

Minthis Hills Committee

GOLF ETIQUETTE

This information sheet should tell you most of what you need to know about golf etiquette. Golf etiquette is not something usually spoken about but it is needed to enable you to have a safe and enjoyable game of golf. Some people may feel that they already know all there is to know about golf etiquette, which is fine, while others, who may be relatively new to golf, may be a bit put off by reading this, believing that the club is very regimented. That is not the intention. Understanding the points made in this sheet should ensure that you and other members are safe on the course, take care of the course and behave courteously to others, so making your game a pleasant one, even if your score is not as good as you would have wished.

Safety

Never strike the ball if you are in danger of reaching the group of players in front of you, or any other golfer who has “strayed” onto your fairway.

If you hit a ball offline and either see it heading for others or cannot see where it will land you should give a clear and loud shout of “FORE!” (or “FORE RIGHT/LEFT!”). It may be that you know there are no other golfers over there (e.g. if you are the first group out) but don't forget greens staff, who may be doing course maintenance at that time. If your ball just misses them you should apologise. If you do cause injury to anyone you may well be personally liable. You may therefore want to consider taking out golf insurance – details are available from the Committee.

If you have hit your ball onto another fairway, or into the rough separating two fairways, please be careful and beware of golfers playing down that fairway. If they are preparing to play their shots, wait (out of range if possible, or safely out of sight, e.g. behind a tree) until they have done so, before playing your next shot.

Never throw clubs in anger, not only is it discourteous it can also be extremely dangerous.

Pace of Play

Keep up with the group ahead. If you “lose” a hole either pick up your pace to make this up, or invite the group behind yours to play through.

Plan your shot before you reach your ball. When you get to your ball you should already know which club to use and where you plan to land the shot.

Take no more than two practice swings before you hit the ball.

If you hit a ball and think there is a good chance it is lost or out of bounds, hit a provisional ball. This is much better than searching and then having to return to where you hit the ball to play another one.

If you lose your ball and have to go back to play another, call the following group through beforehand if they are ready to play.

Don't mark your scorecard on the green. Wait until you are away from the green, e.g. on the next tee and do it without holding up play.

Courteousness

Make sure you know the local rules and adhere to the dress rules.

Switch off your mobile phone before you approach the first tee and keep it switched off for the whole of the round. If you have to use your phone in an emergency do so quietly and discretely away from the fairways and greens.

If you make a bad shot keep your observations to yourself. Don't sulk or lose your temper. If profanity had an influence on the flight of the ball the game of golf would be played far better than it is.

Do not drop the flagstick or additional clubs on the putting green. Lay them down carefully in such a way as not to damage the green or interfere with anyone's putt, preferably off the green provided that will not slow down play. Be careful when removing and replacing the flagstick that you do not damage the hole.

Be aware of your playing partners and others:

- Watch their (sometimes errant) shots to see where they go and help search for their balls.
- Do not distract them (or others) when they are about to make a shot or putt. Stay out of their peripheral vision. Don't stand on their putting line or allow your shadow to fall on it.
- Do not walk off the putting green until everyone has finished the hole.
- Pick up any clubs that have been left on the green so your partners don't forget them.
- Retrieve any provisional balls you pass that are no longer in play.
- Don't talk loudly, in particular on or near greens or tees, especially near the first tee as it is easy to forget someone may be trying to put on the 9th green which is very close by.
- Don't sit on the wall behind the 10th tee to tally your final score if someone is on that tee, or if players are on the 16th green, wait till you are at the clubhouse instead.
- Do not park your bag, trolley or buggy where it could interfere with another player's shot. Near the green, position it close to the path leading to the next tee.

At the end of the round remove any head-wear (but please, not wigs or toupées) and shake hands with your playing partners, congratulate the winner and commiserate with the losers.

Care of the Course

Repair divot marks, both on the tee and on the fairways **and pitch-marks on the green**, not just your own but any others you see. On the tee you should not replace a divot, but fill the divot mark with sand provided for that purpose, so providing a stable platform for subsequent players.

After all of your group has putted out repair any other damage on the green (e.g. spike marks near the hole, holes made by birds etc.). You may do this before everyone has putted out so long as it cannot be construed as "assisting the player in his subsequent play of the hole" (see Rule 16-1c).

Enter bunkers from the "low side" and carry the rake with you if it is not already in the bunker, to avoid going backwards and forwards. Avoid walking up/down the steep face of bunkers.

Rake bunkers once you have played from them. When you leave a bunker ensure that you could answer "No" to the question "Would I be upset with the state this bunker is in were I to land in it?".

Leave rakes inside the bunkers lying near the middle and pointed in the general direction of play, with the rake head in the centre being the part most likely to be hit rather than the handle should a shot end up rolling towards the rake. In this way the rake is least likely to affect the movement of the ball and if a ball does strike it it is likely to stay in the flat area of the bunker rather than next to the edge. It is contentious whether it is best to leave rakes in or out of bunkers, but the relatively small size of Minthis Hills' bunkers make this recommendation probably the best option.

Clean up any sand and stones on the putting surface.

If you pass a bunker from which sand has spilled onto the surrounding area clean it up. However you must not do this if that could be interpreted as improving your lie or someone else's, rather than maintaining the course. This is because sand is a loose impediment only on the green.

If you remove a marker post to play a shot make sure you replace it. You cannot remove an out of bounds stake, but if you see one lying down and it is obvious where it should be you can put it back there. Otherwise inform the staff in the caddy master's room at the end of the round.

Don't forget on the Minthis Hills course you must take full relief from ground under repair and staked trees. If, for example, you do not take full relief from a staked tree or take only partial relief and hit it with your club or your person while making the stroke you will be penalised two strokes in stroke-play or loss of hole in match-play.

Your Golf Committee