

# Golf for Beginners:

## Golf Etiquette and Rules

### Getting Ready:

- Check the scorecard to learn any local rules.
- Local rules apply only to the specific course you are playing.
- Make sure to place an identifying mark on your ball and inform the other players the type and number ball you are playing.
- Exchange scorecards with another in the foursome.
- Turn off cell phones and avoid distractions while other are in position to hit.

### Avoid Slow play:

Helpful tips on keeping up with the pace of play and the group in front of you:

- Walk at a reasonable speed between shots.
- Begin planning your next shot as you approach the ball by studying the strength and direction of the wind.
- When you reach your ball, check the lie, select your club, visualize your swing, and shot, and then play your shot.
- From the time you select your club until you hit your shot, you should take no more than 30 to 45 seconds.
- Be aware of your surroundings and your ball's flight direction to easily find your ball when going into a hazard or out of bounds.
- If you think your ball is out of bounds, you may hit another and announce to your group that you are hitting a provisional. If you find the 1<sup>st</sup> ball, play it otherwise play your 2<sup>nd</sup> ball with a 1-stroke penalty.
- If you aren't ready to play when it is your turn, encourage one of your fellow players to play.

### Maintaining the course:

- Replace your divots and/or simply fill in the divot with the mixture supplied by the course.
- Bring a rake into the bunker with you -- remembering that you should always enter the bunker from the low side at a point nearest to the ball.

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- Whenever possible, avoid walking on the steep face of a bunker.
- After hitting your shot, rake the area you played from, as well as all your footprints and any others within reach.
- Rakes should be left either in or nearby the bunker.
- Important to repair any pitch marks or indentations caused by the ball hitting the green.
- Using a tee, knife, key, or repair tool, repair the mark by working the edges towards the center, without lifting the center of the mark. Don't tear the grass. Finish by smoothing the area with a club or your foot. Try to get the area smooth enough to putt over.

### On the green, remember:

- Don't step on your fellow players putting lines -- the imaginary line that connects the ball to the hole.
- If your ball is on a player's line, volunteer to mark and move the ball. Remember to replace your ball to its original position.
- If your ball is not furthest from the cup: mark your ball.
- Do not stand where you might distract a fellow player and don't move.
- Don't make any noise when your fellow player is preparing to putt.
- If you are asked to tend the flagstick, make sure you aren't standing on anyone's line.
- Hold the flagstick at arm's length so the flag doesn't flutter in the breeze, and make sure your shadow doesn't fall across the hole or line. The flagstick should be replaced right after the player has hit the ball.
- If you lay down the flagstick, lay it off the green to prevent doing any damage to the green.
- Generally, the player closest to the hole will tend the flagstick.
- After everyone has putted out, immediately leave the green and move to the next tee.

### Miscellaneous:

- If you hit a tee shot into the woods and suspect that it might be either lost or out-of-bounds, the Rules of Golf allow you to play a second or provisional ball.
- You then have three minutes from the time you reach the spot where you suspect the ball landed to find the ball. If it is not found within that three-minute period, you must declare it lost and play your provisional ball with a one-stroke penalty

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- If, however, you play the provisional ball and subsequently find your original ball in-bounds, you must pick up your provisional and continue to play the original ball, in-bounds.
- Out of bounds balls are assessed the penalty of "stroke and distance". For a complete discussion of the Rules of Golf, visit the USGA's web site.
- For safety's sake, never hit when there's a chance you might be able to reach the group ahead of you, and anytime you hit a shot that you think even has remote chance of hitting any other players, yell "Fore" immediately, and make a point of apologizing to any players your ball lands nearby.
- Displays of frustration are one thing, but outbursts of temper are quite another. Yelling, screaming, throwing clubs, or otherwise making a fool of yourself are unacceptable and, in some cases, dangerous to yourself and others.
- As a player, you also have a responsibility to learn and understand the Rules of Golf.
- Five of the most common Rules are those deal with Out of Bounds, Lost balls,

### **Unplayable lies, cart paths and water hazards.**

- If you are in a situation where you don't want to or don't think you can play your ball, you always have the option of taking relief under the Unplayable Ball Rule. The player is the only person who can decide that their ball is unplayable, and this can be done anywhere on the golf course except when your ball lies in a penalty area. You have 3 relief options, all for 1 penalty stroke.
  - 1) go back to the spot of your previous stroke and play
  - 2) go back as far as you'd like and drop on the line from the hole through the spot where the ball lies (back-on-the-line relief).
  - 3) Your third option is to drop anywhere within two club-lengths of where your ball lies, no closer to the hole (lateral relief).
- If your ball lies in a bunker, you must remain inside the bunker under options two and three. You also have a
  - 4) fourth option for an extra penalty stroke (two penalty strokes total) which allows you to go back on the line and drop your ball outside the bunker.
- You are entitled to free relief from a cart path if the ball comes to rest upon the path or the golfer's swing or stance is inhibited by the path. Your nearest point of relief will be the spot on the golf course nearest to where your ball lies if that is not nearer to the hole. Use the club you would have used if the cart path was not there.

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## **Posting:**

- Players must remember to keep a copy of their score for posting to GHIN as 'Competition.' Post Hole by Hole.
- Any player picking up their ball or scored with an Equitable Stroke and/or did not finish a hole, please mark 'WD' on top of scorecard. Also place an 'X' and you're most likely score on the scorecard. You may continue to play the round. You will, however, not compete in the competition.
- Any player that does not turn in and/or sign their card is disqualified. These players are not eligible for the competition.