



COURSE ETIQUETTE

There is perhaps no more emotive word in golf than etiquette, in the view of many this conjures up an image of old men in blazers trying to make life more difficult for the everyday golfer. In reality it has been created to make the golfing experience more enjoyable for all. Let's for example take the rule that each player must have their own bag of clubs, why have this? Well simply to speed up play, if two players are using the same equipment then they will take significantly longer to complete their round, which in turn will have the effect of slowing down everyone else on the course. As all of us realise the longer a round of golf takes the less enjoyment it gives.

Next comes the on-course dress code, another bane in the life of many an occasional golfer. Why do we have to spend good money on a pair of dedicated golf shoes when my trainers will do? Put simply golf shoes have over the years been developed to give maximum traction over the undulating surfaces found on golf courses. Is it not far better to have the proper shoes on than face a trip to Accident and Emergency ward with a badly twisted ankle or even worse?

Another often mooted complaint regards the other dress codes of golf clubs particularly the wearing of jeans on the course, which by the way are acceptable in our club house but not on the course, or indeed certain tops than in casual everyday wear are acceptable. No real defence of this one however dedicated golf apparel has been designed to allow the player to swing freely whilst making his stroke.

A quick update on changes the R & A instituted, with the objective of improving the pace of play, this year regarding who plays the next shot and when. Historically the "honour" on the tee went to the player who last won a hole and when playing from the fairway, or the rough the player furthest from the hole played first. In order to help speed up play "play when ready and if safe to do so" was introduced and already this has had the desired effect in helping speed up play. Also, on the green whilst putting it is perfectly acceptable to leave the flag unattended again helping to speed up play. The last significant change introduced by the R & A was to reduce the time a player has to look for a lost ball from 5 minutes to 3 minutes, again to help speed up play. Therefore, if you are not sure after any shot you will be able to find your ball within the allowed time play a provisional ball.

Finally, if you find that you are failing to keep up with the group in front of you or you are regularly looking for balls, please wave the group behind you through, this will once again help to speed up play.