURVEY the putt WHILE other players are putting. When you putt, you should always take your time, so you make a smooth, unhurried stroke. Ready Golf DOES NOT mean RUSHING.

If you prepare in advance to putt, you can take your time AND play Ready Golf.

Farthest From The Hole

There is no reason Ready Golfers can't play in the order of who is farthest from the hole. In Ready Golf, the person farthest from the hole should be READY to play first. There are, however, a few common sense exceptions.

In a foursome in which one or two players are walking and one or two are using buggys, the players with the buggys should hit FIRST if they reach their ball first and are Ready to play.

When someone hits a shot, but is still farthest from the hole, players should hit BEFORE that player if they are Ready. Here are two examples. If a player hits a tree or some obstruction with a second shot and is still farthest from the hole, the players closer to the hole should hit first to speed up play.

If someone is off the Green in a sand trap and hits it furthest from the hole, the other players should not wait for that player to walk around the green to play the next shot. Play should continue until that player is READY to make the next shot. In fact, NOTHING is more DISCONCERTING than watching three players on the green WAITING while the fourth player cleans up the sand, walks to the ball, surveys the putt and then plays.

Summary

Ready Golf means BEING READY to play, not playing when you're ready. Here are some simple rules.

- 1.Walk to your ball as soon as possible, so that you can choose your club and think about the shot in ADVANCE, not when it is your turn.
- 2.When driving a cart, drop off your partner first, let your partner choose his or her club, and then drive to your own ball to get READY to play.
- 3.When a ball is lost, hit your shot FIRST and then help look for the lost ball.
- 4.Walk down the SIDES of the fairway to reach your ball and then APPROACH it from the centre. NEVER play in a caravan, moving in a group from ball to ball....
- 5.When on the Green, line up your putt BEFORE it is your turn, and putt out immediately instead of marking, if you are not in someone else's line.