

2004 ED Golf Course Etiquette and Rules

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Etiquette

The spirit of the game

The game relies on the integrity of the individual to show consideration for other players and to abide by the rules – disciplined, courtesy and sportsmanship.

When you think of cheating

Ask yourself why do you play. You want to test your skill.

When you get angry or upset

Ask yourself why do you play. You want to spend some happy time with your friend in the great nature.

Safety

- Players should ensure that no one is within range to be hit by the club, the ball or any stone, pebbles, twigs or the like
- Play only when players in front is out of range
- Alert third parties working in the course when play
- When play is out of control or goes wild, do shout “fore”

Consideration

- No disturbance or distraction
 - Moving
 - Talking
 - Making unnecessary noise
 - Shut off/silence electronic device
 - Try to stay behind the one about to make a stroke
- On the tee off ground
 - Do not tee one’s ball until one’s turn
 - Do not stand close to or directly behind the ball or hole when someone is about to tee off
- On the green
 - Do not stand on other’s line of putt
 - Do not cast shadow over other’s ball or line of putt
 - Remain or close to the green until everyone finish their putts

Pace of play

- Play at good pace and keep up
 - It is a group’s responsibility to keep up with the group in front
 - If one loses a clear hole and is delaying, invite the group behind to play through, **irrespective of the group size**
- Be ready to play
 - Always get ready to play

- When playing on or near the putting green, leave the bags or carts where quick movement off the green and towards the next green is possible
- When everyone complete putting leave the green promptly
- Lost ball
 - Whenever in doubt, play a provisional ball to save time
 - When the searching of a ball appears to take sometime, signal the group behind to play through (don't wait until 5')

Priority on the course

- Unless stated the otherwise, pace of play determines priority
- Groups playing a whole round is entitle to pass a group playing a shorter round
- **A single player has no standing and shall give way to a match of any kind (deleted in 2004 edition)**

Care of the course

- Bunkers – restore bunkers into its normal conditions
- Repair divots, ball-marks and damage by spikes
- Avoid damages to green – flagsticks, abnormal walking or running, golf bags, throwing of putters in anger
- Golf cart- follow instruction during use
- Damage through practice swings – don't take divots during practice swings

Key Rules

Rule 1.2 – Exerting influence on ball

- A player or caddie must not take any action to influence the position or the movement of a ball.

Rule 1.3 – agreement to waive rules

- Players must not agree to exclude the operation of any rule or to waive any penalty incurred.

Rule 1.4 - Points not covered by rules

- Doubts or dispute not covered should be addressed according to **equity**.

Types of competition

- Stroke play also known as medal play
- Match play

Identify your own balls

- It is your own responsibility to identify your balls in play
- Simply saying that “mine is a Titleist Pro VI #3” is not sufficient evidence of ball ownership
- Playing the wrong ball, except in hazards, incurs a penalty of two strokes

Play the ball as it lies

- You are deemed to have addressed if you ground your club (except in hazard), ball thereafter moved is your responsibility (18-2-b).

- 1 stroke penalty if you move your ball at rest
- 2 stroke penalty if you move your ball in motion (try to exert influence)

Teeing off

- The tee off boundary is an imaginary rectangle formed by the two tee markers and two club length
- The ball must be within the tee off box but not the player
- If a ball, when not in play, falls off a tee or is knocked off a tee by the partner in addressing it, it may be re-teeed without penalty. However, if a stroke is made at the ball in these circumstances, whether the ball is moving or not, the stroke counts but there is no penalty (11-4)

Order of play

- Tee off order determined by lot
- Subsequent order of play determined by honour: the lowest score hit first
- When the current score is the same, count back the last hole
- After tee off, distance from the hole is the sole determinant of play order, i.e. the one further from the hole play first.
- Once teed off, the ball is in play.

Out of bound

- The boundary of the course of a hole is marked by white stakes.
- A ball out of, or touching, the boundary marks is OB.
- Play at where your ball last lied and 2 stroke penalty when OB.

Lost ball

- A ball is lost when it cannot be found or identified within 5 minutes.
- Play a provisional ball at where the ball last lied or declare it lost and play another ball with 1 stroke penalty.

Provisional ball

- A provisional ball is a ball played to save time when the player is not sure if the ball is OB or lost.
- A provisional ball continues to be provisional until it passes the point where the ball is supposed to be OB or lost. Thereafter, the ball is in play when hit.
- If your ball is not OB or lost, you must abandon your provisional ball and continue the *play* with the original ball.

Regular water hazards

- Marked by yellow stakes.
- Play as it lies (if you can) or take 1 stroke penalty and proceed:
 - Drop a ball behind the hazard in line with the hole and the point at which the ball last crossed the margin of the hazard.
 - Replay the shot from where your original ball was hit, if it was from the tee, you may re-tee.

Lateral water hazards

- Defined by red stakes.
- Same options as for regular water hazard plus:

- Drop a ball within two club lengths of the point where the ball last crossed the line of the hazard.
- Drop a ball within two club lengths on the opposite margin of the hazard at a point that is equidistant from the hole.

Unplayable lies

- The player, as a sole judge, may deem his ball unplayable at **any place on the course except the ball is in a water hazard.**
- When ball is unplayable, he must, under 1 stroke penalty:
 - Play a ball as nearly as possible at the spot from which the original ball was last played
 - Drop a ball behind the point where the ball lay, keeping that point directly between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped, with no limit on how far behind that point the ball may be dropped.
 - Drop a ball within two club lengths of the spot where the ball lay, but not closer to the hole.
- If the unplayable ball is in a bunker, the player must drop the ball in the bunker when the last two options is exercised.

On the green

- Always mark your ball before lifting.
- The line of putt must not be touched except:
 - The player may remove loose impediments, provided he does not press anything down.
 - The player may place the club in front of the ball when addressing it, provided he does not press anything down.
 - In measuring.
 - In lifting the ball.
 - In pressing down a ball mark.
 - In repairing old hole plugs or ball marks on the putting green.
 - In removing movable obstructions.

The Flagstick

- Hitting the flagstick from the green incurs 2 strokes penalty.
- You may ask someone to attend to the flagstick for alignment.
- Hitting the flagstick from off the green incurs no penalty.

References:

R & A LTD. (2004). Rolf Rules Illustrated. Hamlyn.

Adams M and Tomasi T J (2000). Total Golf. Carlton Books.