

Courtesy on the Golf Course

Golf has always been considered a game of courtesy and fair play. It has been said that golf is the only major game where you were expected to be your own referee. Marshalls at a tournament are not expected to go around looking for violations - they are there to help you interpret the Rules, but the player is expected to call attention to any possible violation. I have written about Rules before, but this month I will concentrate on Courtesy.

Courtesy to Your Foursome

Talking, moving, standing too close to a player, stepping on another player's line of putt are common distractions. Standing directly or partially behind some players is a distraction, so try to find out if anyone in your group is bothered by a particular action, and then add that to the list above for that round.

Flat markers should be used on the putting green when your marker is near the line of another player's putt.

Count your strokes carefully. We all make mistakes, but if this happens often you will be labeled either careless or a cheat, and no one wants to have to count another player's strokes.

Cell Phones should be turned off or left at home.

Courtesy to Other Players

Don't hit into the foursome ahead of you; and shout a warning if you accidentally do.

Keep your voices down if there are players on a nearby hole (but shouting is forgiven if one of your foursome makes a hole-in-one).

Don't leave your cart or bag in front of the green while you putt.

Walk off greens either behind or to the side so that the next foursome doesn't have to wait before approaching the green. This is especially true on holes where there is a bunker (sand trap) between the green and the next tee box. (Think of our #3 and #11 as being prime examples of this.)

Courtesy to the Whole Field of Players

Keep up with the foursome ahead of you. Some ways to speed up play are:

Save your conversations for times when you are waiting;

Be ready to hit when it is your turn (take any necessary practice swings before it is your turn, but not when another player is making a stroke);

Hit your drive before you mark your scorecard if you are first off the last green;

Restrict your search time to five minutes; and above all,

Don't dawdle.

Courtesy for the Course

Replace divots, and don't forget the ones from your practice swings.

Repair ball marks on the green, even if they weren't made by you.

Don't drop clubs or the flag stick, or lean on your putter on the green - these actions can damage the green.

Replace the flagstick carefully and make sure it is in an upright position.

Rake the bunker after you play your shot and be nice and rake any nearby footprints as well.

Don't drop any trash, and

Pick up any trash you find, especially if you are in a cart.

Courtesy to STWGC

Arrive 30 to 45 minutes before your tee time, as foursomes often must be moved up.

Check for your current handicap – changes are now made twice a month.

Check and return score cards promptly after playing.

Post your own score, don't leave it for the Handicap Chair to do.

Get your own substitute Starter or Scorer if you can't make your turn, and

Notify the starters/scorers chair in advance of any changes.