

Topstone Men's Golf Club

Tips for improving pace of play

Prepared by Topstone Men's Club Board of Directors and Pro Shop Staff



Okay, so we do this for fun, right? Everybody has a day job. But golf is more fun when you can get around the course without being held up by the groups in front of you. Pace of play has been a well-known issue at Topstone, and within our Men's Club for a long time. Dare I say, perhaps a few of our friends have moved on because of it.

And then there are the rangers, "...can you pick up the pace please?" You react with rage. "We have been on top of the group in front of us for 16 holes, and then we get in trouble once, and we get approached by the ranger!" It has happened to all of us. We all fall out of position from time to time, after all, we are high handicappers, and we can't always make the ball do what we want.

Well, that is not what this tip sheet is about. This tip sheet is about controlling what we can control. Everything in golf is done 18 times, so if you can save a little bit of time on every hole by incorporating some different habits, that has the potential to improve your pace of play significantly without having you stressed out doing an activity that you are supposed to enjoy.

We recognize that most of our members are doing a great job with their pace of play. This tip sheet is just a helpful refresher for what you may already be doing. Plus, you may read something here that you have never considered before.

Adhering to the pace of play targets is a common courtesy. Remember, you can have as many as 68 guys waiting behind you. Paying your greens fees is not license to hold up the course. Please consider incorporating the following recommendations into your next game.

1. **Be early for your tee time** - Proper pace of play begins with teeing off at the appointed time. Allow time for unloading your equipment, putting on your golf shoes, any desired practice or warm-up, purchasing any refreshments or balls and driving your cart to the first tee.
2. **Be helpful to others in your group**
 - Follow the flight of all tee shots, not just your own.
 - Once in the fairway, help others look for their ball if you already know the location of yours.
 - Volunteer to fill in a divot or rake a bunker for another player if needed. Be ready to attend the flag stick for others.
 - Players in carts, forecaddie for walkers in your group if their shots have gone awry.
 - Pull clubs for your playing partners if they happen to have not selected the right club(s).
3. **Yield to players in your fairway that are ahead of you** - Topstone has a lot of adjacent fairways, and often times players on holes ahead of you find themselves in your

fairway. What happens if you hold that player up? You have the potential of slowing down your own round! Consider yielding to players in your fairways on holes in front of you. Similarly, if you hit into the fairway of a hole behind you, attempt to make your play if you can do so safely, or if instructed to do so by the players on that hole.

4. **Plan your shot while walking to your ball or while others are playing.** Carry extra tees, ball markers and an extra ball so you do not have to return to your bag to find one when needed.
5. **Line up your putt when others are putting and be ready to play when it is your turn.**
6. **Play ready golf.**
 - a. First on the tee hits, not first in hole!
 - b. Players should advance to their ball, or as far as they can do so safely. There should not be four players staged up at the first player's ball, only to advance to your own ball after the first player has made a shot.
7. **Walk directly to your golf ball; don't follow others unless assisting in search.**
8. **When two players are riding in a cart, drive the cart to the first ball, and drop off the player with his choice of several clubs.** The second player should proceed directly to his ball (if safe to do so, i.e. not in the line of someone's shot). After the first player hits his stroke, he should walk to the cart as the second golfer is playing.
9. **Walkers proceed to your ball along the sides of the fairway.** It's going to take you a little longer to get to your ball, so don't wait with the player farthest from the hole. Proceed up the side of the fairway as far as you can, provided that you can do so safely.
10. **Best ball format scoring.** For best ball events, if your playing partner is in the hole with a score (gross and net) that betters yours, pick up and card the most probable score. **THIS IS LEGAL FOR MEN'S CLUB TOURNAMENTS AND USGA HANDICAP SCORING.** This saves an abundance of time and is well within the rules of golf.
11. **Everything done in golf is done 18 times.** Consider these small adjustments when playing your next round:
 - a. After completing a hole, proceed directly to the next tee. Enter scores and put away clubs at that time.
 - b. Players in the front cart hit their tee balls first. That way, after completion of the last tee ball, the first cart can proceed without delay. Observe this tip especially if you are playing with guys hitting from the gold tee position.
 - c. Park your cart, or place your bag, where you will exit the green (closer to the next tee box). Don't back track up the fairway and hold up the next group.

The Men's Club Board of Directors and Pro Shop staff ask that you have an open mind when considering your own pace of play. The new score cards have the recommended hole completion times at the bottom of the card. Once you complete each hole, look at your watch and compare the time to that time on the card. Are you on time, falling behind, or gaining against the deficit? It is difficult to make up time in a round. Please make every effort to catch up if there is an opening in front of you once you see that you are behind.

Even if you are on pace, but there is a gap between you and the group in front of you, try to catch them. You never know when someone is going to get into trouble later in the round, and if you get a little ahead, that time buffer will assure that you do not hold up groups behind you.