

Tips for Fighting Slow Play

- ✓ At the first tee, arrive in plenty of time to figure out your match and receive the local rules and other materials from the starter. Then make sure you choose an appropriate set of tees from which to compete. You'll enjoy your round more if you're not over-challenged.
- ✓ If you're playing in a stroke play event and you're ready to play, hit it! Ready golf means playing when you're ready.
- ✓ If you hit a ball toward the woods, or another spot, visually mark that spot and then walk (or ride) directly to it. You'll have a much better chance of finding your ball this way. Don't forget, the Rules of Golf say that after five minutes, the ball is deemed to be lost – so go play your provisional.
- ✓ Play a provisional whenever there's ever a question as to whether the ball may be lost. It may even be hit if you hit your ball toward a hazard if there's a chance the ball may be lost outside a hazard. And golf course personnel, consider invoking the local rule that lets a player hit a provisional for a ball that may be unplayable in a hazard (see the Rules of Golf book, page 92, Appendix I, A-2-B. Provisional Ball) especially if the player would have to walk back over a bridge to proceed correctly if the rule were not in place.
- ✓ If you're playing in a stroke play event and have doubt as to procedure, play a second ball under Rule 3-3.
- ✓ If you're sharing a cart, be aware of where your fellow competitor's ball is, take a few clubs that you may need and walk to your ball, allowing the driver of the cart to proceed to her ball. Then when you're ready to hit, start walking back toward the cart, ready to go to your next shot.
- ✓ Don't wait until you get to your ball to decide what you'll hit next – make that decision on the way to your ball, especially if you're walking. Pace off the distance from the nearest marker behind your ball so by the time you reach your ball, you know what you're going to hit and can do so in a timely fashion.
- ✓ Limit your pre-shot routine. Don't rush your shot, but there's no need to overanalyze it either.
- ✓ Read your putt while your fellow competitors are putting. If you're putting first, start to read your putt on the way to the ball. Also, fix ball marks while your fellow competitor is preparing to putt.

- √ Limit your conversations to when you're walking or driving to your ball. You should NEVER delay hitting to finish a conversation.
- √ Park your golf cart or set your clubs down on the way to the next tee. You should never have to walk back to get your clubs. Then mark your score down on the way to the next tee, or at the next tee while you're waiting to hit.
- √ Don't give your opponents or fellow competitors advice. Not only is it annoying, it's against the Rules of Golf.
- √ Watch to see where the people in your playing group hit the ball. The more eyes on the ball, the better the chance of finding it when you get there.
- √ If you're waiting to hit a long shot that you potentially can reach, let the shorter hitter play the approach shot that she can't reach.
- √ If you're not standing in someone's line, putt out. More time is wasted marking putts, and replacing the ball than in any other place on the golf course.
- √ Not only are cell phones annoying, they're against the etiquette of the game and are potential cause for disqualification. Leave the phone off.
- √ Walk quickly to your ball!!!
- √ Have enough stuff in your pockets – tees, ball marker, extra ball, divot repair tool – so that you may play quickly. But don't have so much stuff that you can't find your ball marker.
- √ If you're hitting a chip shot, take the club you will use and your putter – don't return to your bag for the putter after taking your shot. Do it all in one step.
- √ If your playing partner just hit from a bunker, go ahead and putt your ball while you're waiting for her to rake the bunker.
- √ Finally, if you're playing and the ranger or player assistant comes up to tell you that you're out of position – and you're not playing in a tournament – absolutely DO NOT get belligerent. They're just trying to make the game more enjoyable for everyone. Pick up your ball and go to the next tee, taking the score that you most likely would have made on that hole, for handicap purposes. If you can't keep pace, you need to reexamine your game. While you may be frustrated, you need to be aware that those behind you are even more so. Common courtesy is a staple of the game of golf. Observe it in your pace of play.