

NEW GOLF RULES FROM JANUARY 1, 2019
PACE OF PLAY

Rule 5.6 will encourage prompt pace of play by recommending that:

Players should recognise that their pace of play affects others and they should play promptly throughout the round. For example, they should prepare in advance for each stroke and move promptly between strokes and in going to the next tee.

A player should make a stroke in no more than 40 seconds - and usually less - after they are able to play without interference or distraction.

In addition, new Rule 6.4 will expressly allow playing out of turn by agreement in match play.

In stroke play, it will affirmatively allow and encourage players to play out of turn in a safe and responsible way to save time or for convenience. **This is also known as ready golf.**

Under new Rule 18.2, the time for a ball search, before the ball becomes lost, will be reduced from five minutes to three minutes.

Reasons for change

By giving players affirmative guidance, support and encouragement on prompt play, these proposed Rule changes will:

- Make clear what is considered prompt play, by both beginners and experienced players. This includes the maximum amount of time it should normally take to make a stroke.
- Encourage players to play faster by using ready golf.

It is impractical for the Rules to impose penalties whenever a player does not complete a round or a hole or make a stroke in a fixed time:

- Golf is played in so many different settings and by so many different people that time limits may naturally differ for any competition or course.
- There is also no practical way to require all players to follow, and to enforce against one another, any form of shot clock for each stroke.

Limiting the search period to three minutes is more consistent with the underlying principle that golf is to be played in a prompt and continuous way, without long pauses in play. In most cases, if the ball is going to be found, it will be found within the first three minutes.

Although this change may increase the number of lost balls, on average the overall impact should be to speed up play. Knowing that the search time is limited to three minutes should encourage players to play a provisional ball when they believe there is a chance their ball may not be found.