

## Valley Golfers Association Golf Etiquette and Pace of Play

Good standing with the golf courses we play depends upon how we treat the course property and its personnel, and how we pace our play. We can cement relationships and improve standing if we remember that each individual VGA member is responsible for the image projected. Keep the following in mind every time you play a VGA event and the whole club will have a better time, play at a faster pace, play more enjoyable golf, and play on courses that appreciate and reward the club's business:

Golf etiquette should be demonstrated every time a game is played; it is nothing more than respecting property and giving fellow players the opportunity to play their game without interference. As a start try the following:

- Fix divots and replace items you move like stakes and ropes.
- Drive golf carts safely and in areas designated by the course.
- Don't talk when others are trying to concentrate on hitting their ball.
- Don't stand in someone's line of putt or behind someone teeing the ball up.
- Do not throw clubs; it is dangerous and childish.
- Learn from etiquette advice given by fellow players.

Pace of play can be boiled down to two simple phrases: be prepared and be ready to play. Here's how:

- Choose tees appropriate to your skill level when given the opportunity.
- Play "ready golf" from the tee and from the fairway which simply means order of play is determined by who is ready, not who is away.
- Watch balls hit from the tee in case you can help find a lost ball.
- Each member of a foursome (or any group) should proceed directly to his or her ball; the group need not travel as a pack to each ball.
- While traveling to your ball, use the time to think over your next shot - yardage, club selection, etc.; i.e., begin preparing before you get to your ball.
- If sharing a golf cart proceed to the closest ball, drop off the player, then proceed to the second ball. Let the first player catch up to the cart while the second player is hitting his ball.
- On cart path only days, take extra clubs with you when leaving the cart to hit your ball; avoids going back to the cart for a more appropriate club.
- Carry a few extra tees, markers, and spare balls in your pockets to avoid returning to your bag for more supplies.
- If in doubt of shots hit OB or lost, hit a provisional ball to avoid returning to the original spot to replay a ball.
- Limit your search for lost balls to no more than a couple of minutes. The five minute rule is not a license to hold up a group behind you. The real rule of golf is to allow that group to pass though you while you take your five minutes to search.
- Never hold up play to finish a conversation. Put your conversation on hold and finish your stroke.
- On the green, begin lining up your putt and reading the break as soon as you arrive. When it is your turn to putt, be prepared to step up and take your stroke.
- Leave your bags and carts to the side of the green toward the next tee, never in front of the green.
- Never stand on or next to the green to write down your score. Do that at the next tee.
- Try to stay one shot behind the group in front of you. If there is no group ahead, watch the group behind to be sure that you are not holding up their play.

An acceptable pace of play on an 18 hole course is between 4 and 4.5 hours. Just two minutes of wasted time on each hole adds another 36 minutes. Lets be aware of our pace of play and our etiquette practice for the sake of fellow players and our host course.