

Minthis Hills Committee

Welcome

Congratulations on becoming a member of Minthis Hills golf club, one of the friendliest clubs on the island.

Purpose

This information sheet provides a general introduction and overview to Minthis Hills Golf Club.

Enjoy

We want you to enjoy being a Minthis Hills member. If you have any queries or need help related to anything to do with the club, or the game of golf, do not hesitate to contact one of the Committee members and we will try to sort out.

There is a *rogue's gallery* on the board in the Caddy Master's room with pictures of each member of the Committee. At least one of us (usually all of us) plays in the various competitions and can be found in the sports bar or restaurant afterwards, usually crying in our beer (or Pinot Grigiot). The staff there can point us out. The staff in the Pro-Shop and Caddy Master's room are also very helpful in giving out information.

Please enter the competitions, no matter what standard of golf you play and attend the social events, by doing so you will get the most out of your membership, making new friends and having an enjoyable time.

WELCOME TO MINTHIS HILLS

Minthis Hills, in its first incarnation as Tsada Golf Club, is the oldest club in Cyprus. It was designed by Donald Steele on land owned by the church and opened in 1994. It was re-designed by Mackensie and Ebert and took on its current form over a period of several years. The new clubhouse opened in 2012. Minthis Hills was officially inaugurated by President Nicos Anastasiades of Cyprus on 17th September 2014. More information is available on the official website at:

<http://www.minthishills.com/golf/>

Minthis Hills is not a "members club". It is owned by Pafilia, a property development company. Stelios Patsalides is the Resort Manager, Joke Alexandrou is the Pro-Shop Manager and David McKibben is the Club Professional. The Golf Committee is made up of elected golf club members and has a large degree of freedom in the way competitions are run and the way social matters are handled.

Minthis Hills prides itself in the friendly way in which new members are treated and encouraged to make the most out of their membership. The Committee is informed by the Pro-Shop shortly after new members join and these are then contacted by the Committee, to ensure that they have received a "Welcome Pack" and to ask if there is any way the Committee can help them to integrate within the Club.

A new initiative is being put in place to help new members by having an established member offer to play a round with them to help put him/her at ease in playing the course with a friendly partner and to answer any questions they might have about any aspect of membership, be it golf related or on the social side of things.

Many of our members live in Cyprus, but there is also a large contingent of not only British but Scandinavian and other nationalities who are here for part of the year. This eclectic mix adds to the variety of the competitions, especially the "fun" ones, such as the "Nordic Nations versus the rest of the World" and "The English versus the Celts" (actually for this one anyone who isn't English is treated as an honorary Celt!). If you've never drunk aquavit singing silly Scandinavian drinking songs after an enjoyable round of matchplay, you're in for a treat.

Besides lots of golf competitions throughout the year there are quite a few social events. In general these are open not only to members and their partners, but to their family and friends as well. Used to its full your membership of Minthis Hills can be a way of enriching the life experience in Cyprus of not only you but your partner and family as well.

For more information read the other articles in this welcome pack and visit the committee website at:

<http://mhcommittee.elusien.co.uk>

If you need any information that you feel is not covered by these resources collar a Committee member or e-mail the Committee via:

comps@mhcommittee.eluien.co.uk

Your Golf Committee

Minthis Hills Committee

Competition Information

This information sheet should tell you most of what you need to know about the club competitions, not only the qualifying ones, such as the Monthly Medals and Monthly Stablefords, but also the “Fun” competitions and some of the “ad hoc” ones organised by groups of members too.

Qualifying competitions are organised by the Club Professional, while the “fun” ones are organised by the Golf Committee. Entry sheets for all of the competitions are put in a binder that is normally kept in the top left-hand drawer of the Trophy Cabinet in the Pro-Shop. Some of the competitions are qualifying for handicap purposes, while others are purely “fun” competitions.

The competition sheets are usually removed about a week before the date of the competition, the draw is then done and this is communicated to the members by e-mail and by being posted on the notice board in the Caddy Master’s room.

There is always a Medal competition and a Stableford competition each month. The Men's Medal is played off the white tees, the Ladies' off the Red, in most of the other competitions the men play off the yellow tees. These are the main “qualifying” competitions, where your handicap may be adjusted, but there are others as well.

To ensure your handicap is as it should be you should play in as many qualifying competitions as you can. You may also submit up to two “Extra Day Cards” each month if you cannot play in qualifying competitions – see the information sheet on “Handicaps”. If you submit fewer than four qualifying scores in a calendar year your handicap will become inactive. If your handicap remains inactive for one year you lose it the following year and will have to re-apply to re-instate it.

Most of the competitions (but not the knockouts) also have a “Twos” competition that you may enter for €2. If you hole out in two (or get a hole-in-one) on any of the holes you receive a proportional share of the “Twos” prize fund.

The sheets for the Knockout Competitions that run throughout the year are put in the folder in December/January (the draw is usually made in mid- February).

Other “ad-hoc” competitions include:

- POETS – a monthly 9-hole competition played on Friday afternoon (hence the name), followed by a 3-course meal, spouses and friends invited, at a restaurant chosen by the person who came second in the previous POETS competition – the winner organizes the format and logistics of the next POETS competition.
- Nine-Wine-and-Dine – a monthly 9-hole competition followed by a meal in the Minthis Hills restaurant.
- Ladies day – another monthly competition, but obviously only for lady golfers.

There is a folder in the same drawer that describes the rules for each of the fun competitions (like the Motherball, the Waltz, the Patsomes etc.) in detail.

The club has a very good ladies section who are very friendly and welcoming both to new lady members and the wives of members too.

Various social events are organised throughout the year: Annual Dinner Dance, Quizes, Games, Outside Venues etc. and entry sheets for these too may be found in the folder.

Your Golf Committee

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 puttied 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 puttied 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

Minthis Hills Committee

HOW TO IMPROVE PACE of PLAY

This information sheet should tell you most of what you, as a golfer, need to know about pace of play.

If each player in a 4-ball took just 5 seconds less for each shot, it would reduce the time to play their round by about half an hour!

Steps You Can Take To Speed Up Your Play.

Play "Ready Golf"

"Ready golf" is a term which indicates that players should play when they are ready, rather than adhering strictly to the stipulation of "farthest from the hole plays first" in the Rules of Golf. The whole group needs to agree to play "ready golf", not just one or two of the players, otherwise the other players could construe that they are not following correct golf etiquette. Please note that **this is not appropriate when playing matchplay competitions** and also that **players must act sensibly to ensure that playing out of turn does not endanger themselves or others.**

Examples of "ready golf" in action are:

- Hitting a shot when safe to do so if a player farther away faces a challenging shot and is taking time to assess their options;
- Shorter hitters playing first from the tee or fairway if longer hitters have to wait;
- Hitting a tee shot if the person with the honour is delayed in being ready to play;
- Hitting a shot before helping someone to look for a lost ball;
- Putting-out even if it means standing close to someone else's line;
- Hitting a shot if a person who has just played from a bunker is still farthest from the hole but is delayed due to raking the bunker. Alternatively you could rake the bunker for them while they put their club away, choose another and take their next shot;
- When a player's ball has gone over the back of a green, any player chipping from in front of the green or even putting on the green should play while the other player is having to walk to their ball and assess their shot;
- Promptly replacing the flag and leaving the green quickly after all players have holed-out;
- Marking scores upon arrival at the next tee, except that **the first player to tee off should do so immediately** and then mark their card afterwards.

Be Ready to Play

While waiting for others to play and **taking care not to distract other players or compromise safety:**

- Walk efficiently to your ball putting your glove on in the process;
- Assess the shot, including any calculation of distance, or line up the putt;
- Decide on club selection. If you have to leave your bag some distance away from where your ball lies make sure you carry a small selection of clubs to your ball. Don't get to your ball with a single club only to find it's the wrong one for the next shot, causing you to return to your bag for the correct one.

Keep Up With The Group In Front

If ground has been lost on the group in front, then **all of the players in the group should take responsibility** for making up that ground as quickly as possible.

Allow Faster Groups To Play Through

If a group cannot keep its position on the course for whatever reason, and is delaying the group behind, then it should invite the group behind to play through so that group can play at the pace it is capable of.

Don't Imitate Elite Golfers

It is generally unnecessary for most club golfers to prepare for their shots in the same way as the elite golfer does. The consequence of doing so is simply to increase the time taken to play each shot with no tangible benefit in performance. Therefore the futile mimicking of elite golfers should be avoided. Common examples of this to be avoided are:

- Determining precise distances for shots when approximate distances would suffice;
- Taking more than one or two practice swings before hitting the ball;
- Studying the line of putt from multiple angles, however, it may be beneficial to view the putt from both sides of the hole as this may increase putting accuracy and result in fewer putts;
- Marking, lifting and replacing a ball that is close to the hole before holing-out.

Position Bags, Trolleys and Carts Sensibly

When players are approaching the green, golf bags, trolleys and carts should be positioned to allow for quick and efficient movement off the green towards the next tee.

If In Doubt, Play a Provisional Ball

Delays can be minimised significantly if a player whose ball might be in danger of being lost plays a provisional ball.

Watch the Flight of the Ball Carefully

All players in a group should make a conscious effort to watch each other's shots as carefully as possible to minimise the possibility of balls being lost.

Have You Ever Told Someone, Or Been Told "You Are A Slow Player"?

There is a natural reluctance to tell a fellow golfer that he or she is slow for fear of confrontation or appearing rude but you would in fact be doing them a favour and so long as you do it in a polite way it should not cause offence.

Golfers don't often accuse other golfers of being slow players without good reason. Telling another player that they are a slow player will often only occur after a considerable period of frustration having observed that player causing pace of play difficulties and consistently failing to act in accordance with the guidance outlined below. Consequently, if you, on more than one occasion, have been told that you are a slow player it probably means that you are.

This does not make you a bad person, and it does not give someone the right to be impolite towards you. However, it does suggest that you should take some positive steps to do something about it so that the same accusation is not levelled at you again. You can do this by asking for advice from the players you play with on what it is that they believe causes you to be slow. It should then be relatively easy for you to make some minor adjustments to the way you play golf which will make you a quicker player, which will mean you are not negatively impacting on the enjoyment of other players on the course, and which in turn will make you a more enjoyable person to play with. You are then more likely to enjoy your golf without feeling the pressure of being scrutinised by your fellow players.

Acknowledgement

Most of the information in this leaflet is reproduced from the excellent R & A publication "Pace of Play Manual" (<http://mhcommittee.elusien.co.uk/information/Misc/2016/2016-06-29+Paceof%20Play%20Manual/Pace%20of%20Play%20Manual.pdf>).

Your Golf Committee

Minthis Hills Committee

The EGA Handicap System (European Golf Association: www.ega-golf.ch)

This information sheet should tell you most of what you need to know about handicaps. e.g. how to obtain one, how to keep it current, what the disadvantages are of not keeping it up to date etc.

The purpose of the EGA Handicap System is to enable golfers of differing abilities, men and ladies alike, to take part in various forms of competitions on as equitable and fair a basis as possible.

Handicapping is not an exact science but rather a statistical approximation of playing ability in time. The accuracy of the handicap relies heavily on the number of scores returned within a specified time frame. The higher the number of scores the better the confidence that the handicap reflects the player's ability. In fact the biggest problem in maintaining a representative handicap is the number of scores presented for handicap adjustment. This applies particularly where a player presents fewer than ten scores for handicap consideration.

The EGA Handicap System is based on the following two fundamental principles:

- Every player will endeavour to make the best score he can at each hole during a qualifying round.
- Every player will return a sufficient number of scores to provide reasonable evidence of his/her playing standard. The EGA has accepted four scores per year as a minimum requirement. However, every score above that minimum will improve the accuracy of the handicap substantially.

One of the obligations of a player is to endeavour to comply with the intent and purpose of the fundamental principles of the EGA Handicap System at all times.

If you join Minthis Hills and already have a handicap from another golf club, then, depending on how long ago that handicap was last validated, you should be able to obtain an EGA handicap more or less straight away. If your old handicap was an EGA or USGA one the new handicap will be the same; if it was a CONGU handicap your new EGA handicap will be based on that plus the result of three games played under handicap conditions.

If you do not have a handicap from another club, or if it is out-of-date, you will have to play three games of golf under handicap conditions, have your scorecard marked by a player who does have an EGA handicap and hand each of these scorecards in to the Pro-Shop, for the attention of the Club Professional. He will then use these scores as the basis for allocating you an EGA exact handicap. Before you commence these rounds you must inform the Pro-Shop of your intention to submit the scorecard for handicap purposes, as with an extra day card (see later).

Once you have a handicap the best way to keep it current is to play in the qualifying medal and stableford competitions each month. If you play sufficiently well to exceed your "buffer zone" (this varies according to handicap category) your handicap will be reduced, if you play within your stableford buffer zone it will stay the same, if you play worse than this your handicap will increase by 0.1 (or 0.2 for high handicap players). Depending on how many people play within or better than their buffer zone in a particular competition the buffer zones may change for that competition.

Handicap Category	Exact Handicap	Buffer Zone Stableford	Below BZ Add:	Above BZ Subtract:
1	Plus – 4.4	35 – 36	0.1	0.1 x diff
2	4.5 – 11.4	34 – 36	0.1	0.2 x diff
3	11.5 – 18.4	33 – 36	0.1	0.3 x diff
4	18.5 – 26.4	32 – 36	0.1	0.4 x diff
5	26.5 – 36.0	31 – 36	0.1	0.5 x diff
6	37.0 – 54.0	none	none	1.0 x diff

If for some reason you cannot (or do not wish to) play in the qualifying competitions, then there is the option of "Extra Day Scores/Cards", which is the subject of the next section.

EXTRA DAY SCORES

Each year, usually in January, there is an “Annual Handicap Review” (AHR) at which all of the qualifying scores for each of the Minthis Hills members since the previous AHR are analysed and the player's handicap is adjusted accordingly. If fewer than 4 qualifying scores are returned in the period between AHRs the handicap will automatically become inactive. The consequences of this are:

- The player will be ineligible to enter the coming year's knockout competitions;
- The player will be ineligible to enter CGF competitions and probably competitions run by other clubs;
- The player will be ineligible to win a net prize in any competition, this includes a score based on stableford scoring;
- If the player enters a team “fun” competition (e.g. a “Texas Scramble”) that team will be ineligible to win a net prize.

The handicap committee is conscious of the fact that, while there are a large number of competitions throughout the year that are qualifying for handicapping purposes, some players struggle to return a sufficient number of scores to maintain a handicap that reflects their playing standard. This may be due to: injury or illness; work or family commitments preventing participation in competitions; difficulty in playing at certain times or on specific days; a declining desire to play regular competition golf.

The system of Extra Day Scores/Cards (EDS) has been designed to provide a format to supplement scores from qualifying competitions for handicapping purposes and is intended to augment the sometimes sparse information from competition golf and to enable every player to meet their obligation to return a sufficient number of scores to provide reasonable evidence of their playing standard.

Up to twice a month a player can partake in a social game of golf with friends, without the pressures and time constraints of a formal competition, and put forward their stableford score in that game as a qualifying score for handicap purposes. There are some provisos however, which are:

- Before the game you must ask in the Pro-shop for the “Extra Day Score” book and sign it to agree that the card will be handed in after the game for David McKibben, the Club Professional, to input into the EGA handicapping system;
- You must play the game strictly according to the R&A Rules of Golf for a stableford competition, e.g. no “gimmes”, no accepting advice on how to play a shot or make a putt, no rolling the ball out of a divot on the fairway etc.;
- You must have your card properly marked and signed, both by the marker, who must have a current EGA handicap and yourself. The gross score on each hole must be recorded, if it is a stableford “blob” then you may indicate the gross score by a minus (“-”) sign;
- You must hand in your card (for the attention of of the Club Professional) at the end of the round, no matter how you played. If it is not handed in it will be deemed to be a “No Return”. Hopefully you played better than your current handicap, in which case it will be adjusted down, but if unfortunately you played worse by more than your buffer zone you will be adjusted upwards.

The committee hopes that by pointing out this additional way of returning scores that qualify for handicapping purposes players will make use of it to satisfy their obligation to provide reasonable evidence for their playing standard.

PLAYING HANDICAP

Introduction

One of the main differences between the EGA handicapping system and CONGU, which is used in the UK, is that with EGA your playing handicap changes according to how difficult the course is rated from the tees selected, whereas with CONGU your playing handicap is the same no matter which course you play. In general, the par for a course has no bearing on how difficult that course is. Competing on an easy PAR 72 municipal course in the UK a 17.5 handicapper will receive 18 strokes, exactly the same number he would receive playing a much more difficult course, such as The Old Course at St. Andrews.

Course and Stroke Rating

The EGA has adopted the USGA Course Rating System. The Course Rating (CR) is a measure for the playing difficulty for a “scratch player”, whereas the Slope Rating (SR) measures the playing difficulty for a “bogey player” relative to a “scratch player”. The playing handicap is computed using these two indices thus equalising the difference in playing difficulty and making scores from different courses and from different tees comparable.

For the purpose of course rating, a male “scratch player”, is defined as a player with a scratch handicap who hits his drive 250 yards and can reach a 470-yard hole in two shots, while a lady “scratch player” has a scratch handicap, can hit her drive 210 yards and can reach a 400-yard hole in two shots.

A male “bogey player” is defined as a player with an exact handicap of 17.5 to 22.4 who, under normal situations can hit his tee shot 200 yards and can reach a 370-yard hole in two shots. A lady “bogey golfer” has an exact handicap of 21.5 to 26.4, can hit her tee shot 150 yards and can reach a 280-yard hole in two shots.

The rating indices for the three tees at Minthis Hills are:

TEES	PAR	CR	SR
RED	71	71.6	119
YELLOW	71	68.4	121
WHITE	71	70.9	123

Calculation of Playing Handicap

By comparing the Course Ratings (CR) it is obvious that a scratch lady golfer playing from the Red tees would find the course more difficult to play than a scratch male golfer playing from the Yellow tees, since she would on average take 71.6 strokes, while he would go round on average in 68.4 strokes, a difference of 3.2 strokes. However, the EGA Playing Handicap Formula takes care of this. The formula is:

$$\text{PLAYING HANDICAP} = \text{EXACT EGA HANDICAP} \times (\text{SR} / 113) + (\text{CR} - \text{PAR})$$

This would mean that the lady would have a playing handicap of 0.6 (rounded to 1), while the man would have a playing handicap of -2.6 (rounded to -3).

It is not necessary to remember this formula to calculate your playing handicap as you go from course to course, since each golf club should display the EGA Playing Handicap Tables for each set of tees on their course, so that you can easily look-up your playing handicap given your EGA Exact Handicap.

Your Golf Committee