



Pace of Play Manual



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a practical way
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Manual is all about. ’

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Foreword

Golfers' views on pace of play in our club game are markedly varied. It has been a topic of conversation for a long time with emotive perspectives. Moving from discussion to a practical way forward is what this Manual is all about.

In 2014/2015, The R&A took two important steps in gaining a better understanding of the issues affecting pace of play in golf. The first was to undertake an extensive international survey of golfers' views on pace of play and how it affected their enjoyment of the sport. The survey received more than 56,000 responses from golfers in 122 countries. One of the key findings was that 60% of golfers said they would enjoy golf more if they played in less time.

The second step was to organise a conference in St Andrews entitled Time for Golf. We invited professionals and administrators involved in golf at all levels of the sport to come together to discuss the survey findings and the various approaches adopted to deal with pace of play around the world. We heard from leading professionals such as Ryder Cup player Stephen Gallacher and Ladies European Tour player Rebecca Hudson, as well as PGA Master Professional Denis Pugh and former Great Britain and Ireland Walker Cup Captain Nigel Edwards. We also heard from club secretaries, course managers and senior commercial operators who gave some fascinating insights into their methods of ensuring good pace of play.

The research and the conference gave us an important basis on which to draw some conclusions about best practice in improving pace of play at courses around the world. It also reinforced the feeling that there is no magic wand or 'one-size-fits-all' solution to improving pace of play. Indeed, for some courses it is not a problem at all.

The next stage of the process was to capture some of these insights and produce a document which could benefit the wider sport by giving a useful guide to best practice in the key areas of management, course set-up and player behaviour. People often assume that poor pace of play is purely a result of player behaviour but the reality is much more complex than that and there are many different factors which can impact on the time it takes to go round a golf course.

This Manual is the outcome of that process of research, discussion and consideration. It is intended as a guide which brings together a wide selection of different approaches in these respective areas and which reflect the focus of the discussions at the conference. It offers thoughtful solutions and approaches which have proved to be effective.

A great deal of work has gone into pulling this publication together and I would like to extend my appreciation to all of those who have contributed ideas and opinions throughout the process. I have no hesitation in commending it as a useful and informative guide on how to improve pace of play.

Martin Slumbers
Chief Executive, The R&A

Introduction

1.1 The Issue

Golf is a sport that, by its nature, takes longer to play than many other sports. Consequently, any increase in the time taken to play a round of golf needs to be considered as a potential significant barrier to people taking up the sport or to active golfers playing more often.

It is a commonly held view that rounds of golf played over the same course take longer now than they once did. While it is impossible to confirm that this is the case, whether it is true or not is almost irrelevant. What is important is whether a significant proportion of golfers playing on a certain course on a certain day feel that the time taken to play, or the amount of time they had to wait, was excessive and feel that it negatively impacted on their enjoyment.

When the pace of play is causing players who enjoy golf to enjoy it less, and they are experiencing reduced enjoyment on a regular basis, it has become a problem, and something needs to be done about it.

When The R&A undertook its global survey on pace of play in 2015, the results showed that 60% of the 56,000 golfers that completed the survey would enjoy the sport more if it took less time. On average the respondents to the survey played golf twice a week. This demonstrates that, even among those who play golf regularly, there is a strong desire to play in less time.

1.2 Purpose of the Manual

The purpose of this Manual is to provide anyone committed to improving pace of play with a range of solutions that can actually deliver the desired improvements. By reading this Manual, those responsible for operating golf facilities, whether they be owners, managers, club professionals, greenkeepers or committees, should be able to identify their own issues that are causing pace of play to be worse than necessary and apply solutions to alleviate the problem.

We do not promise an easy fix. There is no single solution that applies across the board. There is no single target for everyone to aim towards. Local, national and international variations in courses, forms of play, level of competition, weather and expectation mean that each facility has to set its own targets. These targets need to be realistic and should be aimed at improving customer satisfaction.

Nevertheless, it is The R&A's strongly held view that, having identified pace of play as an issue, there are solutions available that can result in improvements at any facility. It may be that one single change in procedure does not, of itself, bring

about huge change. However, introducing a number of the initiatives offered in this Manual, and staying committed to those initiatives, can and will make a difference. It is appreciated that, due to resources, some of the solutions offered in the Manual may be unrealistic for some facilities, but most of the principal solutions should be capable of being applied by all.

1.3 The Benefits of Improved Pace of Play

As stated above, research shows that a clear majority of golfers would enjoy the sport more if it took less time to play; there are very few players who enjoy playing slowly or having to wait to play shots on a regular basis during the round. So, purely from the perspective of increasing player enjoyment, there is a benefit to be derived from improved pace of play. Crucially, however, this increased enjoyment brings with it ancillary benefits to those who are operating facilities and are having to make the effort to tackle the pace of play issue.

It is safe to assume that players are more likely to want to play a course again or recommend a course to others if their experience did not involve an overly long round or excessive waiting time. Positive testimony alone is likely to reap financial benefits for facilities where pace of play is well managed.



In addition to the benefits of securing repeat business and retention of members, research has shown that golfers are willing to pay an average of 9.1 percent more in green fees for a significant improvement in pace, with significant being 15-30 minutes. The same research showed that respondents younger than 40 would pay 14.2 percent more. It can be seen that a good pace of play enhances the product and, potentially, adds value to it.

1.4 The Approach

This Manual takes a holistic approach to pace of play, recognising that management practices, course set up and player behaviour all combine to cause issues with pace of play. The common misconception is that players are the sole cause. The reality is that many of the barriers to playing at a good pace are in place long before players themselves have a negative impact.

Providing insufficient time between groups teeing off, leading to overcrowding of the course and waiting, is a common management practice that can mean that rounds are doomed to take longer than most players would like.

Courses are often set up or designed to be too difficult for the majority of golfers that play them. A lack of teeing options to cater for the differences in player hitting distances, rough near to the fairway in which balls can frequently be lost or excessive green speeds or green firmness are just some examples of course features that can cause excessive delays and round times.

Individual players can, of course, have a negative effect on pace of play, but that effect may be relatively insignificant when compared to the impact that poor management practices and ill-considered course set up can have.

The approach of this Manual is to review all three aspects – management practices, course set up and player behaviour – that can contribute to the problem. The huge upside to there being three potential problems is that it enables all of us, potentially, to be part of the solution.



1.5 Soliciting Opinion and Data Gathering

Before embarking on any attempts to improve pace of play, it is best to assess whether there is a widespread view among users of the facility that there is an issue with pace of play.

The soliciting of opinion on pace of play will establish whether there is a genuine issue that needs to be addressed. There is little point in expending energy and resource to improve round times if the vast majority of golfers using the facility are perfectly happy with the time it takes them to play, and don't believe that playing more quickly would enhance their enjoyment.

If it is clear that there are widespread concerns with pace of play, the gathering of information on round times by administrators will be invaluable, and will enable targets for improvement to be set. Such data may also provide information on, for example, when rounds are at their shortest and longest, when the course is quiet and busy, which groups of golfers play most quickly and most slowly, etc.

This data can be a hugely valuable resource. For example, it may identify very quiet periods where single players or groups of two who wish to play more quickly are likely to be able to do so. It may highlight that visitors take more time to play, and the management may then advise members to avoid such times if they wish to play at a quicker pace. It may indicate that the time allowed for a group to play a number of holes or the full round (known as the "time par") is too generous or too strict. If weather information is also recorded, it may indicate that the course plays much harder with a certain wind for example, and that adjustments should be made to the pace of play expectations when such weather conditions exist.

Some data gathering should be considered an essential step prior to adopting practices to improve pace of play. It means that action is being taken based on fact rather than supposition, and enables proper evaluation of the success or failure of the initiatives adopted.

Collecting data need not be complicated or resource heavy. It can be as simple as taking note of the number of players in each group at the 1st tee and recording the time each group takes to play 18 holes. This can be done by the starter or by someone in the professionals shop or clubhouse. For an example of a data collection template, see Appendix A.

2. Management Practices

2.1 Introduction

As demonstrated by the results of The R&A's pace of play survey, players rarely cite golf management practices as a cause of slow play, but instead focus on the habits of their fellow players as being the root of the problem. However, research demonstrates clearly that certain management practices can have a very positive impact on pace and the flow around the course and, in equal measure, misguided management practices can create significant problems.

This section focusses on management practices, policies and miscellaneous ideas that those responsible for golf facilities may wish to consider if there is a desire to improve pace of play and player experience. It is not suggested that all of the policies that are referenced be adopted, but each golf facility should implement those which best fit the nature of the club and its course to yield positive results.

2.2 Starting Intervals

a Overcrowding the Course

It is accepted as fact, by those who have studied pace of play and flow around the course, that overcrowding is the most common cause of longer than necessary rounds and unacceptable waiting times. If the starting intervals between groups are too narrow it will result in too many groups being on the course at any one time, and, in such circumstances, adopting all or any of the other recommendations in this manual will be futile.

There have been many studies into flow around the course but, at its most basic level, the following example demonstrates the problem that arises from having narrow intervals:

- The course starts with two mid-length par 4s, followed by a mid-length par 3.
- When play is in three-balls, the allotted time for completion of the holes is as follows:
 - 1st hole in 12 minutes
 - 2nd hole in 12 minutes
 - 3rd hole in 9 minutes
- The Committee has adopted 8 minute starting intervals
- If all groups play the holes in the allotted time, by the time the second group reaches the 3rd tee it will wait for one minute on the 3rd tee and the third

group will wait for two minutes on the 3rd tee (see table below)

- The waiting time will worsen as more groups come on to the course

Starting Time	1st Hole Completed (12 minute allotted time)	2nd Hole Completed (12 minute allotted time)	3rd Hole Completed (9 minute allotted time)
9.00 am	9.12 am	9.24 am	9.33 am
9.08 am	9.20 am	9.32 am (1 minute delay on tee)	9.42 am
9.16 am	9.28 am	9.40 am (2 minute delay on tee)	9.51 am

With all aspects in the example the same, but with 10 minute starting intervals, there is no delay on the 3rd tee (see table below).

Starting Time	1st Hole Completed (12 minute allotted time)	2nd Hole Completed (12 minute allotted time)	3rd Hole Completed (9 minute allotted time)
9.00 am	9.12 am	9.24 am	9.33 am
9.10 am	9.22 am	9.34 am (no delay on tee)	9.43 am
9.20 am	9.32 am	9.44 am (no delay on tee)	9.53 am

This is a very simple example. Much more detailed and thorough explanations of the significance of starting intervals on pace of play can be reviewed in chapter 6 of “Golf’s Pace of Play Bible” by Lucius Riccio (see References Section). It is acknowledged that there is a certain amount of ebb and flow in pace of play during a round, but the message is clear – starting intervals need to be sufficiently wide for there to be any chance of achieving good pace of play and flow around the course.



The obvious question then becomes, how wide do the starting intervals need to be? The answer is, the wider the better. However, whether it is, for example, a members' club trying to give a large number of members the opportunity to play on a given day, a resort course trying to maximise revenue or a tournament organiser trying to get 156 players around the course in daylight, it is understood that there is a limit to how wide the intervals can be.

When play is in two-balls an interval of at least 8 minutes is recommended. When play is in three-balls this should be increased to at least 10 minutes. When play is in four-balls, 11 or even 12 minute intervals should be considered. A good guide is that the starting interval should not be shorter than the time it should take to play the quickest hole on the course, and this becomes particularly relevant when that hole features early in the round.

When the groups are likely to be going out in a mixture of two-balls, three-balls and four-balls, the intervals should cater for four-balls. This highlights the issues that can arise when the size of groups differs, and this topic is discussed later in this section.

A concern that is often expressed with regard to increasing starting intervals is that it reduces the number of groups that can play the course on any given day, and therefore reduces playing opportunities and, potentially, revenue. The reality is that reducing the amount of time it takes to play will mean that those starting later in the day will be guaranteed to complete their rounds and, consequently, additional

later tee times can be offered.

It is also the case that very few facilities operate at maximum capacity, so stretching out the tee times is unlikely to have a significant impact on the number of players that will in fact play the course, but it will enhance player enjoyment.

As outlined in the Introduction to the Manual, even if an alteration to the starting intervals does reduce the number of players that play the course on any one day, if the experience of those who do play is positive, the likelihood is that, over an extended period of time, more golfers will wish to play the course. In addition, those people may be prepared to pay slightly more knowing that they are guaranteed a pleasurable experience.

For an example of the potential positive financial impact of increasing starting time intervals, see the Financial Impact Study by Global Golf Advisers Inc. (see References Section).

b Empty Starting Intervals or “Starter’s Gaps”

Even with appropriate starting intervals, delays can arise on the course due to a number of factors, such as ball searches, a hole that is playing particularly hard or easy, etc. Such delays can be cleared, or at least alleviated, by having empty starting intervals, sometimes referred to as “starter’s gaps”.

If, for example, the starting intervals are 10 minutes and the Committee has an empty starting time after every 10th group, there will be a 10 minute break in play from the 1st tee every 90 minutes. If a delay has built up on a particular tee early on in the round, the starter’s gap should enable that delay, or at least some of the delay, to clear. Without the empty starting interval, the likelihood is that waiting on that hole will increase as the day goes on.

c Two-Tee Starts

A “two-tee start” is where groups start simultaneously from two different tees, usually the 1st and the 10th tees. If it is necessary to get a lot of players around a course in one day, and the course lends itself to two-tee starts, this can be an effective way of getting more players around the course more quickly.

The principal reason for this is that play through the day occurs in two “waves” – the morning wave and the afternoon wave – and the theory is that the afternoon wave is a fresh start so any delays that have built up during the morning wave do not impact on the afternoon wave. For an example of a draw for a two-tee start, see Appendix B.



If two-tee starts are adopted, it is important not to have too many groups going out from the 1st and 10th tees. This will simply result in players making the turn having to wait for the 1st and 10th tees to clear, which eliminates the potential time saving that the two-tee start creates. It can also result in the afternoon wave of tee times being delayed, which will cause more frustration for the golfers.

d Shotgun Starts

A “shotgun start” is where groups start simultaneously from multiple tees and it is an effective way of getting more players around the course in a shorter period of time, simply because more of the holes are utilised from the start rather than needing to be filled from the 1st tee (or the 1st and 10th tees). Shotgun starts are more common in club and corporate hospitality events where the concern may be less about pace of play than the desire to have all the players completing their rounds by a specific time, e.g. in order to attend a prize giving or other function. Efficient organisation is vital when conducting a shotgun start as you need to ensure that all players are in position at the appropriate starting time. Golf cart transportation can be very helpful when conducting a shotgun start.



As the course will be full from the beginning, managing a good pace of play is crucial. Like a two-tee start, a shotgun start should enable you to have two “waves” of play – a morning wave and an afternoon wave.

2.3 Number of Players in Groups

Clearly it is more likely that a group of four players, each playing their own ball, will take longer than a group of two or a group of three players doing likewise.

If administrators wish to reduce the time it takes to play, then restricting the number of players in each group is a simple method of achieving that.

That said, it is entirely reasonable for players to wish to play in groups of four, and in some countries it is common to play in groups of more than four. However, to cater for those who wish to play their rounds more quickly, administrators should consider setting aside blocks of starting times for players wishing to play in groups of two. Logically, these times should be assigned when the two-balls are not going to catch up with three-balls and four-balls, so it is best if early starting times are reserved for the smaller groups. For example, some courses adopt a “two-balls only before 9 am” policy.

The lack of managing the mix of players in two, three and four-balls through the day can lead to significant delays and conflict on the course as faster groups will want and expect to be let through.



2.4 Forms of Play

One of golf's great strengths is that there are many forms of play that can be adopted. Not only does this make the sport diverse, but it can also assist with pace of play.

Regular stroke play competitions, where players are required to hole out on each hole in order to have a valid score, tends to be the slowest form of play. Alternative stroke play competitions, such as Stableford and bogey/par competitions, which enable players to have valid scores without completing each hole, tend to be quicker, provided administrators impress on players the importance of picking up their ball when they are effectively out of the hole in so far as their score is concerned.

Similarly, match play golf tends to be quicker than stroke play, because strokes and holes can be conceded in match play.

Foursomes, where partners play alternate shots, is a good way of maintaining the social aspect of having four players in a group, while retaining the pace of play benefits of only two balls being played. The use of foursomes (or "foursome-like" golf, such as greensomes) would allow groups of four to utilise the tee times that administrators may have set aside for two-ball play only, as referenced above.

2.5 “Ready Golf”

“Ready golf” is a commonly used term which indicates that players should play when they are ready to do so, rather than adhering strictly to the “farthest from the hole plays first” stipulation in the Rules of Golf.

“Ready golf” is not appropriate

in match play due to the strategy involved between opponents and the need to have a set method for determining which player plays first. However, in stroke play formats it is only the act of agreeing to play out of turn to give one of the players an advantage that is prohibited. On this basis, it is permissible for administrators to encourage “ready golf” in stroke play, and there is strong evidence to suggest that playing “ready golf” does improve the pace of play. For example, in a survey of Australian golf clubs conducted by Golf Australia, 94% of clubs that had promoted “ready golf” to their members enjoyed some degree of success in improving pace of play, with 25% stating that they had achieved “satisfying success”.

When “ready golf” is being encouraged, players have to act sensibly to ensure that playing out of turn does not endanger other players.

“Ready golf” should not be confused with being ready to play, which is covered in the Player Behaviour section of this Manual.

The term “ready golf” has been adopted by many as a catch-all phrase for a number of actions that separately and collectively can improve pace of play. There is no official definition of the term, but examples of “ready golf” in action are:

- 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
- Putting out even if it means standing close to someone else's line
- 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
- Marking scores upon immediate arrival at the next tee, except that the first player to tee off marks their card immediately after teeing off

2.6 Time Par

“Time par” is the term given to the length of time allocated to complete each hole, a certain number of holes or the full round. Establishing a pace of play expectation, and communicating that expectation to players, is a common method of trying to improve pace of play. The time par provides a standard by which each group will be judged, and gives an objective guide on whether a group is playing at an appropriate pace. Depending on resources, enforcing the time par can be done in a number of ways, which will be covered under the heading of “Pace of Play Policies” below.

The time par can be printed on the score card, communicated at the time of booking and starting, etc. Alternatively, and sometimes more effectively, it can be displayed on the course, for example by having a sign after six holes that states “Your group should have taken no longer than 1 hour 15 minutes to reach this point”.

One drawback of having a single time par that applies to a course is that it does not take into account groups of different sizes. If there is a single time par then realistically it has to cater for play in four-balls (assuming four-ball play is permitted on the course). Consequently, it is recommended that time pars are established for two-balls, three-balls and four-balls. This means, for example, if play before a certain time is restricted to two-balls, those two-ball groups will be aware of what is expected of them in terms of time to complete the round.

For guidelines on establishing the time par, see Appendix C.

2.7 Utilising Golf Course Staff and/or Volunteers

The staff at the golf course can be a very useful resource in terms of encouraging a good pace of play. When guidance on the expected pace is given prior to the round or polite encouragement is offered during the round, more often than not players will do their best to adhere to the requests being made.

a Check-In Staff

If players are required to check-in, for example at the professional shop or at the club office, prior to playing, the check-in staff can be the first to advise on the pace of play expectations for the course or for that day. The simplest thing to do may be to display the expectation on a notice board, and then the check-in person can simply refer to it. This can then be reinforced by the starter on the first tee. Research shows that having two people make the same point can have a far greater influence than just one, and that verbal requests have more impact than written ones. Obviously it is important that the request is made in a polite and encouraging manner.



Staff at Troon Golf's Abu Dhabi Golf Club wear clothing referring to the time par for the course

b Starters

The persons responsible for administering starting, whether it is a dedicated starter or the Club professional is, generally, the last person to speak to the players before they start their round. At this point, if the starter can politely advise the players of the pace of play expectations, provide them with any guidance that may assist with pace of play (for example, encouraging “ready golf” in stroke play) and ensure that the group starts at the correct time (not before or after), this can have a very positive impact on the pace of play. As stated above, the impact is increased if the starter’s encouragement is a reinforcement of guidance already provided.



For guidance on best practice for Starters, see Appendix D.

c Caddies

If caddies are commonly used at a course, they can be asked to keep an eye on the pace of play of the group that they are involved in. Caddies, understandably, may be reluctant to be seen as criticising the pace of play of their group, but if the starter has advised the players that the club considers it part of the caddie's role to politely encourage groups to keep their position on the course, it will make it easier for the caddies to speak to the players about pace of play if necessary. Caddie training is also important. A good caddie can assist by being at the ball quickly, replacing divots and raking bunkers, attending the flagstick and offering guidance on the course, for example, on the best direction of play, the need to play a provisional ball, etc.

d Ball Spotters

If there are holes where it is very common for balls to be lost (for example, holes with blind tee shots), the deployment of ball spotters can greatly assist with pace of play. It is recognised that this may only be realistic at high level tournaments with a significant number of volunteers.

e Greenstaff

Undertaking course maintenance during play is common and necessary at many clubs. However, where possible, greenstaff should be encouraged to adapt their maintenance schedules to have as little negative impact on pace of play as possible.



For example, with an empty course, it may be more efficient for the greenstaff to prepare the course non-sequentially in groups of holes in close proximity to one another. However, if course preparation cannot be completed in full before play commences, it is often better to prepare the course in hole sequence so as to keep ahead of play. With a two-tee start, this will involve using two teams of greenstaff commencing from the 1st and 10th tees.

It may also assist greenstaff in completing their tasks if management of the facility stipulates that play does not commence prior to a certain time, which then ensures that the greenstaff can stay ahead of play.

f Course Rangers

One of the most effective ways of ensuring that golf is played at a good pace is to employ rangers that monitor pace of play (also known as course marshals) who are responsible for encouraging groups to play within the expected time and, importantly, helping them to enjoy their rounds as much as possible. The key to effective pace management is ensuring that any pace of play problems are spotted quickly and acted upon promptly.

It is very important that course rangers are properly trained, not only in being able to spot pace of play issues and act upon them, but in how to communicate with players. Polite and friendly encouragement initially is more appropriate than stern warnings. Players can take offence at being told they need to quicken their pace, so rangers need to ensure that when they do make such requests it is entirely justified. For guidance on effective pace of play management practices and a sample pace of play spreadsheet, see Appendices E and F.

g Pace of Play Chairman/Committee

Appointing someone with responsibility for monitoring, educating on and improving pace of play can have a beneficial effect. If a facility has an on-going issue with pace of play and is serious about improving the situation, it makes sense to appoint someone to lead the initiative to bring about such improvement. If nothing else, it shows that the facility is taking the issue seriously, and it means there is a specific person to whom suggestions or concerns can be directed.

h Referees

It should almost go without saying that referees should consider it part of their role to ensure that the sport is played at a good pace. Referees should intervene to prevent potential pace of play issues, and properly enforce any pace of play conditions of the competition that the Committee has introduced.

Further guidance on pace of play conditions is provided later in this Manual.



i On-Course Catering Facility Staff

If the facility offers on-course catering, for example a half-way house or carts with food and drink, the staff need to be efficient with service so as not to delay play. Staff may also be asked to encourage groups that have been utilising the facilities for longer than necessary to continue play. In addition, if there is half-way house or the like, it is a great source of collecting pace of play data, as the staff can record when the groups arrive at that point.

2.8 Communication with Players

Communication with players by those managing the course, e.g. receptionist, professional, starter, etc., can be a key component in ensuring a good pace of play. This communication can take various forms, as follows:

a Education

New members and junior golfers may need to be advised in relation to pace of play, and it should be the role of management in its various forms (club committees, teaching professionals, national associations, etc) to ensure that clear, helpful and friendly guidance on pace of play is being provided. In particular, it is considered key for golfers' early coaching experiences to include guidance on showing consideration for others on the course, which includes playing at a good pace.

b Expectations

Players need to be made aware of what is expected of them in terms of pace of play. This should be done tactfully, but clearly. The expectations need to be realistic and, if possible, they should be adjusted to take account of the various factors, such as the number of players in the group, the form of play, the weather conditions on the day (play may understandably take longer in extreme weather conditions), etc.



c Recommended Tees for Skill Level

The tees that players select for their rounds can have a significant impact on the pace of play. If players elect to play from tees that are too difficult for their skill level, not only may their enjoyment of the round be compromised, but the pace of play may also suffer.

It is helpful for players who are unfamiliar with the course to be given guidance, by a delegated member of staff, on which tees they should play from based on their skill levels.

This topic will be covered in more detail in the section relating to the Course.

d General Guidance on the Course

If players are unfamiliar with the course, then providing guidance to them before they play may be beneficial. For example, if there are holes where balls are often lost, the starter can advise players to play a provisional ball at that hole if they have hit a stray shot. If there are course boundaries or water hazards that may not be visible from the tee or the fairway, this can be communicated to players. In addition, if there is routing on the course that may be confusing, players can be advised in advance of the direction to go to the next tee when they come off the green of the relevant hole.

e Course Signage

In addition to giving verbal guidance regarding the course, it helps to have well positioned, clearly worded signage. This will enable players to move more efficiently around the course, particularly when the routing is not obvious and there is the possibility of players walking in the wrong direction when leaving the green.

f “Call-Up” Procedures

If there are driveable par 4s or long par 3s where delays often occur, those managing the course may wish to introduce a “call-up” procedure when waiting starts to develop on the tee of such holes. A “call-up” is where the players at the green stand aside at a safe distance once their balls are on the green to allow the players from the tee to play their tee shots. In such instances, it is important to have good signage that will ensure that players understand when such a procedure should be adopted and how it should be handled. While call up holes may not necessarily reduce the time to play, they can reduce waiting time and the associated frustration.

For further guidance, see Appendix G.

g Use of On-Course Catering Facilities

There should be clear and prominently displayed guidance to players as to what is expected of them in relation to utilising these facilities in terms of the time taken. If groups are inconsistent in their approach to using these services (for example, one group stops for 10 minutes at a half-way house when the guidance is to stop for no more than 5 minutes) this can have a negative impact on pace of play.

h Distinguishing Between Members and Visitors

A number of clubs have gathered data which shows that, generally, visitors to the course take slightly longer to play than members. This is to be expected due to visitors being unfamiliar with the course. In addition it is quite common for visitors to wish to record a stroke play score (which may be of less concern to members who play the course on a regular basis).

Those administering the course should recognise that this is a common, and generally acceptable, scenario. It can set the right tone with visitors if they are made aware that certain allowances are being made for them in terms of pace of play expectations, but that they still have a responsibility to play at a reasonable pace. Equally, administrators need to manage the expectations of any members playing among visiting groups, and ask them to show a certain amount of patience with visitors.

i Proof of Player Ability

There is no suggestion that higher handicap players necessarily take longer to play than low handicap or elite level players, but there are some courses that may simply be too difficult for players of a certain ability to play. Such courses may consider it appropriate to impose a handicap limit on players playing the course. If such a policy is adopted, this needs to be clearly communicated to any visitors well in advance of them arriving at the course, and it needs to be made clear that proof of handicap will be required before visitors are permitted to play.

If the facility chooses to adopt such a policy it should be strictly enforced. If not, it will cause great frustration to other players on the course when they see problems being created by players who clearly have not met the pre-determined requirement.

2.9 Deterring Slow Play

It is hoped that a group that is politely requested to improve its pace of play, whether by a course ranger, another group or a referee, will do so without the need for recourse to sanctions. However, this is not always the case, and the question administrators need to grapple with is whether any action can be taken against the player, players or group as a whole that have been the cause of the pace of play issue.

Various pace of play policies, including the penalties applied for breaches of them, will be covered below, but examples of sanctions that can be imposed for slow play are as follows:

- For visitors:
 - being asked to leave the course (either with or without a refund depending on the agreement made at the time of the booking)
 - being advised that future bookings will not be accepted
 - a report being sent to their home club advising of the unacceptable pace of play, or
 - a combination of the above
- For members:
 - requiring attendance at a session on how to improve their pace of play
 - suspension from play on the course for a period of time
 - being required to play at the end of the field in competitions for a specified period of time
 - displaying the names on the club notice board of members/groups who, without good reason, have taken longer than the stipulated time to play
 - applying penalties under the Rule 6-7 for undue delay/slow play, or
 - a combination of the above

It is not the purpose of this Manual to promote severe sanctions for slow play, and The R&A would only advocate sensible and tactful use of the above measures. However, particularly when a player or group has repeatedly caused pace of play issues and has failed to alter behaviour after repeated requests, it is entirely appropriate for the management of the course to take some form of disciplinary action for the benefit of the other players using the course.

2.10 Incentivising Play at a Good Pace

An alternative to applying sanctions for slow play is to incentivise play at a good pace. This has been successfully implemented at some facilities and examples of incentives that have been offered to players or groups that have played within the allotted time are as follows:

- Reduced price green fee for the next round
- A rebate on the green fee relative to the amount of time under the allotted time that the group took to complete the round
- A free drink at the bar, or
- A free golf ball or other appropriate item from the professionals shop

2.11 Pace of Play Policies

In the Rules of Golf, Rule 6-7 is the relevant Rule in relation to undue delay and slow play. It provides that “The player must play without undue delay and in accordance with any pace of play guidelines that the Committee may establish”. The penalty for a breach of Rule 6-7 is loss of hole in match play and two strokes in stroke play, and for a repeated offence, disqualification. However, Note 2 under Rule 6-7 states:

“For the purpose of preventing slow play, the Committee may, in the conditions of a competition (Rule 33-1), establish pace of play guidelines including maximum periods of time allowed to complete a stipulated round, a hole or a stroke.

In match play, the Committee may, in such a condition, modify the penalty for a breach of this Rule as follows:

- First offence – Loss of hole;
- Second offence – Loss of hole;
- For subsequent offence – Disqualification

In stroke play, the Committee may, in such a condition, modify the penalty for a breach of this Rule as follows:

- First offence – One stroke;
- Second offence – Two strokes;
- For subsequent offence – Disqualification.”

It should be noted that many pace of play policies provide that the first offence has

occurred only after an initial verbal warning.

It is a matter for the Committee in charge of a competition or administrators at clubs, public courses or resorts to formulate their own pace of play guidelines. In practice the nature of such a policy, and the successful implementation of it, will often be dependent on the number of people available to oversee it.

For example, there are an adequate number of officials at R&A Championships for it to be possible to adopt a hole by hole pace of play guideline and, subsequently, shot by shot timing procedures if a group is out of position on the course and in excess of the prescribed time limit. See Appendix H for an example of the full Pace of Play condition adopted at R&A championships, which is very similar to the pace of play conditions adopted by the majority of the professional tours.

Obviously, it is unlikely that such a policy could be successfully adopted at club level. Therefore, if a club is having problems with pace of play, it may be necessary to formulate a simple condition whereby the management establishes a time limit that it considers is more than adequate for players to complete the round and/or a certain number of holes (which will vary depending on numbers in groups and form of play). In the circumstances where a group exceeds the prescribed time limit and is out of position on the course, each player in the group is subject to penalty.

As an example of this form of condition, a Committee may decide that a group of three playing stroke play should not take more than 1 hour 45 minutes to complete nine holes and stipulate that if they exceed this limit, and are out of position, all three players are subject to a penalty of one stroke. In addition, the condition may state that if they fail to complete the second nine holes in the prescribed time and are still out of position all three players are subject to a further penalty of two strokes.

The problem with adopting such a policy where each player in the group is penalised for a breach of the condition is that it does not consider individual responsibility for the delay and a player who is blameless may be penalised. However, this type of policy may assist in terms of a group's self-regulation, with slower players being encouraged to improve their pace of play by other members of the group.

There are a number of different pace of play policies that administrators can adopt, or adapt to the specific situation they face. Some significant success has been noted with checkpoint systems that involve each group recording its time at certain points during the round on on-course time sheets. The benefit of such a policy is that it allows the group to determine whether it is in good position and it gives a player

or players in the group a convenient opportunity to encourage another player or players to improve their pace. See Appendix I for an example of this policy.

Identifying the most suitable pace of play policies for competitions may be a case of trial and error. It may be that a simple policy of publishing the round times for each group on a notice board provides sufficient incentive for players (particularly club members) to play at a good pace. When an effective policy is established it can enhance the enjoyment of the sport for all concerned.

2.12 Peer Review

It is often very hard for management to devote sufficient resources to administering pace of play policies or for the club to be able to employ course rangers. In such circumstances, administrators may wish to encourage players to review and critique each other's pace of play.

Some success in improving pace of play has been noted with peer review systems where each player fills out a "report" card on a fellow-player in the group.



3. The Golf Course

3.1 Introduction

The nature, location, design and set up of a golf course all have a major impact on the time that it takes to play a round of golf. There are courses that will be difficult and take longer to play as a result when compared to others.

This section examines various aspects of the design and set up of the course and provides guidance on actions that can be taken by those responsible for setting up the course if the desire is to improve pace of play.

It is recognised that there may be cost implications associated with some of the solutions proposed in this section, but many of the suggestions have very little financial impact, yet can make a significant difference.

Please note that nothing in this section is intended to suggest that all golf courses should be easy to play. The challenge that the sport presents is one of golf's enduring attractions. However, it is worth considering that, in the UK, the average handicap of a male golfer is 16 and the average handicap of a female golfer is 25. This means that, even when playing to their handicap, the average golfer is playing bogey golf. In other words, the majority of golfers find the sport suitably challenging without the course being made unduly difficult.

3.2 Tees

a Variety

A reasonable variety of tees should be offered on each hole so that players can use the tees commensurate with their ability and/or hitting distances.

There is strong evidence that suggests that having players play from tees that suit their ability not only improves the pace of play, but increases player enjoyment.

It is recognised that encouragement may need to be given to players to select the appropriate tees, rather than electing to play the course at the full length available on any given day, and this point is referenced in more detail in the "Management Practices" section.

It is common for the gap between different sets of tees to be so big that it almost forces players to play the course at a length that is too long for their ability. For example, if there is a group of male golfers with a handicap range of 6 to 15 and they have the choice of playing the course at 6,100 yards or 6,800 yards, there is a strong likelihood that they will go to the 6,800 yard tees as the 6 handicap golfer will feel that 6,100 yards is too short. However, if there was an offering of tees at around 6,400 yards, it is far more likely that the group will elect to use those tees,

which may result in the group enjoying the round more and playing more quickly. By providing an additional distance option between 6,100 yards and 6,800 yards, Kingsbarns Golf Links in Fife, Scotland saw a reduction from 50% of groups using the 6,800 yard tees to only 15% of groups playing the course at that length.

Provide all golfers with teeing options that match the design of the hole and the way that it was intended to be played. This may include setting up a suitable number of holes where players are hitting lofted clubs into greens, rather than always having to hit long irons, hybrids or fairway woods. In particular, focus on holes where it is clear that the green is designed to accept lofted shots, as opposed to low running shots.



If your course has “carries”(for example, over water, bunkers, areas of rough or the like) try to provide teeing options that enable all players to make the carries with a well-played shot for a player of their ability. Alternatively, bail out areas should be provided for those unable to make the carry. This would also apply to a hole where there is a carry for the approach shot into the green.

b Gender Neutral

Many clubs that have pursued a programme of encouraging players to play from tees appropriate to their ability have found considerable success by avoiding having designated “men’s” and “women’s” tees. In many parts of the world, red tees are

associated with ladies golf, and men can be reluctant to play from these tees. By simply changing the colour of the “forward” tees and referring to tees as, for example, “forward, middle and back”, evidence suggests that men are more likely to choose to play from the forward tees. Alternatively, tees can be referred to by the measured course they offer, which will be an immediate assistance to those who know what length of course they enjoy the most (for example, referring to tees that give a 6,400 yard course as the “64 course”).

If golfers are to be encouraged to play from the tees that suit their game, it is equally as important to provide men’s and women’s course ratings from the different sets of tees for handicapping purposes.

c Avoiding Bottlenecks

The design of a course can introduce or eliminate bottlenecks. The types of holes that consistently create delays on golf courses will be looked at in more detail in other parts of this manual, but it is worth noting that the positioning of tee-markers to slightly adjust the nature of a hole can assist in preventing delays.

For example, if a hole is playing as a long par 3 (perhaps due to its yardage or because it is playing into a significant wind), moving the tee up to reduce the yardage and increase the number of tee shots that make it on or around the green is likely to reduce the waiting that occurs on the tee.

It is not always a reduction in distance that will reduce waiting time. If a par 4 is likely to be reachable from certain tees due to the expected wind conditions that day, those teeing options can be removed so that it plays as a two-shot hole for everyone, thereby avoiding players on the tee waiting for the green to clear.

Alternatively, consider implementing a “call up” procedure for long par 3s or drivable par 4s. This is discussed in more detail in the “Management Practices” section.

d Distance from Green to Tee

If it takes considerable time to walk or drive a cart from a green to the next tee this adds significantly to the time taken to play. If there is a choice between using teeing areas that are closer to the greens versus those that are further away, on days when pace of play may be a concern, do not offer the further away tees as an option, unless it makes sense from a pace of play perspective to do so (see comments above regarding drivable par 4s).

Ideally, short walking distances between a green and the next tee should be

designed into a course, though the topography of some sites may mean this is unfeasible.

Re-routing of the course should be considered if it might reduce the distances from greens to tees (while retaining the same level of safety) – this is discussed in more detail later in this section.

3.3 Fairway Width and Rough Height

Much time can be lost during a round as a result of searching for balls in the rough; it is also a source of much frustration for golfers. Time spent searching for balls can be reduced in the following ways:

- Making it easier to play the ball onto the fairway by increasing fairway widths
- Ensuring, where possible, that players can carry any rough in front of the tee and reach the fairway (even at its events for elite players, The R&A looks to have a maximum carry to the fairway of 200 yards)
- Extending the width of the first cut of rough so that balls that initially land on the fairway are less likely to run through the first cut into deeper rough (which may be more cost efficient than widening fairways because of the frequency and speed of mowing)
- Generally reducing the severity of rough so that, while the rough still provides a challenge, it is less likely to conceal a ball



In addition, where there are stretches of rough where it may be difficult to find a ball, installing marker posts that provide reference points for estimating where stray shots may have come to rest will assist players in locating balls.

The length of the grass around greens can also contribute greatly to the round times. Even if rough near greens is not long enough to lose a ball, if it is of a length that makes it very difficult to control a chip shot, there is a strong likelihood that most players will not be able to get the ball on the green with their chip shot, or at least not get the ball close to the hole. Reducing the height of the grass around greens to make chip shots easier to play, or to enable players to putt from off the green, will reduce the time it takes to play.

The R&A is not advocating the cutting of all grassland to a length aimed at improving pace of play. Natural grassland provides a home for a range of wildlife and every facility should carefully consider the need for cutting such areas, and only do so if it is going to be of benefit to a reasonable number of golfers. Indeed, some areas that are being mown regularly at present might not demand such treatment if they are well out of play. Compromise in this respect is often required, and before changes are made to mowing practices, which may have a significant impact on labour and the cost of course maintenance, it is advisable to undertake an assessment of need with regards to the playability of the course.

An alternative for an area farther from play that has environmental value is to make it wild enough to discourage players from trying to look for their ball because there is really no point. A balance needs to be struck between cutting huge areas to speed play up and the costs associated with doing so.

3.4 Bunkers and Rakes

Bunkers are, by definition, hazards and are meant to present a challenge. However, the number of bunkers and their design will impact on pace of play. If a course is considered to be excessively bunkered, either in terms of their number or their severity, it is recommended that a review of the course be undertaken by a qualified course architect to determine what, if any, measures need to be taken to address this issue.

If bunkers are small, with steep faces, it becomes harder to extricate the ball, and this means that it will take longer to play. With reference to greenside bunkers, if it is hard for less skilled players to get the ball out of these bunkers, there is also a strong likelihood that even when they do succeed in extricating the ball, it may be difficult to stop the ball on the green.

The challenge presented by a bunker can be reduced without making it easy. Slightly lowering the height of the face, providing a gentler face angle or enlarging the bunker slightly to allow more room to swing the club all increase the chances of players being able to get the ball out of the bunker. In addition, ensuring that the bunkers are prepared in such a way that a ball generally comes to rest away from the sides and faces of the bunkers will reduce the number of occasions when the ball is left in the bunker. This can be done by ensuring that the floor of the bunker is shaped in such a manner that when sand is introduced it can be prepared so that it is reasonably firm and slopes down towards the centre of the bunker.

If there are bunkers on the course that come into play only for high handicap golfers, clubs may wish to consider whether it is necessary to retain these bunkers. While high handicapped players tend to find bunkers challenging, more skilled golfers often find shots from bunkers, especially greenside bunkers, to be relatively easy. Converting greenside bunkers to tightly cut swales can make the course easier for high handicap golfers but at the same time retain, or even increase, the challenge for the better golfer.



The photographs above and below show the 5th green at Royal Lytham & St. Annes Golf Club. The bunkers in the photograph above have been removed and replaced with swales, which will be closely mown.



It is now commonplace for rakes to be left on the course, and players are expected to leave bunkers in the condition that they found them by using the rakes to smooth over their footprints. It will assist with pace of play if there are an appropriate number of rakes on the course as it enables players to fulfil their responsibilities without too much delay.

3.5 Other Obstacles on the Course

In addition to rough and bunkers, most courses will either have water hazards, trees, bushes and other forms of obstacles that present a challenge to the player (or a combination of these obstacles). Pace of play may be improved if there is a reasonable opportunity for recovery when a ball comes to rest in such an area, which may require some redesign of the obstacle in question.

For example, if trees are a feature of a course, and it is common for errant shots to come to rest among trees, it is preferable if the ground beneath the trees is maintained in such a way that a ball can easily be found and a recovery shot on to the fairway is possible. If there is dense rough under the trees then not only is the ball harder to find, but the chance of advancing the ball out of the trees with one shot is significantly reduced. The R&A is not suggesting that the ground under every tree on the course be managed in this way, as this can have cost implications. As with rough height around the rest of the course, the rough under trees should be assessed to determine its impact on pace of play, and only where it is considered to have a significant impact should maintenance be employed to make ball finding and recovery shots easier.

Similarly, where a water hazard provides an intrinsic challenge on a hole and is

likely to receive a large number of golf balls, resulting in players having to take relief under penalty, it will assist with pace of play if the player then has a reasonable place to make his next stroke from. If the relief under the Rules has players dropping in thick rough or in otherwise very difficult positions on a regular basis, this will have a negative impact on pace of play. In such situations, consideration should be given to improving the relief areas or, if this is not possible, providing dropping zones as additional options under the Rules.

3.6 The Putting Greens

a Introduction

In general, around half of the strokes made during a round will be from on or around the putting greens. The more putts that players take to hole out, the longer a round will take. The number of chips and putts will be strongly influenced by a combination of the following factors:

- the severity of the slopes on the greens
- the speed of the greens,
- the firmness of the greens, and
- the position of the holes on the greens.

Pace of play will be negatively impacted when greens have severe slopes, are running at a quick pace and the holes are cut on or near the slopes. The impact of this combination is that it makes it harder for golfers to get the ball into the “tap in” zone, which means they take more putts and take longer to play.

b Green Speed

The common method for measuring the speed of greens is by using the “Stimpmeter” to provide measurement in feet and inches. It is generally accepted that the faster the greens are, the harder it is for less-skilled players to putt. It is not possible to provide a definitive green speed that is appropriate for general play as it depends hugely on factors such as the slopes on the greens, wind speeds and the like but there is a tendency at many courses to have green speeds that are unnecessarily fast, particularly when it comes to competitions. It is more important that greens are smooth and true than fast. Fast greens may also mean that you are unable to utilise certain hole positions that the course architect had in mind.

With experience, those responsible for setting policy for green speed on a

course should be able to establish the speed whereby the greens become overly challenging for the majority of golfers. This in turn will allow for a policy on green speed to be established for general play, i.e. a more moderate green speed, which will ensure that the speed of the greens is not a factor that is contributing to slow play.

To provide some context on this point, at The Open Championship, played over seaside links courses that are susceptible to strong winds, The R&A sets a maximum green speed target of 10½ feet on the stimpmeter. When strong winds are forecast, the target speed will be reduced well below the maximum of 10½ feet.



c Firmness of Greens

Firmness of greens should also be a consideration. Soft, over watered greens are in no way being promoted. However, very firm greens do provide a stiff challenge for the majority of players in terms of holding the green with approach shots or with chip shots from around the green. This is not so much the case when it is possible to run the ball into the green, but when the green is protected at the front by bunkers or a slope, thereby requiring the ball to be pitched on the green, the firmness can have a significant impact on a player's ability to execute the shot successfully. In such situations, if the desire is to maintain firm greens (which often

is the sustainable approach to course maintenance), the positioning of the holes and the tees (referenced above) becomes very important so as to ensure that players are hitting appropriate clubs into greens.

To provide some context on this point, at The Open Championship, where measurements of firmness are taken with a “Clegg Hammer”, The R&A aims for firmness values of approaches and greens between 110 and 150 gravities. It should be noted that these firmness values relate to links golf, where the ability to run the ball up to the hole is considered an intrinsic feature of the challenge of the courses.

d Hole Positions

As referenced above, the positions in which the holes are cut on the greens has an impact on pace of play. If the holes are cut on or close to slopes, this inevitably makes it more challenging to stop the ball close to the hole with a putt (or a chip), and this means that lag putting and putting from close to the hole is made more difficult. In match play, this will mean fewer conceded putts, and in stroke play there will be fewer tap in putts. Locating the holes in flatter areas of the greens will reduce putting time and benefit the pace of play.



Hole positions can also have a significant impact on approach shots. If the hole is positioned close to the edge of the green or close to bunkers, water hazards or severe greenside run offs, the recovery shot will be more difficult or the penalty will be more severe for a slightly errant shot. If the focus is on reducing the time taken to play, then the hole positions should offer a greater margin for error with the approach shot.

For additional guidance on Hole Positions, see Appendix J.

3.7 Course Routing

While there may be a traditional sequence of holes at a course, this may not in fact be the optimum routing from a pace of play point of view. If that is the case, it may be worth considering using an alternative routing for general play, or reconsidering the routing for all play.

As referenced above, a difficult hole may create a bottleneck on the course, which may have a lasting and detrimental impact on pace of play.

If it is impractical to alter the bottleneck hole or there is no desire to do so, having a bottleneck hole early in the round is often preferable to having it later in the round as play will flow for groups after they have played that hole. This can be achieved through altering the routing of the holes or simply by reversing the nines.

If the course has considerable walks from greens to tees, it is worth considering whether the sequence the holes are played in is contributing to pace of play issues. Altering course routing may provide shorter walking distances from greens to tees, which in turn may reduce round times.

3.8 Cart Path Location

If players using golf carts are required to keep their carts on the paths or only follow specific routes, the locations of the cart paths will impact on how quickly and easily players can get to their ball to play their next shot.

If cart paths are only located on one side of a hole (which is common due to lack of space or cost implications), this will increase the time it takes to play as there will be many occasions when a player needs to walk a considerable distance to access his or her ball on the other side of the hole.

Where cart golf is common, and the cart paths are not well situated from a pace of play perspective, consideration should be given to allowing players to take the carts onto the fairways. If turf conditions allow, being able to grant such permission will benefit the pace of play. It is recognised that this may be a difficult judgement to make and a flexible policy might serve to create some confusion. Any potential confusion should be easily overcome with clear signage and verbal guidance at the starting tee.

Where a course has back tees that should only be used by elite golfers, it can assist in diverting attention away from the back tees for regular play if the cart paths are routed away from the back tees. If players don't drive past the back tees they are less likely to want to use them.

3.9 Distance Information

While the use of distance-measuring devices has become quite common, there are still many golfers who do not use such devices. Many golfers are quite happy with an approximate yardage. To assist such golfers, easily located distance markers can

help with pace of play. In this regard, a stake at the side of the fairway is often more easily seen than a ground level disc. Providing distance information on sprinkler heads can also be of assistance.

3.10 Signage

The claim is often made that it is visitors to courses that cause slow play rather than the members. To reduce the likelihood of this, ensure that there is clear signage directing players who are unfamiliar with the course to the quickest route to help them navigate their way around the course, for example from the green to the next tee.



3.11 Course Rating

It is worth pointing out that if a course does make permanent and significant changes to the set-up of the course (e.g. significant widening of fairway widths), it is recommended that the national association is advised as there may be an impact on the course rating for handicapping purposes.

4. Player Behaviour

4.1 Introduction

This Manual has highlighted that it is wrong to think that players are the cause of all issues relating to pace of play, but, nevertheless, the behaviour of the players on the course also needs to be examined.

There is no doubt that one group, or even one player, can create issues for all of the other players on the course by demonstrating poor etiquette in relation to pace of play.

The guidance in the following section is intended to assist players in improving their pace of play. That said, it will often require another person, for example a fellow-player or an administrator, to advise a player that he or she needs to improve their pace of play. This section should also assist such a person in identifying why the player concerned has an issue with pace of play, and it will allow for solutions to be offered to that player to remedy the situation.

4.2 Player Ability

Playing ability is a factor that can result in certain players taking more time to play than others. All other things being equal, it will take longer to play 95 shots than it will to play 75 shots. If four players in a group are playing 95 shots each compared to four players in another group playing 75 shots each, the difference is amplified.

However, the beauty of golf is that it is a sport for players of all abilities, and the unique handicapping system means that players of all abilities can compete equitably against one another. Nevertheless, if a course is simply too difficult for players who are not of a certain ability (for example because the distance to carry the “trouble” is too far, the greens are very sloped, the bunkers are very deep, etc.), it becomes impossible for those players to play the course in a reasonable amount of time. In such cases, players should be encouraged to play a course that is more commensurate with their



ability and which, realistically, they may enjoy more.

It could be the case that the course itself is not too difficult, but players are playing the course from tees that make it too difficult for them. As mentioned in the sections above, alternative teeing options should be made available and highlighted to players, but the players themselves have to take responsibility for choosing the correct tees for their ability.

It is not always necessary for every player in the group to play from the same set of tees. Handicap adjustments and course ratings can take account of players playing from different tees, while retaining the ability for players to compete against each other equitably for the same prizes and trophies.

4.3 Being Aware of Position on the Course

Players need to be aware of their group's position on the course, and how they are impacting on the pace of play of other groups.



The basic advice in this regard is that if a group keeps up with the group in front, the players in that group will rarely be accused of slow play. Players should always be looking forward to ensure 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 all the players in that group to ensure that the group gets back into position promptly. The self-assessed pace of play control system (see Appendix I) can assist in ensuring that players take responsibility for making up lost ground.

4.4 Allowing Faster Groups to Play Through

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 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. 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.

Sometimes, if a number of groups on the course are playing slowly, playing through does not always achieve its objective, but it remains good etiquette.

4.5 Being Ready to Play

The main criticism levelled against slow players in The R&A’s pace of play survey was that such players were not ready to play when it was their turn.

Being ready to play should be very easy. While taking care not to distract other players or compromise safety, all that is required is that a player should do the following while waiting for others to play:

- Walk efficiently to the ball putting their glove on in the process
- Assess the shot, including any calculation of distance the player wants to make, or line up the putt, and
- Make a decision on club selection

It is even more important that the first person in a group to play carries out these tasks promptly.



Considerable time will be saved during the course of a round if players do these things efficiently and non-intrusively while others are playing. The frustration comes when a player stands by their ball watching others in the group playing, and only when it is their turn do they begin to prepare for the shot.

Combined with an efficient pre-shot routine, the seconds that can be taken off each stroke by being ready to play, multiplied by the number of strokes played each round, multiplied by the number of players in a group, can have a massively positive impact on the time it takes to play a round of golf.

For example:

- Each player in a four-ball takes an average of 5 seconds less to play each shot
- Each player plays 80 shots
- $80 \text{ shots} \times 5 \text{ seconds} \times 4 \text{ players} = 26 \text{ minutes and } 40 \text{ seconds}$

That means that, ignoring all other variables, the four-ball would play in 26 minutes and 40 seconds less time simply by shaving off an average of 5 seconds per shot.

4.6 Imitating Elite Golf

While in no way looking to excuse any elite golfers who may take an excessive time to play, it is recognised that tour professionals make their living from the sport and, understandably, may wish to take slightly longer to assess their shots than regular golfers. In addition, the skill level of the elite golfer is such that certain detailed information will have a bearing on shot selection and execution, and it may require more time to assess this information.

This is not the case for the vast majority of amateur golfers and, therefore, it is often unnecessary for them to prepare for their shots in the same way as the elite golfer does. The consequence of doing so is simply to increase the time taken to play each shot with no tangible benefit in performance. Therefore, the futile mimicking of elite golfers should be avoided.

Common examples of this are:

- determining precise distances for shots when approximate distances would suffice
- studying the line of putt from multiple angles, and
- marking, lifting and replacing a ball that is close to the hole before holing out.

4.7 Various Actions Players Can Take to Improve Pace of Play

a Position of Bags or Carts

When players are approaching the green, golf bags or carts should be positioned to allow for quick and efficient movement off the green towards the next tee.

b Marking Score Cards

While it is strongly recommended that players remain at the green to watch the other players in their group hole out, the marking of score cards should not be done at the green if this may delay play of the group behind. Mark score cards on the way to or at the next tee. That said, the player who is first to play from the next tee should play first and then mark the card.



c Playing a Provisional Ball

Ball searches and lost balls are a feature of golf, but they do cause delay. The delay can be significantly minimised if the player whose ball might be in danger of being lost has played a provisional ball. A player should play a provisional ball if they think that their ball may be out of bounds or if there is any possibility that it may be lost, other than when it is clearly in a water hazard.

The result of playing a provisional ball is that the player will not have to return

to the spot of the previous stroke to put another ball into play. Another practical result is that often, having played a provisional ball, the player is less concerned with taking the full five minutes to search for the original ball in the knowledge that the hole can be completed with the provisional ball.

d Watching the Flight of the Ball Carefully

The problem of lost balls can be significantly reduced if all players in a group make a conscious effort to watch each other's shots and their own shots as carefully and as often as possible. This will result in less searching time and fewer lost balls.



e “Ready Golf”

As referenced in the Management Practices section above, playing “ready golf” is permissible in stroke play and can improve pace of play. Even if the management at a course has not made a request for players to play “ready golf”, players in stroke play can agree to do so.

f Choosing an Appropriate Form of Play

The vast majority of golf is not overseen by a committee or other administrator, which means it is the golfers themselves who decide how many players will be in their groups and what the form of play will be. The choices that are made will impact on how long it takes to play.

If golfers wish to play a form of stroke play, then it is best if they don't play in four-

balls when the time taken to play is a concern. Similarly, pace of play is likely to be better if they use a modified form of stroke play such as Stableford or bogey/par. As stated above, if players wish to play quickly, they should consider playing in smaller groups and/or playing match play, which tends to be a faster form of play.

g Choosing an appropriate time to play

If golfers want to play quickly, they should attempt to get one of the first starting times of the day and set the pace or choose a quieter time of the day when the course may be under-utilised.

4.8 Physical Limitations

While all of the guidance above relating to being ready to play, positioning of bags and carts, etc applies to all golfers regardless of physical limitations, it is important to recognise that golfers may be restricted in how quickly they can play due to their maximum walking speed. This may be particularly relevant to elderly golfers or golfers with disabilities or injuries. There is a fine balance between encouraging play at a good pace and excluding those who simply cannot play at the prescribed pace. Common sense expectations need to be adopted.

4.9 Have you been told you are a “Slow Player”?

Golfers don't often accuse other golfers of being slow players without good reason. Telling another player that they are a slow player will often only occur after a considerable period of frustration having observed that player causing pace of play difficulties and consistently failing to act in accordance with the guidance outlined above.

Consequently, if you, on more than one occasion, have been told that you are a slow player it probably means that you are. This does not make you a bad person, and it does not give someone the right to be impolite towards you. However, it does suggest that you should take immediate positive steps to do something about it so that the same accusation is not made again. You can do this by asking for advice from the players you play with on what it is that they believe causes you to be slow. It should then be relatively easy for you to make some minor adjustments to the way you play golf which will make you a quicker player, which will mean you are not negatively impacting on the enjoyment of other players on the course, and which will make you a more enjoyable person to play with.

Importantly, you are more likely to enjoy your golf without feeling the pressure of being scrutinised by your fellow players.



There is a natural reluctance to tell a fellow golfer that he or she is slow for fear of confrontation or appearing rude. Clubs should foster a culture where feedback is seen to be positive, and golfers welcome that feedback in order to ensure that they can improve their behaviour, routines and pace of play. Establishing a reasonable time par is necessary to enable appropriate feedback to be given, without a time par it is impossible to gauge whether a player or group is fast or slow.

Each player should be encouraged to time (and possibly even film) their own pre-shot routine for various shots, e.g. tee, fairway, bunkers, chipping and putting, from the moment they reach their ball to the time of impact, to ascertain how long they take and where seconds can be saved.

Having a Pace of Play Chairperson (referred to in the Management Practices section above) can be very useful. It enables players to make any complaints about slow players to the Chairperson who can then assess whether the complaints are justified. If the complaints are justified, the Chairperson can then assist the player in improving their pace.

5. Conclusion

There are a variety of reasons for wanting to improve pace of play – greater customer satisfaction, increased revenue, higher membership numbers and increased participation – and there are a variety of ways of achieving the goal.

First, a facility needs to assess if it has a problem, and this can only be done properly through soliciting opinion and gathering data. From that point it becomes possible to set goals, assess where the issues lie and implement measures to tackle the problems.

The issues may lie with management practices, course set up or with the players, or a combination of the three. There may be a single solution or a combination of solutions, and sometimes finding the right combination may involve trial and error.

Nevertheless, The R&A believes that any members' club, public course, resort, tournament committee or golfing body can implement measures that will produce genuine and lasting improvements in pace of play and flow around a course. This Manual provides the tools to do it. We strongly encourage you to use them.



6. Appendices

A. Data Collection Template

Date

Day of week

Group No.	Tees Used	Start time	End time	Number of golfers	Comments (finished out of order, lost balls etc, number and types of DMD)	Duration	Members/Visitors	Caddies/ Cart
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18								
19								
20								
21								
22								
23								
24								
25								
26								
27								
28								

B. Two Tee Start Guidance

Two Tee Start – 156 Players playing in 3-balls with 10 minute starting intervals

1st Tee am	
Game No.	Start Time
1	7.30 am
2	7.40 am
3	7.50 am
4	8.00 am
5	8.10 am
6	8.20 am
7	8.30 am
8	8.40 am
9	8.50 am
10	9.00 am
11	9.10 am
12	9.20 am
13	9.30 am

10th Tee am	
Game No.	Start Time
14	7.30 am
15	7.40 am
16	7.50 am
17	8.00 am
18	8.10 am
19	8.20 am
20	8.30 am
21	8.40 am
22	8.50 am
23	9.00 am
24	9.10 am
25	9.20 am
26	9.30 am

1st Tee pm	
Game No.	Start Time
27	12.00 pm
28	12.10 pm
29	12.20 pm
30	12.30 pm
31	12.40 pm
32	12.50 pm
33	1.00 pm
34	1.10 pm
35	1.20 pm
36	1.30 pm
37	1.40 pm
38	1.50 pm
39	2.00 pm

10th Tee pm	
Game No.	Start Time
40	12.00 pm
41	12.10 pm
42	12.20 pm
43	12.30 pm
44	12.40 pm
45	12.50 pm
46	1.00 pm
47	1.10 pm
48	1.20 pm
49	1.30 pm
50	1.40 pm
51	1.50 pm
52	2.00 pm

C. Time Par Guidelines

Establishing a time par for each hole and the round depends on numerous factors, such as the:

- number of players in the groups
- length of the holes
- difficulty of the holes
- walking distance from green to next tee

There is no set formula for establishing time par. It is a good opportunity for golf course administrators to establish expectations, but it is important that the expectations are realistic. If the time pars are so strict that no one can adhere to them, they will soon become irrelevant.

If, having observed play at a course and determining that generally it is reasonable for a group of four to take 10 minutes to play an average length par 3, 13 minutes to play an average length par 4 and 16 minutes to play an average length par 5, these hole times can form the basis of the time par.

For example, if the course has:

- Two holes where there is a long walk from the green to the next tee
- One long par 3
- One long par 4
- One long par 5
- One difficult hole over water

the time par for the course may be calculated as shown in the table on the following page:

Hole	Yards	Par	Time Par	Comments
1	390	4	13	
2	525	5	16	
3	353	4	13	
4	150	3	10	
5	432	4	14	Long par 4 adds one minute
6	547	5	16	
7	407	4	13	
8	186	3	11	Long par 3 adds one minute
9	345	4	14	Long walk from 8th tee adds one minute
Out	3335	36	2.00 hours	
10	394	4	14	Difficult par 4 over water adds one minute
11	364	4	14	Long walk from 10th tee adds one minute
12	522	5	16	
13	155	3	10	
14	578	5	17	Long par 5 adds one minute
15	402	4	13	
16	132	3	10	
17	331	4	13	
18	387	4	13	
In	3265	36	2.00 hours	
Total	6600	72	4.00 hours	

Note: This is not a recommended time par for a course with the above par and yardages played by groups of four. It is simply a guide for establishing a time par, and the factors that should be taken into consideration when doing so.

D. Starter Sample Guidelines

The following is taken from the St Andrews Links Trust guidance for Starters on The Old Course. The St Andrews Links Trust manages the seven public courses in St Andrews, including The Old Course.

Introduction

Each person will have their own style of delivery, however, to provide continuity on the 1st Tee the following practices should be adopted and the relevant information must be given to all golfers:

Ensure golfers are on the tee in time and help settle their nerves.

- This is important to help maintain continuity on the tee

Yardage Markers

- Inform golfers about yardages on sprinkler heads

Make golfers aware of the Pace of Play targets and give them advice as to who the Rangers are on duty

- It is vital that this information is passed on and that golfers are made aware that the rangers are there to help with and encourage pace of play

Food Cart

- Informing golfers of the location of the food cart and advise them of the need to maintain their position on the course

Caddies

- Ensure all golfers who have caddies receive the card detailing fees and feedback

Photos

- Take photographs of golfers as required

Assist the golfers by offering them guidance on the line off the 1st tee.

- Make sure it is clear to play and inform golfers that they have right of way over golfers playing the 18th hole
- If the golfers have caddies let the caddies advise on the line off the tee
- Get players to play a provisional ball if required

Starting

- Assuming that it is possible to do so, start the players at exactly the group's time of starting
- Do not start the group early even if it is clear to play

E. Course Ranger Sample Guidelines

The following is taken from the St Andrews Links Trust guidance on “Correct Ranging”. The St Andrews Links Trust manages the seven public courses in St Andrews, including The Old Course.

Introduction

1. The “CORRECT” Ranging training method was devised to provide consistency of Ranging throughout the Links. It is a system, which, if followed to the letter, should ensure enjoyment for all golfers and job satisfaction for the Rangers working on the course. It should be used for training in conjunction with actual or hypothetical situations and may be used as a training package for any aspiring Ranger on any course.

Objectives

1. To assist all golfers around the golf course safely and within the timescale laid down by the Management.
2. To enable all golfers to enjoy the experience of playing the course and leaving them with a desire to return.

Preparation

1. Ensure you have a thorough knowledge of your course, particularly in respect of difficult holes that may cause golfers problems.
2. Know your distances, both from the tee and to the green, using measuring points that are permanent fixtures on the course.
3. Ensure you have a sound knowledge of the Rules of Golf, especially the Rules on Etiquette, as they will quite often be used to emphasise points to golfers during dialogue with them. Carrying a copy of the Rules of Golf is encouraged as these can be referred to at any time.

On The Course

1. Keep in touch with the Starter to ensure you have an accurate list of golfers by tee times and keep updating your list at regular intervals.
2. Ensure you can identify each game by tee time by using equipment or attire worn or carried by the golfer that is not liable to change.
3. Introduce yourself to as many games as possible, as early as possible, reminding them of the pace of play requirements and offering your assistance to them should they encounter any problems during their round.

4. Any problems encountered due to slow play should be handled using the “CORRECT” Ranging method.

“CORRECT” Ranging

1. “CORRECT” is a method of Ranging which should be used to avoid undue harassment to golfers and can save the Ranger embarrassment through making hasty decisions.
2. “CORRECT” is as follows:
 - C = Check
 - O = Observe
 - R = Review
 - R = React
 - E = Encourage
 - C = Chase
 - T = Thank
3. Each letter should be used in sequence when addressing any problem with Slow Play as follows:
 - a. Check - Ensure that any game that appears to be slow is in fact slow. By use of the recognition points of groups made earlier, ascertain the starting time of the game you are concerned about to ensure that your concerns are justified.
 - b. Observe - Look at the games immediately behind and in front of the suspect game. Ascertain whether the suspect game is falling behind the group in front and/or delaying the group behind.
 - c. Review - Have any of the games changed position? Ascertain what has happened (they may have let a game play through for instance or been let through after a delay).
 - d. React - What, if any, action is required? Ensure that whatever action you propose is the correct action prior to approaching any golfers. Check the golfers that you are about to approach for any body language (e.g. irate, annoyed or, even, happy), which will assist you in determining the proper approach to make.
 - e. Encourage - Should the Ranger decide that encouragement is the required approach, do so cheerfully. This should put the golfers at ease. Ensure that, during dialogue with the golfers, they know that you have observed them having slight problems and encourage them to increase their pace, once again offering

your assistance to them should they require it.

f. Chase - Should the Ranger decide that the problem game is unlikely to increase their pace through encouragement, assertive measures will have to be adopted. Once again, be polite at all times.

g. Thank - In all circumstances, ensure that the golfers are thanked for their efforts to date and for any future improvements they make in their pace of play. If the dialogue ends on a pleasant note then they will be more receptive to the Ranger's requests.

SUMMARY

1. Always remember that the earlier the Ranger can spot a potential problem, the easier it can be rectified. If a game is encouraged early enough and Ranger assistance given at this stage, then the need for assertive measures may never arise. Rangers must ensure that monitoring continues to enable assistance to be given as required.
2. Conversely, if a game is a long way behind in the early stages of its round, the Ranger must be prepared to use assertive measures straight away. But, it must be remembered that, if assertive measures are used in the early stages, the Ranger must ensure that the golfers are given sufficient time to improve their position on the course before they are approached again. It tends to take a few holes of play to recover a short period of lost time. Continuous monitoring of this type of problem is a must, albeit the monitoring is done from afar.
3. The Ranger must always remember the "T" for "thank" in "CORRECT". If dialogue has taken place with any slow game and it has improved its position, then the Ranger must return to the game in question and thank the players for their efforts, and encourage them to keep up the good work. Additionally, if it is clear that a game is doing its best to make up time, but progress is not as desired, they must also be thanked for their efforts and encouraged to continue as best as they can. In this case, the Ranger's job is to ensure that all games behind the problem game are as close to each other as possible to enable any lost time to be regained once the offending game has left the course.
4. If all the above measures are followed to the letter, then, hopefully, all golfers will enjoy their round and the Ranger achieves satisfaction knowing he has contributed to making their experience pleasurable.

The following guidance on marshalling pace of play is provided at Carbrook Golf Club, Queensland, Australia.

Marshalling

Role

- To ensure the field flows as fast as possible and to ensure each group does the best they can in keeping up with the group in front and keeping their position in the field.
- The Marshal can also prevent slow groups from becoming out of position purely by being a presence. Most players will move faster if they know they are being watched by an official.

Addressing groups out of position

- If a group is out of position, and a gap of more than half a hole has opened up it is important to be careful and not jump to conclusions. Most players take offence at being told they're slow. A few tips are:
 - Make sure you are aware of what is in front of them. Know the position of the 2-3 groups in front and ensure there are no waits or hold ups ahead. The last thing you want to do is tell a group they are out of position and then the next hole they are waiting on a tee.
 - Monitor them for a hole to see what their behaviour is like – are they slow or are they making an effort. Your presence with no communication may have an immediate effect.
 - If they are still behind, a non-aggressive and empathetic approach is always encouraged. A good way to approach them is “have you guys had any trouble?”
 - When they reply either yes or no (they may have just lost a ball), you can then say “if you can just help us and try to close the gap over the next two holes it would be appreciated”.
 - Then leave the group but pop back a hole later to let them know you are still watching them.
 - Should they not make any effort you will have to ask them again. For example, “Guys I know you are trying but there is still a bit of a gap, and we need you to close it by the 13th please.”

Tips

- Always go into the situation giving the player the benefit of the doubt.
- Be friendly and empathetic
- Don't be aggressive even if the players you are speaking to choose to act this way. Remain calm but assertive.
- Most of the time your presence will be enough. Just hovering around a group without saying anything will make them move faster.
- Encourage the players to be faster between shots. They don't have to rush their actual strokes, just walk faster and make an effort.

F. Pace of Play Spreadsheets

The following is a sample extract from a pace of play spreadsheet, which enables a course ranger or referee to ascertain whether each group is playing within the time par established for each hole and the round.

Round 1 Date: July 16th 2015		Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Par	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	3	4
GAME	NAMES	Time	0.14	0.15	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.15	0.15	0.11	0.14
Tee 1											
1	Pampling...Owen...Bjorn	6.32	6.46	7.01	7.15	7.31	7.49	8.04	8.19	8.30	8.44
2	Hamilton...Dunne...Hahn	6.43	6.57	7.12	7.26	7.42	8.00	8.15	8.30	8.41	8.55
3	Harman...Knox...DeLaet	6.54	7.08	7.23	7.37	7.53	8.11	8.26	8.41	8.52	9.06
4	Every...Levy...Lingmerth	7.05	7.19	7.34	7.48	8.04	8.22	8.37	8.52	9.03	9.17
5	Luiten...Streb...Jones	7.16	7.30	7.45	7.59	8.15	8.33	8.48	9.03	9.14	9.28
6	Wall...An...Niebrugge	7.27	7.41	7.56	8.10	8.26	8.44	8.59	9.14	9.25	9.39
7	Lyle...Hoffman...Na	7.38	7.52	8.07	8.21	8.37	8.55	9.10	9.25	9.36	9.50
8	Streelman...Lowry...Goosen	7.49	8.03	8.18	8.32	8.48	9.06	9.21	9.36	9.47	10.01
9	Donald...Mahan...Pettersson	8.00	8.14	8.29	8.43	8.59	9.17	9.32	9.47	9.58	10.12
10	Dubuisson...Horschel...Fisher	8.11	8.25	8.40	8.54	9.10	9.28	9.43	9.58	10.09	10.23
11	McDowell...Simpson...Schniederjans	8.22	8.36	8.51	9.05	9.21	9.39	9.54	10.09	10.20	10.34
12	Watson...Els...Snedeker	8.33	8.47	9.02	9.16	9.32	9.50	10.05	10.20	10.31	10.45
13	Todd...Holmes...Tomimura	8.44	8.58	9.13	9.27	9.43	10.01	10.16	10.31	10.42	10.56
14	Watson...Poulter...Schwartzel	9.00	9.14	9.29	9.43	9.59	10.17	10.32	10.47	10.58	11.12
15	Westwood...Garcia...Reed	9.11	9.25	9.40	9.54	10.10	10.28	10.43	10.58	11.09	11.23
16	Clarke...Langasque...Manassero	9.22	9.36	9.51	10.05	10.21	10.39	10.54	11.09	11.20	11.34
17	Spieth...Matsuyama...Johnson	9.33	9.47	10.02	10.16	10.32	10.50	11.05	11.20	11.31	11.45
18	Palmer...Lawrie...Kisner	9.44	9.58	10.13	10.27	10.43	11.01	11.16	11.31	11.42	11.56
19	Day...Woods...Oosthuizen	9.55	10.09	10.24	10.38	10.54	11.12	11.27	11.42	11.53	12.07
20	Takayama...Senden...Koepka	10.06	10.20	10.35	10.49	11.05	11.23	11.38	11.53	12.04	12.18
21	Cink...Curtis...Duval	10.17	10.31	10.46	11.00	11.16	11.34	11.49	12.04	12.15	12.29
22	Howell...Ilonen...Chalmers	10.28	10.42	10.57	11.11	11.27	11.45	12.00	12.15	12.26	12.40
23	Jacquelin...Pepperell...Hearn	10.39	10.53	11.08	11.22	11.38	11.56	12.11	12.26	12.37	12.51
24	Arnold...Kinnear...Hatton	10.50	11.04	11.19	11.33	11.49	12.07	12.22	12.37	12.48	13.02
25	Brooks...Boyd...Bland	11.01	11.15	11.30	11.44	12.00	12.18	12.33	12.48	12.59	13.13
26	Moore...Hend...Fox	11.12	11.26	11.41	11.55	12.11	12.29	12.44	12.59	13.10	13.24

G. Guidance on Call-Up Procedures

A call-up procedure may be introduced at one or more holes, either on a permanent basis or as needed. Generally, call-up procedures are adopted at holes where players are waiting for a green to clear, but a high percentage of players will not actually succeed in getting their ball on to the green, which then causes delay. This occurs most commonly with long par 3s or drivable par 4s, but also may arise on holes where players have a long approach shot into the green, for example, long par 4s or short par5s.

Procedure When Call-Up Procedure Adopted

When a call-up procedure is introduced, it is important that players understand what is expected of them at the relevant hole.

The following is an example of the type of guidance that should be offered to players:

1. If there is waiting on [insert relevant hole number/location, for example, 5th tee or 7th fairway], players should initiate a call-up procedure.
2. Once the 1st group to use the procedure has all balls on the putting green, these should be marked and lifted by the players and they should then step aside to a safe distance from the green.
3. The group should then indicate to the group behind to play up
4. If any ball from the 2nd group interferes with the 1st group, a player in the 1st group may mark and lift the ball.
5. The 1st group should then complete play of the hole.
6. Once the 1st group has completed the hole in question, any ball lifted should be replaced and the 2nd group will, if necessary, continue play of the hole until all balls are on the putting green.
7. Once all balls for the 2nd group are on the putting green, they should be marked and lifted and the process (see 2-6 above) starts again.

If at any time the group “behind” is not in a position to play (for example, due to a lost ball or being out of position) the group on the putting green should simply complete the hole without delay.

H. R&A Pace of Play Condition

Pace of Play Condition for The R&A's Amateur Championships and Matches

(a) Time Allowed:

Each hole has been given a maximum completion time based upon the length and difficulty of the hole. The maximum time allotted for the completion of 18 holes will be available prior to play.

Definition of “Out of Position”: The first group and any group after a starter's gap will be considered to be “out of position” if, at any time during the round, the group's cumulative time exceeds the time allowed for the number of holes completed. Any following group will be considered “out of position” if it is more than the starting interval behind the group in front.

Note: In making a decision on whether to time a “following group” that is out of position, leniency may be shown to a group that has not exceeded the time allotted for the number of holes completed.

(b) Procedure When Group is Out of Position:

1. If a decision is taken to time the group, each player in the group will be subject to individual timing by a referee. Each player in the group will be advised that they are “out of position” and are being timed.
2. The maximum time allocated per shot is 40 seconds. 10 extra seconds are allowed for the first player to play:
 - on a par three hole;
 - an approach shot; and
 - a chip or putt

The timing will start when a player has had sufficient time to reach his ball, it is his turn to play and he is able to play without interference or distraction.

On the putting green, timing will start when the player has had a reasonable amount of time to lift, clean and replace his ball, repair ball marks and move loose impediments on his line of putt. Time spent looking at the line from beyond the hole and/or behind the ball and aligning the ball will count as part of the time taken for the next stroke.

3. Timing ceases when a group is back in position and players will be advised accordingly.

Note: In some circumstances, an individual player, or two players within a group of three, may be timed instead of the entire group.

PENALTY FOR BREACH OF CONDITION:

1	Bad Time	Player will be warned by the referee and told that if he has a further bad time he will be penalised	
		<u>Stroke Play</u>	<u>Match Play</u>
2	Bad Times	Penalty of One Stroke	Loss of Hole
3	Bad Times	Further Penalty of Two Strokes	Loss of Hole
4	Bad Times	Disqualification	Disqualification

(c) Procedure When Again Out of Position During Same Round:

If a group is “out of position” more than once during a round, the above procedure will apply on each occasion. Bad times and the application of penalties in the same round will be carried forward until the round is completed. A player will not be penalised if he has a second bad time before being advised of his earlier bad time.

(d) Random Timing Without Warning When Group Not Out of Position

In some circumstances, a group or an individual player may be timed without warning, including when a group is not out of position. In such cases of “random timing”, the timing provisions and penalties set out in clause (b) above apply, except that a player will only be given a bad time if he exceeds 60 seconds to play a shot, with an extra 10 seconds given (i.e. 70 seconds in total) for the “first to play” shots referenced in (b) above.

I. Self-Assessed Pace of Play Control System

Concept:

The idea is that, with the “Self-Assessed Pace of Play Control” system, each group will monitor their pace of play by checking the official clock against the official times of passage through 4 check-points themselves. In the case of a group being “out of position”, it will receive an automatic warning.

Any player of the group must enter the time at each check-point and check whether their group might be out of position according to criteria established by the administrator.

The intention is that either the other players in the group will ask the player who did the checking what the result is or the players doing the checking will advise the other members of the group as to their status. This way, a discussion about the group’s pace of play is initiated; this also gives the faster players in the group an excuse or a justification to tell the slower player(s) that they must all speed up (without the check point information, often players would feel uncomfortable to initiate such a discussion).

With this system, there is no need for any volunteers to operate the check-points. This avoids inexperienced volunteers sometimes using inappropriate wording when talking to the players. It also avoids wrong information being given to the players by well intentioned volunteers. Most importantly, it places the responsibility on the players to administer their own pace of play system.

A referee on the course can check at a distance the information that has been provided by the players. All the referee has to do is monitor groups who have had automatic warnings and confirm to them that they have been officially warned.

Sample Text for “Self-Assessed Pace of Play Control System” Condition of Competition

Players must follow the pace of play rules and play according to the hole-by-hole time par decided by the Committee.

If a group is “out of position” at any one of the check-points, the group is deemed to be in breach and risk being penalised.

Definition of “Out of Position”:

The first group is deemed to be out of position whenever it is behind schedule at any one of the check-points.

Subsequent groups are deemed to be out of position if:

- a) the group has passed through a check-point behind the schedule and
- b) there is a gap of 15 minutes or more between their time and the time entered by the group ahead

Players in an “out of position” group receive the following penalties:

- First breach: warning
- Second breach: one stroke
- Third breach: two strokes
- Fourth breach: disqualification

Groups must enter their time of completion of the hole (shown on official clock) at the check-points, once the flagstick has been replaced in the hole. Failure to do so will result in an automatic warning and entering an inexact time will be considered as a serious breach of etiquette – Rule 33-7 applies.

The check-points are:

1. Between holes 4 & 5
2. Between holes 9 & 10 (halfway house)
3. Between holes 13 & 14 and
4. After hole 18 in the recording area.

Note: Players, before signing their scorecard, should first ensure that they have no penalty strokes under those conditions to add to their score.

If a group, having been on time at the first 3 check-points, is out of position after hole 18, players will be subject to a one stroke penalty if there is no good reason for the group being out of position.

J. Hole Position Guidance taken from The R&A’s “Guidance on Running a Competition”

Many factors affect the selection of good hole positions, but the primary objective is to reward a good shot.

The following points should be considered:

- A. Take into account, where appropriate, the design of the hole as the architect intended it to be played. Determine the length of the shot to the green and how it may be affected by the possible conditions for the day – wind, rain and the holding nature of the green. In this connection it is recommended that a weather forecast is obtained and, if rain is likely, holes should not be cut where water might accumulate.
- B. There must be enough putting green surface between the hole and the front and the sides of the green to accommodate the required shot. For example, if the hole requires a long iron or wood shot to the green, the hole should be positioned deeper in the green and farther from its sides than would be the case if the hole requires a short pitch shot.

In any case, it is recommended that generally the hole be positioned at least four paces from any edge of the green. If a bunker is close to the edge, or if the ground slopes away from the edge, the distance should be greater, especially if the shot is more than a pitch.

Consideration should be given to allowing fair opportunity for recovery after a reasonably good shot that just misses the green. On the other hand, the penalty for failure is something the player must take into account in deciding whether or not to attack a particular hole position. Much will depend upon the standard of the players.

- C. An area of two to three feet around the hole should be as level as possible. Effort should be made to ensure that holes are not positioned within three paces of a very severe slope or ridge or of a recently used hole. If the design of the green dictates that the hole be positioned on a slope, the hole should be cut vertically, not with the slope. A player putting from above the hole should be able to stop the ball near the hole.
- D. Consider the condition of nearby turf, especially taking care to avoid old hole plugs which have not completely healed.
- E. There should be a balanced selection of hole positions for the entire course

with respect to left, right, central, front and back positions. For example, beware too many positions on one side or the other of the green with a resulting premium on drawn or faded shots.

- F. For a competition played over several days the course should be kept in balance daily as to the degree of difficulty. The course should not be set up appreciably more difficult for any round – balanced treatment is the aim. The idea of making the course progressively harder round after round is one that should be avoided.

One form of balanced daily treatment is to select six quite difficult hole positions, six which are moderately difficult and six which are relatively easy. One should also try to keep a balance of using the left and the right of the green. For example, on the first nine there may be four to the right, four to the left and one in the centre. The second nine should be similar. Also, one should vary as much as possible the number of paces from the front edge of the green.

- G. During practice days before a competition it is recommended that holes are positioned in areas which will not be used during the competition so that competition positions will not be damaged by foot traffic.
- H. Anticipate the players' walking routes. Position holes for early rounds so that good hole positions for later rounds will not be spoiled by players leaving the green. For example, for a four-day event, on the first day, where possible, the hole positions should be close to the exit line to the next tee. On the second day the holes should be in such a position that the players will be walking on or near the first day's position. This should leave half of the green for the last two days.
- I. In match play, a hole position may, if necessary, be changed during a round, provided that in each match the players play with the holes in the same position. In stroke play, the Rules require that all competitors in a single round play with each hole in the same position, other than when it is impossible for a damaged hole to be repaired so that it conforms with the Definition of "Hole" in the Rules of Golf.

When 36 holes are played in one day it is customary for hole positions not to be changed between rounds, but there is no Rule to prohibit changing them. If they are changed, all players should be informed.

- J. The member of the greenstaff who cuts the holes must make sure that the Rules of Golf are observed, especially the requirements that the hole must be

4 ¼ inches (108mm) in diameter, must be at least 4 inches (101.6mm) deep and that wherever possible the hole-liner must be sunk at least one inch (25mm) below the putting green surface. If a plastic cuff/rim is used, it is considered to be part of the hole liner, so it too must be sunk at least one inch (25mm) below the putting green surface, unless the nature of the soil makes it impracticable to do so.

7. References

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- p.8 & 13 Research conducted by “Global Golf Advisors”
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The St Andrews Links Trust
- p.57 Ranger Sample Guidelines
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- p.60 Marshal Sample Guidelines
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- p.66 Self-Assessed Pace of Play Control System
The Swiss Golf Association

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All photographs, Getty Images, except:

- p.15 Panhandle Alliance for Education
- p.19 Troon Golf
- p.35 Mackenzie & Ebert Limited
- p.36 Paul Smith

8. Acknowledgements

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