



# MALTA GOLF ASSOCIATION INFORMATION BULLETIN

## PACE OF PLAY



*The R&A have just circulated a communication document to all its affiliated unions/ associations/ federations concerning “pace of play”. Although principally intended for elite/championship level golf, we would like to share with you the R&A’s recommendations to amateur golf.*

It is understandable that clubs, public courses, resorts and competition organisers may have differing views on what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable pace of play. However, it is a fact that slow play detracts from the enjoyment of the game for many golfers, and few golfers are heard to complain about play being too quick.

Therefore, at all levels of the game, there is a responsibility on players and administrators to ensure that golf is played at a good pace, and a pace that is appropriate to the course being played. Factors that may influence what is considered to be an appropriate pace may be the severity of the course, the distances between greens and tees, the climate and also the range of ability of the players on the course.

In addition, it is necessary to make some distinction between golf played as a leisure pursuit and golf that is played at the highest levels, where certain allowances have to be made for the fact that those playing at the highest levels are doing so as their occupation. At the elite level, generally there will be officials on the course who can monitor pace of play and implement a strict policy which involves groups having to keep to a hole-by-hole schedule and being subject to timing of individual strokes with the threat of penalties if they fail to keep to the schedule. It is not realistic for such policies to be adopted for “normal” play and, therefore, administrators need to rely on good practices and player co-operation to ensure reasonable round times.

In this respect, it is important for administrators to set targets for round times. As stated above, there is not a “one size fits all” model for round times, but it is important that targets are achievable without being too soft.



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As a guide, generally two-ball rounds should take no more than 3 hours and 10 minutes; three-balls should take no more than 3 hours 30 minutes, and four-balls no more than 3 hours and 50 minutes. In fact, shorter round times than these should be the aim of all players, where appropriate. However, as already mentioned, it is also appreciated that factors such as course design and heat may necessitate longer round time targets and administrators should be mindful of this.

#### **THINGS THAT PLAYERS CAN DO TO MINIMISE ROUND TIMES**

- Be aware of your position with regards to the group in front.
- Do not concern yourself with the group behind; the fact that you are not holding them up is irrelevant as it is your group's responsibility to keep up with the group in front.
- If you feel that your group is falling behind, advise the other players in your group.
- If your group is behind, try to catch up quickly.
- If you lose a clear hole and are delaying the group behind, or if there is no group in front of you and you are delaying the group behind, invite the group behind to play through.
- Do not wait until it is your turn to play before putting your glove on.
- Do not wait until it is your turn to play before calculating your yardage and selecting your club.
- Look at your own line of putt while the other players in the group look at theirs (within the bounds of normal etiquette).
- At the green, position your bags so as to allow quick movement off the green to the next tee.
- Move off the green as soon as all players in your group have holed out; mark score cards at or on the way to the next tee.
- Play a provisional ball if your ball may be lost outside a hazard or out of bounds.
- If you keep up with the group in front, you cannot be accused of slow play.