

Pace of Play/General Etiquette at Rowlands Castle GC

Dear Members,

With golf slowly getting back to normality and still having a very busy golf course, many conversations about pace of play and general etiquette have come up. Therefore, I felt some further information on the matters may help members understand what is expected when playing RCGC. I hope you would agree the golf course is in fantastic condition at the moment, especially with the current weather not doing us any favours.

Pace of Play

Pace of play is a topic that has come up a lot since we have returned to golf. This is not just about slow play, but also about those that want to run around the golf course in record time. Like anything, there has to be a balance. Therefore, I wanted to share some information with you regarding the calculated average pace of play.

2 Balls – 3 hrs 9 mins /1 hr 3 mins per 6 holes

3 Balls – 3 hrs 40 mins /1 hr 13 mins per 6 holes

4 Balls – 4 hrs 3 mins / 1 hr 21 mins per 6 holes

These times are calculated taking into account walking pace, lengths of, and distances between, the holes around the course, time to take a shot, time to take a putt, time to potentially look for a ball, and are based on an 18-handicap golfer. They are also based on each golfer being ready to play immediately the previous golfer has played which currently leads to a lot of lost time.

This addresses both points... If you are not completing your round within these times please take responsibility for yourself and your playing partners to ensure you are achieving them. They are not unrealistic and will be achieved by keeping a steady pace.

In the same breath, those that are playing a round of golf within these times and then complaining about slow play also need to understand golf is a leisure sport. Unnecessary pressure put onto fellow members when they are sticking within these time frames is just as bad etiquette as slow play. Balance is key.

Letting Groups Through

There is a bit of confusion with this due to COVID restrictions. There is no reason why you can not let a group through and keep to a safe distance. The timings above are key to ensuring good pace of play but if you lose a hole on the players in front you need to do 1 of 2 things. Firstly, pick up the pace to gain back the ground you have lost or secondly, step aside and let the group behind you play through.

3 Minute Rule

The time allowed to look for a ball is now 3 minutes, so please ensure you are not taking any longer. In competition play, playing a provisional ball is always encouraged if you feel your ball may be difficult to find.

4 Metre Rule

This is one of the biggest gripes to many members. **You should not be taking your trolley within 4 metres of the green.** Doing this shows obvious wear in areas where it is very important to keep the grass lush and healthy. No body enjoys a bare lie just off the end of the green and this is exactly what taking your trolleys too close to the green causes. You should also not be taking your trolley between green-side bunkers and the green, please go around them. This rule also applies for buggies. Buggies should also be used sparingly on the fairways and in the first cut/rough as much as possible as they burn the fairway out in these current conditions.

Pitch Marks

Quite simple this one.... Repair them!! If every member made it their goal to repair at least 3 on each green, we would have no problem. Yes, members should be doing this themselves but sometimes they can be missed.

Litter

Due to guidelines we are still unable to put the bins back out. The majority of members have been very good with taking their own rubbish home, but can I remind you it is not acceptable to leave rubbish on the golf course or stuffed into poles as pictured. As a bit of information, bin clearing for the green keepers is around 2 hours a week work. This time can be used so much better with a little care taken by the members.



Summary

We are all members of the same golf club and it is important to remember golf is a leisure sport and every member has equal rights. You should treat your fellow members how you would like to be treated. If you are holding up someone on the golf course, you are affecting their enjoyment and many others – it only takes 1 golfer to ruin the enjoyment of a hundred others. If you are getting right up behind someone and putting pressure on them when they have not lost any ground on the group in front, you are taking away enjoyment from their round.

We are all members of this fantastic golf club and we want you to enjoy it every moment you are here.

Many thanks

Shah