



Easingwold Golf Club

Golf Course Etiquette

We have had a significant number of new members joining the club, some of whom are also fairly new to club golf, which is good news. We therefore feel it is a good time for new and long-standing members to be reminded of some important aspects of golf etiquette.

PLAYER CONDUCT AND SPIRIT OF THE GAME

It is one of the central principles of the game of golf that players play by the Rules and in the spirit of the game. Rule 1.2 (a) is an important Rule in the Rules of Golf as it details the conduct that is expected of all players and what is meant by spirit of the game.

Rule 1.2 (a) reads as follows:

“All players are expected to play in the spirit of the game by:

- Acting with integrity – for example, by following the Rules, applying all penalties, and being honest in all aspects of play.
- Showing consideration to others – for example, by playing at a prompt pace, looking out for the safety of others, and not distracting the play of another player.
- Taking good care of the course– for example, by replacing divots, smoothing bunkers, repairing ball-marks, and not causing unnecessary damage to the course.

PACE OF PLAY

Over the past few years (and particularly since 2019) there have been changes made to R&A Rules regarding Etiquette on the Golf Course. The recent 2019 changes were particularly intent on reducing slow play on the course. Some of these are already having a positive impact on the speed of play, including:

- Play Ready Golf
- Putting with the Flagstick in (now a Covid-19 Local Rule of course)
- Time allowed searching for a lost ball (reduced from 5 minutes to 3 minutes)

However, as we will all be aware, from time to time, we still find ourselves in a situation where groups lose their position on the course. This may be due to any number of factors from a single individual in the group being slow or from time taken to look for balls that are proving difficult to find.

How long should a round take – there is no simple answer to this as it depends on factors such as:

- Size of group - a 1/2/3 ball will play quicker than a 4 ball etc.
- Ability in the groups – higher handicappers will generally take longer than lower handicappers (unless you watch the professionals who appear to be a law unto themselves).
- Weather conditions. Wind / Rain can slow down the pace of play.

Experience around Easingwold Golf Club suggests that a 4 Ball should complete their round in about 3 hours 45 minutes, but 3 balls may only take 3 hours 30 minutes and 1 or 2 balls quicker still. It is inevitable in these situations that the smaller size groups will have to wait at times on the course.

How can we therefore, either avoid slow play or mitigate the impact of playing slowly on other groups following behind us?



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1. PLAY READY GOLF

Ready Golf has been incorporated into the 2019 R&A Rules book and can take many forms including:

- Hitting a shot when safe to do so if a player farther away faces a challenging shot and is taking time to assess their options.
- Shorter hitters playing first from the tee or fairway if longer hitters have to wait.
- Hitting a tee shot if the person with the honour is delayed in being ready to play.
- Hitting a shot before helping someone to look for a lost ball.
- Hitting a shot if a person who has just played from a greenside bunker is still farthest from the hole but is delayed due to raking the bunker.
- When a player's ball has gone over the back of a green, any player closer to the hole but chipping from the front of the green should play while the other player is having to walk to their ball and assess their shot.
- Leave your bag where you intend to leave the green rather than where you get on to it. You may need to mark your ball to allow others to play whilst you do this.
- Study your next shot while others are preparing for theirs, both on and off the green
- Consider putting out a short putt even if it means standing close to someone else's line.
- Marking scores upon immediate arrival at the next tee, except that the first player to tee off marks their card immediately after teeing off.

2. PLAY PROVISIONAL BALL

If a player considers there may be a chance that their ball is either lost or out of bounds, play a provisional ball at all times.

This is especially true following the 2019 change that allows only 3 minutes of searching time (down from the previous 5 minutes).

Playing the provisional ball reduces the time it would take to walk back to the tee, play another ball and then walk on to catch up your playing partners.

3. ALLOW GROUP BEHIND TO PLAY THROUGH

Be aware of your position on the course and how you are potentially impacting on other groups following you.

The basic advice in this regard is that if a group keeps up with the group in front, you will rarely be accused of slow play. Players should always be looking forward, ensuring that they are maintaining a good position in relation to the group in front; for example, making sure that they do not have an empty par 4 hole in between them. If ground has been lost on the group in front, then all of the players in the group should take responsibility for making up that ground as quickly as possible. It is inevitable that there will be holes that take longer to play than would normally be the case, either due to bad play or some other delay, but the key is for the all the players in that group to ensure that the group gets back into position promptly.

If a group cannot keep its position on the course for whatever reason, and is delaying the group behind, then it should invite the group behind to play through so that the group can play at the pace it is capable of. Inviting a group behind to play through means that it will take longer for the group doing the calling through to complete the round.



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This is due to having to wait for the “playing through” group to get out of range before continuing play. However, while the round time may be slightly increased, it is likely that the “inviting” group will enjoy its game more without being constantly pressurised by the group behind, and the group that has been allowed to play through will have had their enjoyment enhanced.

It is possible to mitigate this to an extent by playing the remainder of the hole being “played through” at the same time as the group being played through, then to let the group played through to putt out first and progress to the next tee whilst you put out. This will also minimise the impact on any other groups following behind if you have waited on the fairway to play to the green.

NOTE – there is a popular misconception that groups do not have to let single players through as they believe they “have no standing on the course”. This situation was eliminated from the Rules of Golf several years ago and single golfers have the same rights on the course as any other size group.

NOTE 2 – groups playing in matchplay KO competitions should be allowed to ‘play through’ if requested to do so (courteously), particularly if there are concerns over being able to finish the round due to fading light. Matches going down the 19th hole (i.e., the 1st) should also be allowed to ‘cut in’ when necessary.

A couple of additional areas we’d like to make you aware of:

Use of White Tees – at EGC members are allowed to play off the White tees at any time, including social golf and when playing with guests. They are also available to be used when submitting General Play cards.

Cutting In – There may be occasions during a round of social golf when it is not intended or possible to complete a full 18 holes. For example you might wish to play holes 1-5 and then go across and play the 9th (and 10th); or holes 1-7 and then play the 15th; or play holes 1-11 and then go across and play the 18th. The rule is that if you are cutting-in, then the hole previous to the one to which you are moving to should be clear of golfers before doing so. Players on the previous hole have priority and so should be allowed to tee-off before you. This will be particularly important to adhere to when cutting onto the 9th as the 8th hole is not visible from the 9th tee.

Scorecards – just a quick reminder of the requirements regarding scorecards after completion of competition or general play rounds. Once the round is complete and the verification of scores conducted, scores should be entered into the computer (either via the PSI screen in the lounge, behind the pro-shop if lounge is closed, or via the MSI HDID App). Cards should then be placed in either a) the competition box in the lounge (or outside clubhouse opening hours in the red metal box outside the entrance to the clubhouse); or b) the wooden General Play box to the left of the main noticeboard at the entrance to the Locker Rooms.

Play Safe - Stay Safe

Enjoy your golf
H&C