



Flowing From The Green

By Marilyn Reynolds, AWGA Rules Committee

Common golf etiquette recommends all players remain at the putting green until everyone in the group has completed putting. It is also polite for the first player who putts out, to replace the flagstick after the last player putts out. These are good practices under normal circumstances.

However, there are times when golfers will be better served by another strategy for leaving the green. This occurs if a group wants or needs to pick up the pace of play and there is open space ahead. This may happen if players notice that their pace exceeds the “Time Par”* printed on their scorecard, or an official has informed them that they are “out of position.” Players may also want to play faster if the temperature is high and rising, or other inclement weather is looming. For whatever reason the need arises, there is a way to speed up the pace of play that will save a minute or two on each hole.

This alternate strategy is called “flowing from the green.” This is how it works. The first two players to complete putting on a hole, quietly leave the green while the third player is lining up her putt. If those two players are not in the same cart, one of the players grabs her driver from her bag and gets in the cart with the other player. They quietly and quickly proceed to the next teeing ground and tee off immediately. The third player remains at the green and replaces the flagstick when the fourth player has completed her putting. By the time the third and fourth player arrive at the next teeing ground, at least one of the first two players should have teed off.

The next time you need to make up time on the golf course, try this “flowing from the green” strategy. You could save up to 30 minutes per round with these small adjustments. Keep in mind, there are times when pace of play guidelines supersede traditional golf etiquette.

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