



# Woodford Golf Club

Policy for inclement weather, suspension of  
play and abandoned competitions

Nick Rowe, Honorary Competition Secretary

2017

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION SPEAK TO NICK ROWE

## Woodford Golf Club

### Policy for inclement weather, suspension of play and abandoned competitions.

January 2017

#### Introduction

The aim of this Policy is to have procedures in place to cope with inclement weather and other situations where play may need to be halted before or during competitions. This is required so that players and those involved in running the competition are able to recognise the conditions under which play should be suspended and that there is clarity for all involved on the procedures to be followed. The situation where players do not know whether play has been suspended or not, or some players know and others don't should be avoided. **There are also issues of health and safety where procedures must be followed.**

Due to the circumstances at Woodford Golf Club we cannot always guarantee that certain named individuals will be on site at the time that a decision is required to suspend play or abandon a competition. We are also not in a position where we can sound a klaxon to suspend or abandon play. This makes procedures more challenging than for some golf clubs and requires that all concerned - including players - have access to the procedures and are familiar with them. It is important in this context that we:

- a) communicate clearly the circumstances in which inclement weather and poor playing conditions warrant intervention;
- b) identify roles and responsibilities for making decisions on suspending play and abandoning a competition; and
- c) ensure everyone is aware of the appropriate procedures and their personal responsibilities.

#### Authorised responsibilities for decisions on suspending or abandoning play

For the purposes of this policy it is assumed that the "person responsible for the competition" as sanctioned by the Handicap and Competitions Committee is as follows (and in the following order):

1. The Honorary Competition Secretary (**Nick Rowe**) - if he is in the Clubhouse at the time when a decision is required or is easily contactable on the golf course;
2. The Golf Professional (**Kenny Banks**) - if he is in the Clubhouse at the time when a decision is required or is easily contactable on the golf course;
3. The Seniors or Ladies Competition Secretaries (**Tom Steed/ Maureen Hamilton**) if available and in the absence of Nick Rowe and Kenny Banks
4. Members of the Handicaps and Competitions Committee (**Mark Deeming**) if available and in the absence of all above named individuals

The above individuals will take advice from the Greens staff (Steve Thorogood and Stuart Runciman) where appropriate and available. Invariably there will be a judgement call to be made by 'the person

responsible for the competition'. They will make the call on suspension and abandonment taking into account all the information available. The decision made is final and should be accepted by all players as being made in good faith and with the safety and best interests of all golfers.

In the unlikely circumstances that none of the above are available at the time a decision is required (AND AS A LAST RESORT or IN THE CASE OF DANGER FROM LIGHTNING) players are authorised to make their own decision to suspend play if conditions are unplayable (see below). **In this situation at least 6 players (in two or more groups) must come to an agreement that this is an appropriate course of action.**

**In the absence of a klaxon players are required to notify the playing group immediately behind them on the course if play is suspended or abandoned.** This will ensure that all players on the course are notified as quickly as possible - that players do not play on unnecessarily and that the course is evacuated promptly in the case of a dangerous situation.

## **SUSPENSION OF PLAY**

**Suspension from the start of a competition:** If conditions are such that any competition cannot be started on time for any reason then it is assumed that the "suspension of play" starts from the time of the first planned tee-time. If there is no improvement in conditions after a period of one hour then the competition will be abandoned. If play is started players will go out in the same order as on the start sheet.

**In the case of suspension of play for a competition that has already started (with players on the course) the following procedure will apply.** As soon as the players have returned to the clubhouse they will be kept informed of what is happening. The person responsible for the competition will be expected to inform the players that the situation will be reviewed. Accordingly, play cannot be resumed until the reason for the suspension has been removed or does not continue to exist. The situation will be reviewed every 30 minutes up to a maximum period of one hour. After a period of one hours delay and with no improvement in the situation, the person responsible for the competition will declare the competition abandoned and the players notified accordingly.

**In the case of suspension of play in match play competitions** (which could include lack of daylight). Agreement on suspension (unless a dangerous situation applies) must be made by both sides. Play will be resumed from where the match left off at a time agreed by both sides.

### **a) Dangerous Circumstances**

All players must adhere to the following Suspension of Play procedures in the case of dangerous situations.

**Lightning:** Players have a duty to protect themselves in Health and Safety matters especially should there be a danger from lightning when play must stop immediately. **However, even if play is not formally suspended and the players believe there is a real risk of, or danger from, lightning then the player is entitled to proceed under the provision of Rule 6-8 and make a personal decision to discontinue play.**

**Fog:** Should play need to be suspended due to fog then the same procedure will be followed as for lightning. It is considered that play is only safe when the large Oak Tree to the left of the fairway and approximately 200 yards from the tee can be seen from the competition first tee.

A decision to suspend or abandon play due to dangerous weather conditions will be made by the responsible individual available on the day. Every effort will be made to ensure that players are notified with sufficient time to allow for all competitors, caddies and spectators to evacuate the course prior to an electric storm striking the course. If play has been formally suspended, then a player is not entitled to override that decision and continue play. When notified that play is suspended players must discontinue play immediately. **PENALTY for breach of this condition is DISQUALIFICATION.**

**Non formal competition situations:** Woodford Golf Club will make every effort to provide sound advice on when play should or should not be allowed - and will promote and communicate this guidance in prominent places in the Clubhouse. However players are responsible for policing themselves in non formal competition situations and are personally liable.

#### **b) Non-Dangerous circumstances**

A competition should not generally be suspended simply on account of rain, unless the rain is so heavy that it would be unfair to require players to continue. Similarly frozen, icy conditions will not normally be a cause to suspend play unless the green keepers advise that continuing play will damage the course. **Generally, play should only be suspended when the course has become unplayable.** For example:

- a) balls are moving frequently on the putting greens due to wind;
- b) at least one hole is TOTALLY surrounded by casual water;
- c) snow is accumulating on the course and affecting play.

Once notified of a decision to suspend play the same procedures apply as noted above for 'dangerous situations'. **PENALTY for breach of this condition is DISQUALIFICATION.**

#### **Procedures to be followed on the course when play is suspended.**

Rule 6-8 of the Rules of Golf applies (see the full rule for details). The important points to note are:

- a) When play is suspended by the Committee, if the players in a match or group are between the play of two holes, they must not resume play until the Committee has ordered a resumption of play. If they have started play of a hole, they may discontinue play immediately or continue play of the hole, provided they do so without delay. **In the case of a dangerous situation they must discontinue play immediately.**
- b) If the players choose to continue play of the hole, they are permitted to discontinue play before completing it. In any case, play must be discontinued after the hole is completed.
- c) when discontinuing play the ball must be marked (or left in situ) and on resumption of play the ball must be replaced on the spot marked. If this is not clear then the ball must be placed on a spot that is the best estimate of where it previously lie. The ball may be lifted, cleaned and replaced in all circumstances.

## **Impact on the competition and handicaps when play is abandoned**

Once the play of a round has started, if it is clear that not all the field can complete their rounds on the day and the event cannot be continued later, the Committee has no option but to cancel the round.

Those players who have not completed their round will be considered as having not entered the competition and their cards will not be classed as "No returns" (NR's). Their handicap will remain unchanged. **If more than two thirds the scheduled field has completed a full round then the competition will stand; failing that it will be recorded as abandoned in full.** Players will be entitled to a full refund of the entry money. The competition will usually be re-scheduled.

When a competition counting for handicap is abandoned the result becomes CSS = SSS Reduction Only with handicap adjustments (for those cards entered) made only for competitors with a Nett Differential of less than zero. No handicap increases are applied where a competition is abandoned. (CONGU® UHS Clause 18.7)

**Nick Rowe, Competition Secretary 13th January 2017**

## GOLF IN DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

Woodford Golf Club is not able to use a klaxon to warn members or guests of severe weather conditions.

The following policy is therefore adopted and must be adhered to.

### FOG

The fact that the course has not been officially closed does not warrant that it is fit for play. Players have a duty of care not to behave in such a way that others may be injured by their actions. They also have a duty to take care not to injure themselves.

It is considered that play is only safe when the large Oak Tree to the left of the fairway and approximately 200 yards from the tee can be seen from the competition first tee. If these conditions are not met **DO NOT PLAY!** Playing in such conditions is dangerous and players do so at their own risk and are personally liable.

### LIGHTNING



**If there is a risk of lightning and you are playing social golf you are strongly advised to stop play immediately and make your way to a safe situation.**

In competition\* players have a duty to protect themselves in health and safety matters especially should there be a danger from lightning when play must stop immediately. **However, even if play is not formally suspended and the players believe there is a real risk of, or danger from, lightning then the player is entitled to proceed under the provision of Rule 6-8 and make a personal decision to discontinue play.**

\*Please see Woodford Golf Club Policy for inclement weather, suspension of play and abandoned competitions (copy available in the Clubhouse).

**Paul Evans, Captain and Chair of Management Committee, 13th January 2017**