

2026 Southern Golf Association Pace of Play Policy

The SGA wants all players to enjoy competing in our events. Pace of play may differ depending upon the venue, weather and course conditions. Every player is accountable for playing at an acceptable pace, therefore we need your help. Please observe the following guidelines to help ensure a pleasant tournament experience for all:

- Make sure to keep pace with the group in FRONT of you. The group behind should keep pace with your group and so forth.
- Go directly to your ball. If sharing a golf cart at sectional qualifying, drop-off the player farthest from the hole then proceed to the other ball.
- Be ready to play when it is your turn or request to play out of turn if it is safe to do so.
- Keep practice strokes and time taken to read putts to a minimum.
- Play a provisional ball if your original ball may be lost outside a penalty area or out of bounds.
- Keep time taken at the snack bar or between nines to a minimum.

If everyone does their part, then everyone will enjoy an acceptable time to play a round of golf at an SGA championship. Following the lead of the USGA, the SGA has developed a pace of play policy, based on Rule 5.6b and Model Local Rule 8K that is fair to every competitor.

*Note: a group may receive a “friendly reminder” of their position regardless of pace of play guidelines.

Maximum Allowable Time

The maximum allowable time is the maximum time considered necessary by the Committee for a group to complete its round. This is expressed in a per-hole and aggregate time format and includes all time associated with playing the game, e.g., for rulings and walking times between holes.

Both the specific maximum time allotted per hole and for the completion of 18 holes at SGA championships will be denoted on each player’s SGA issued scorecard. The following procedure applies only if a group is “out of position.”

Definition of “Out of Position”

The first group to start will be considered “out of position” if at any time during the round, the group’s cumulative time exceeds the time allowed for the number of holes played. Any following group will be considered out of position if is more than 15 minutes behind the group in front of them and has exceeded the time allowed for the number of holes played.

Procedure for When Group is “Out of Position”

1. Referees will monitor pace of play and decide whether a group that is “out of position” should be timed. An assessment of whether there is any recent mitigating circumstances, e.g. a lengthy ruling, lost ball, unplayable ball, etc. will be considered.

If the decision is made to time the group, each player in the group will be subject to individual timing. The referee will advise each player in the group that they are “out of position” and being timed.

In exceptional circumstances, an individual player, or two players within a group of three or four, may be timed instead of the entire group.

2. The maximum time allocated per stroke is 40 seconds. 10 extra seconds are allowed for the first player to play: a) a tee shot on a par 3 hole; b) an approach shot to the green; and c) a chip or putt.

In the teeing area, general area, a penalty area or bunker - Timing will begin when a player has had sufficient time to reach the ball, it is his or her turn to play and he or she is able to play without interference or distraction. Time taken to determine distance and select a club will count as time taken for the next stroke.

On the putting green, timing will begin when the player has had a reasonable amount of time to lift, clean and replace the ball, repair damage that interferes with the line of play and move loose impediments on the line of play. Time spent looking at the line of play from beyond the hole and/or behind the ball will count as part of the time taken for the next stroke.

Timing ceases when a group regains position and players will be advised accordingly.

Note: The policy may provide that at any time, if a player is observed by a referee to take longer than a specified time to play a shot (i.e., 120 seconds), they will be notified of the excessive shot time and be timed, even though the group is in position.

Procedure for Subsequent “Out of Position” Situations During the Same Round

If a group is “out of position” more than once during a round, the timing procedure protocol applies to each situation. Individual bad times and penalties aggregate until the round is completed.

Penalty for Breach of Pace of Play Policy

- Penalty for first breach: Verbal warning from referee
- Penalty for second breach: One-stroke penalty
- Penalty for third breach: General Penalty in addition to the one-stroke penalty for the second breach
- Penalty for fourth breach: Disqualification