

## 1 Introduction

To enjoy the great game of golf, we need to be aware of a few facets of the game like rules, shot making, etiquette and safety. This guide is intended to assist new players in their introduction to golf.

For specifics about Blackwood Golf Club, refer to the **New Member's Information Guide** on the [Policies and Publications](#) page on our website.

## 2 Prior to Play

- Arrive at least **30 minutes** early to check-in and be at your tee and ready to play 10 minutes before tee off.
- Have **no more than 4 in a group** unless previously approved by Management.
- Have **no more than 14 clubs** in your bag.
- Take a **bucket** of sand with you to repair divots.
- Apply sunscreen, wear a hat, take an umbrella (for rain or sun) and water with you and observe the **dress code** found on the [Policies and Publications](#) page on our website.
- Ensure **mobile phones** are turned off, or on silent.
- Motorised **carts** should be kept to paths where appropriate and unless on a constructed path, they are not to be driven within 5 metres of any green, tee or bunker.
- Check the Blackwood **local rules** and **temporary local rules** in the glass cabinet on the veranda near the entrance to the Pro Shop.

## 3 On the Tee

- Tee off between the markers (but not in front of them).
- **Tees** are only used at the tee off, not on the fairway. Choose a tee suitable for the club used, i.e. higher tee for a driver, but a lower tee for a 3 or 5 wood, or iron.
- Always play **ready golf on the tee (and throughout the course for all forms of golf except match play)**. The first person ready at the next tee hits off, and if marking a score card, marks the card after hitting off, while the others are hitting.
- **Mark your ball** with a permanent marker so that you can identify it.
- Hit **ONLY** when golfers ahead of you are **out of range**.
- **Stand still, do not talk or make any distracting noises whilst other golfers are hitting.**
- **Watch** where all balls go to avoid time spent looking for lost balls.
- Shout the warning "**FORE!**" if your ball or playing partner's ball is heading toward another golfer or another fairway. (If you hear someone call "FORE", duck and protect your head.)

## 4 The Fairway

- Walk directly to your ball unless you reach someone else's ball first.
- Place your bag or cart beside you when hitting i.e. don't leave it behind or you will have to backtrack.

- Try to take no more than **one practice swing**. From club selection to pre-shot routine to execution, strive to hit your shot in no more than 20 seconds.
- Player furthest from the hole usually plays first but golfers out of range of the group in front can play first, if ready.
- **Walk briskly** between shots and be ready to play when it is your turn.
- **Keep pace with the group in front** of you at all times.
- Assist playing partners when needed by bringing clubs, finding lost balls, raking bunkers, etc.
- Generally, as you approach the green, your **choice of club** will change to a higher number, e.g. a 7 iron, or closer to the green a 9 iron, or pitching wedge. Distance from the green is marked on sprinkler covers on the fairway – this will help you to judge the distance of your hits, and to decide on which club to use.

## 5 On the Green

- Buggies are not to be taken across the green.
- Place your **bag or cart between the green and the next tee** – never in front of the green (leaving it clear for the next group to approach immediately as you leave the green).
- Take all clubs that you may need.
- You should only use a **putter** on the green.
- **Repair** your own ball marks and any others if time permits.
- Avoid stepping on another player’s **putting line**.
- Mark, lift and clean your ball when you arrive on the putting green so you will be ready to putt when it is your turn to putt.
- The person furthest away from the hole putts first. The **flag** may be left in, or taken out, whatever your preference. You may ask someone to remove it for you.
- You can usually line up your putt while others are putting or preparing to putt without disturbing them.
- Continue putting until **holed out** unless you would be standing on someone’s putting line.
- **Mark your ball** if it is in the path of another player’s ball. i.e. place a marker directly behind the ball when lining it up with the flag. (You may lift the ball, clean it and replace it exactly where it was later.)
- If it is directly in the path of another ball you may be asked to move the marker to one side (You will be shown how to do this).
- When someone else is putting, do not stand directly behind them, opposite the ball or where you cast a **shadow** across the line of play. **Stand still**, do not talk or make any distracting noises.
- **Replace the flag** carefully so that it stands straight up before leaving the green.
- Record all scores at the **next tee**.

## 6 Tips to Avoid Slow Play

When playing golf, it’s important to be considerate of other golfers using the course. Four hours is used as a rough guide for 18 holes (less time if there are only 2-3 players in your group) and if rounds take longer than 4 hours you will hear people talking about ‘slow play’. Slow play is generally not about how many shots you have but what you do between shots!

The following tips can help you **keep pace with the group in front** of you at all times.

- Walk briskly between shots and be **ready to hit** when it is your turn.
- Keep your pre-shot routine short.
- **Try to take no more than one practice swing.**
- Take plenty of clubs with you to your ball when leaving your bag or motorised cart.
- Consider all options as you approach your ball to **make decisions quickly.**
- **Watch all balls** until they stop rolling to avoid lengthy searches.
- Use a fixed object as a **reference point** to help find the ball.
- All players should **go directly** to their own ball and play when ready.
- If you do fall behind, have one or two members of your group putt out and move to the next tee and hit off immediately.
- If you still fall behind, **let faster groups play through.** Remember only **3 minutes** is allowed to look for a lost ball.
- **Continue putting** until holed out unless you would be standing on someone’s putting line.
- **No more than 10 strokes** should be hit on each hole (i.e. if you reach 10 shots pick up your ball and walk the rest of the hole).

## 7 Safety and Consideration for others

- Before playing a stroke or taking a **practice swing**, always ensure that no-one is in your line of play or near your swing path.
- **Stand still** in a **safe position** and watch other golfers while they are hitting.
- Don’t **talk** or cause any distractions whenever someone is hitting the ball.
- If your ball lands on **another fairway**, players using that fairway have right of way. Wait until they have had their shot and passed by and do not hit your ball until it is safe to do so.
- **Grounds staff** also have right of way, so if they are working ahead, wait until they either move aside or indicate it is safe to hit.
- Familiarise yourself with what to do in **thunder and lightning** by reading the Dangerous Weather Policy on the [Policies and Publications](#) page on our website.

## 8 Care of the Course

- If your swing dislodges the grass on the course, please fill the **divot** with sand and level the sand with your foot or a club so that a reasonably flat lie remains for other players.
- Treat the greens with care, and the grass around the circumference of the hole (do not step on the hole). If using a ball retriever, great care should be taken to avoid damage.
- If your shot onto the green leaves an indentation this should be repaired with a **pitch repairer**. (You will be shown how to do this.)
- Before leaving a **bunker**, carefully fill up and smooth over all holes and footprints you or others have made, and then place the **rake** in a flat area of the bunker, face down, near an access point, pointing in the direction of play.

## 9 How do I complete a scorecard?

Each time a player plays in competition a score card is required. A personalised card is printed in the Pro Shop after you pay your entry fee. Even playing socially, it is handy to have a score card. A blank card can be collected from the Pro Shop.

In a competition, players do not mark their own score card – it is swapped with another player in the group, and each player marks each other’s card. At the end of the round, the player and the marker sign the score card to verify the scores. (Note – To reduce touch points during the COVID-19 pandemic, players mark their own card and check it with the person nominated to verify their score.)

## 10 Rules of Golf

The rules of golf may seem quite overwhelming at the start, but it is important to learn the basics. Start by searching for [Quick guide to the rules of golf](#) on the Golf Australia website.

In addition to these, Blackwood has some **local rules** and **temporary local rules** in the glass cabinet on the veranda near the entrance to the Pro Shop. (Local rules are also on the back of the printed score card.)

A pocket-sized copy of the **Rules of Golf** and the Rules of Amateur Status (effective January 2019) is available in the office.

## 11 Useful Resources

Refer to the [Getting Started](#) page on Blackwood Golf Club website for more useful resources for new golfers.