

Pace Of Play Policy – Merewether Golf Club (MGC)

Introduction

At Merewether Golf Club, we are committed to providing an enjoyable and efficient golfing experience for all members and guests. Slow play can disrupt the flow of the course and diminish the experience for everyone. To ensure a smooth pace of play, we have established the following Pace of Play Policy (PoPP).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to minimize slow play on the course, ensure fair and consistent enforcement, and maintain the quality of play for all participants.

General Guidelines

1. **Tee Times:** Players must arrive at the tee box at least 10 minutes before their scheduled tee time.
2. **Group Size:** Groups should consist of no more than four players unless approved by the club management.
3. **Ready Golf:** Players are encouraged to play “ready golf” – hit when ready, rather than strictly adhering to the traditional honour system.
4. **Be aware:** of your pace and where you are in relation to the group in front.
5. **Plan:** Make sure that you have all the necessary equipment and supplies before you tee off and during your round plan your shots while others are playing.
6. **Lost Balls:** A maximum of 3 minutes is allowed to search for a lost ball. If you think a ball will be hard to find, a provisional ball should be played.
7. **Practice Swings:** Limit practice swings to one or two per shot.
8. **Continuous Putting:** Once you start putting, if it’s practical to do so, continue until the ball is holed.
9. **Scorecards:** Mark scores on the way to the next tee or during the next hole, not on the green. If marking at the next tee, do so whilst someone else is teeing off.
10. **Please:** keep conversations brief and focused during play.

Specific Pace of Play Requirements

1. **Time Allotment:** Each round of golf should be completed in no more than 4 hours and 30 minutes.
2. **Course Marshalls:** Course Marshalls may monitor the pace of play and have the authority to enforce the Slow Play Policy.
3. **Position on the Course:** Groups are expected to keep pace with the group in front of them. A group is considered out of position if they are more than one hole behind.

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Enforcement

1. **Warning:** The first instance of slow play will result in a verbal warning from a course Marshall.
2. **Move Up:** If slow play continues, the group may be asked to move up to their correct position on the course even if that means taking a miss on the hole in order to do so. In stroke play, a two shot penalty will be awarded to every player in the group.
3. **Repeat Offenders:** Persistent slow play offenders may face further disciplinary actions.

Implementation of Penalties for Repeat Slow Play Offenders

Stage 1 – First warning – Written notice to request co-operation and improvement of pace of play

Each player in any group that is identified as breaching either of the following will be advised in writing, notifying them of the details of their breach, and suggesting ways to improve their times by modifying their behaviour or the group's behaviour.

- Being out of position as per the Target Interval for more than two holes of play
 - Target interval is the interval between groups which is typically 8 minutes.
- Finishing a round 15 minutes or more longer than the total time recorded by the group ahead

NB: No notice will be issued if the group finishes within the appropriate Target Time.

- Target Time is 4 hours and 30 minutes for 18 holes at MGC. It is acknowledged that course conditions, walkers vs carts, general fitness and competition format can all affect speed of play, but every effort should be made to achieve this target time.

Stage 2 – Second warning - Further Letter to Request Co-Operation

Any player who reoffends within a 12-week period will be sent a further letter stating the details and again requesting their co-operation to improve their group's slow play.

The notice will also warn that further breaches may result in Stage 3 sanctions

Stage 3 – Report to Committee, Monitoring, Suspension, Timesheet Restrictions

If a player is again in breach within a further 12 weeks, they will be asked to attend a meeting with the Golf Operations Committee to explain their actions.

The Golf Operations Committee shall not impose any penalties until the Member has had the opportunity to discuss the issue. Failure to respond to the Committee's request for a meeting within 14 days may result in a Stage 3 penalty being automatically applied.

Penalties may include any or all of the following:

- For a midweek competition, the player may only be allocated the last timeslot on the timesheet for any period up to 12 weeks.
- A player may have their Saturday playing rights suspended for 2 weeks .
- The player may only be permitted to book on the timesheet 24 hours before a round for any period up to 12 weeks

Following a Stage 3 Notice, the player will be placed on a 6-month probationary period. Two further offences in that time will be penalised in accordance with Stage 4

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Stage 4 – Subsequent Offences, Report to Committee, Suspension

Where a player is identified as persistently breaching previous warnings and advice, the player will again be asked to meet with the Golf Operations Committee to provide explanation.

Stage 4 penalties may include any or all of the following:

- For a midweek competition, the player may only be allocated the last timeslot on the timesheet for any period up to six months.
- The player may not be able to book on the timesheet until 24 hours before a round for a period up to six months
- The player may be suspended from all competition for up to 3 months

At the Golf Operations Committee's discretion, additional and extended suspensions may apply for multiple or consistent breaches.

Appeal Process

Any player who is sent a letter advising them of a breach of the PoPP may appeal to the Golf Operations Committee in writing if they believe they have a reasonable explanation for the breach.

Feedback

We encourage members and guests to provide feedback on the pace of play and the enforcement of this policy. Your input is valuable in helping us maintain an enjoyable golfing environment.

Conclusion

We appreciate your cooperation in adhering to the Pace of Play Policy. By doing so, you help ensure that everyone can enjoy their time on the course. Thank you for your understanding and commitment to keeping Merewether Golf Club a great golfing destination.