

2025

Golf Guide

A white golf ball with a red tee is positioned in front of the letter 'o' in the word 'Golf'.

The Mendota Reporter and The Amboy News
Wednesday, April 16, 2025

How to speed up your game on the golf course

Golf is a challenging game that can sometimes frustrate even the most accomplished players. No two golf courses are the same, and seasoned players know that courses play differently each time. Greens that are accommodating on Saturday might be far more difficult on Sunday, which is part of what makes the game of golf such a fun challenge.

Pace of play may not matter much when a course isn't busy. But courses tend to draw crowds come spring, summer and early fall. During the busier times of year, the United States Golf Association® offers these tips to golfers looking to improve their pace of play.

- Arrive on time and ready to play. Most courses give players a tee time,

which indicates when their round will begin. Confirm the tee time the day before a scheduled round and arrive at the course ready to play. The USGA® urges players to arrive at the first tee early and with their equipment in order. Don't forget to ensure you have essentials like extra balls, tees and gloves.

- Play from where you're comfortable. Each tee box features separate tees for players of various skill levels. Players who want to improve their pace of play are urged to begin each hole from the tee box where they're most comfortable. Players in the same group can play from separate tees, so if need be, choose to play from the tee nearest the pin so you can make it to the green more quickly.

Resolve to spend as little time on the tee as possible without feeling as though you're rushing your tee shot.

- Strategize between shots. Once you have hit off the tee, strategize how you can get to the green as you approach your ball. Planning as you walk or drive can reduce the time you'll spend strategizing between shots, which can improve your pace of play considerably.

- Limit practice swings. Practice swings can help players shoot their best, but if improving pace of play is a goal, limiting practice swings to just one before each shot can help. Practice swings can even be taken while others in your group are lining up and playing their shots. Just be sure to do

so quietly and out of the sight line of your fellow players.

- Work with your fellow players. Follow each player's shot during your round so less time is spent finding each golfer's ball. In addition, fill each other's divots and rake bunkers together to cut time off your round.

- Use the group in front of you as a marker for time. Aspiring to keep up with the group in front of you is

a good way to ensure your group is moving along. If that's proving difficult, let other groups behind you play through if they are moving more quickly than you are. Similarly, if the group in front of you is moving slowly, politely ask to play through.

- Line up your putts while others are putting. Read the green while your fellow group members are

putting and line up your shot accordingly so you spend less time on the greens. The USGA recommends leaving clubs on the side of the putting green that is closest to the next tee to save even more time.

There are many ways for golfers of all skill levels to improve pace of play so everyone can have as much fun as possible while getting a round in.



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There are many ways for golfers of all skill levels to improve pace of play so everyone can have as much fun as possible while getting a round in.

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Golf terminology for beginners

Golf is a fun game that is not without its challenges. Getting a tiny ball from a tee box into a small hole that's several hundred yards away requires considerable skill and a lot of patience. But novices know that mastering the game is not the only challenge on the course.

Like most sports, golf has its own unique terminology. Confusion can set in when beginners arrive at a course and feel as though they're surrounded by people speaking a different language. This glossary of golf terms, courtesy of the PGA of America, can help beginners master the lingo of the links.



• **Par:** The score an accomplished player is expected to make on a hole. Holes are either a par three, par four or par five.

- **Birdie:** A score of one-under-par on a hole.
- **Eagle:** A score of two-under-par on a hole.
- **Double eagle:** A score of three-under-par on a hole.
- **Bogey:** A score of one-over-par on a hole.
- **Double bogey:** A score of two-over-par on a hole.
- **Green:** The area at the end of each hole where grass is cut especially short.

- **Fairway:** The area of short grass between the tee and corresponding green.

- **Rough:** The area of longer grass around the fairway and the green.

- **Hazards:** Obstacles, including water, between a tee and a green.

- **Bunker:** Sometimes referred to as a "sand trap," the bunker is a hollow comprised of sand or grass or both that exists as an obstacle and, in some cases, a hazard.

- **Divot:** The turf displaced when a club strikes the ball on a descending path.

- **Fore:** An exclamation golfers yell to warn others that they have hit a bad shot.

- **Ranger:** A course employee who drives around the course ensuring golfers are following the rules and playing at a reasonable speed.

- **Range:** Sometimes referred to as the "golf range," this is a facility where players can practice their full swings and, in some cases, their short games.

- **Pin:** The flag on the green that indicates to players where the hole is.

- **Shank:** When the ball is struck on the hosel of the club, usually sending it shooting off to the right.

- **Slice:** A ball that curves from left to right after being struck. Left-swinging players will slice right to left.

Golf has its own unique terminology. Knowledge of some basic terms can help any player feel more comfortable on the course.



Be aware of your surroundings. It is important when you are preparing to swing to keep track of those around you. Never swing a golf club if a fellow golfer is close to you, and exercise caution when practicing your swing away from the area of play.

Tips to stay safe while golfing

A round of golf on a warm, sunny day can be the perfect way to spend a few hours with friends, and more and more people are recognizing that. The National Golf Foundation says more than one-third of the United States population over the age of five played golf; followed golf on television or online; read about the game; or listened to a golf-related podcast in 2023. That marked a 30 percent jump since 2016.

Golf is a relatively safe sport, but accidents and injuries can happen on the course. Golfers can follow these guidelines to ensure their next round of golf is as safe as possible.

- **Be aware of your surroundings.** It is important when you are preparing to swing to keep track of those around you. Never swing a golf club if a fellow golfer is close to you, and exercise

caution when practicing your swing away from the area of play.

- **Warm up your body.** Any exercise requires warming up to get muscles and joints ready for action. Spend between five and 10 minutes warming up before tee time. Walk briskly and rotate your arms and torso to prepare for movements involved in golf.

- **Apply sun protection.** According to a study commissioned by the United States Golf Association, an 18-hole round of golf averages four hours on weekdays and 4.5 hours on weekends. Players spend roughly four hours exposed to the sun. Always wear sunscreen before heading outdoors, and consider wearing a visor or hat to further protect the skin on your face and your eyes from UV exposure.

- **Wear the right gear.** Ne-

mours Teen Health suggests using a golf glove or two to keep the golf club from slipping out of your hands. Gloves also can help prevent blisters. In addition, get a pair of golf shoes with plastic spikes for good traction.

- **Yell "Fore!"** Calling out "Fore!" is a warning to everyone on the course that a ball has been hit and is heading in their direction rather than the intended area, says Yatta Golf. It's a "heads up" for a poor shot that has the potential to hit someone, and it is proper etiquette to yell "Fore!" when this occurs.

- **Use a golf cart.** Carrying a heavy golf club bag for hours on end can lead to aching shoulders and lower back strain. Rather than risking injury, take advantage of a golf cart, if available. Also, caddies may help lessen the load of a golf bag.

- **Beware of lightning.** Lightning strikes can be quite dangerous in any

location, but particularly so on an open course when you're holding a metal club. Always end the game promptly and take cover when thunder is heard, as it means that lightning is occurring.

- **Stay hydrated.** Bring along plenty of fresh water or an electrolyte sports drink to replenish fluids on hot days.

- **Be cautious of hazards.** Hazards on a golf course provide difficult obstacles to make play more challenging. Hazards include bunkers (sand traps) and water. Keep in mind that wildlife linger in golf hazards and caution should be used when trying to play balls that fall in a hazard.

Golf has inspired millions to hit the links and play a round. While golf is typically a safe sport, there are ways to make it even safer.



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As beginning golfers introduce themselves to the game, they can keep various strategies in mind to ensure their day on the links is fun and fruitful.

Strategies to help beginning golfers

Golf courses are serene settings that allow people to enjoy the great outdoors while simultaneously engaging in the thrill of competition. Those factors undoubtedly motivate people to hit the links and play a round of golf, which remains a wildly popular sport. In fact, a recent report from the National Golf Foundation found that roughly 119 million people followed golf on television or online, read about the game, or listened to a golf-related podcast in 2022.

Golf can certainly be a fun sport to follow, but it's just as fun to play. Golf is a challenging sport, and it can be especially difficult for newcomers. Patience is paramount when learning to play golf, and the following are some additional strategies beginners can keep in mind as they learn to golf.

- **Work with a pro.** Golf pros at local courses or even private coaches typically have extensive experience teaching the game. That experience is invaluable. Beginners can learn the basics from a seasoned pro, who can instruct students on fundamentals such as stance, grip and swing so they enjoy their first round that much more.

- **Purchase a good set of clubs.** The right clubs can make the game that much easier. Adults who are not sure if they want to fully commit to playing can get by with secondhand clubs, while parents can do the same as they try to teach their children the game. Once a commitment has been made, a new set of custom fitted clubs can be a worthy investment that lets golfers

take their game to the next level. Using clubs that are too small or too large can affect performance, as can other factors like grip size. Custom fitted clubs can be expensive, so beginners may want to wait until they catch the golfing bug before they make such an investment.

- **Golf with a friend.** The buddy system makes numerous recreational activities more fun, and golf is no exception. Beginners can ask a friend who already plays to tag along, but it also can be fun to learn the sport alongside another novice. Friends with experience may be willing to offer some tips to becoming a better player, while two beginners can share a few laughs as they navigate their way through rounds that end up well over par.

- **Choose the right courses.** Certain courses are more challenging than others. Par-3 courses can be perfect for beginners because they include only par 3 holes, which feature shorter distances from tee to cup and tend to be flatter and easier for novices. Par-3 courses also tend to be just nine holes, which can be ideal for beginners. When playing a traditional course, beginners can look for one with a reputation for being less challenging so they are not discouraged by their final scores.

Millions of people enjoy playing the game of golf. As beginners introduce themselves to the game, they can keep various strategies in mind to ensure their day on the links is fun and fruitful.

How to get kids interested in golf

Modern children face no shortage of things to do, and many kids are involved in competitive sports. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that the proportion of boys and girls playing on sports teams increased between 1998 and 2020.

The lasting appeal of athletics and recreation is undeniable, and kids as young as preschool age can participate in a wide range of sports, including baseball and soccer. And though it might require a little more patience on the part of players and parents, golf is another great sport to introduce to children. Kids unfamiliar with golf may be hesitant to give it a shot, but the following are some strategies parents can try to get their youngsters more interested in the game.

- **Start with miniature golf.** Though mini golf and the real thing are two entirely different activities, many an avid golfer first picked up a club on a miniature golf course. Mini golf is all about having fun, and the joy kids have on a miniature golf course might spark an interest in playing traditional golf.

- **Play with kids.** Young children typically are excited to engage in any activity if it involves playing alongside their parents. Parents

who play golf can take their kids along to the course, first taking them to the range and practice green so they can teach them some of the fundamentals of the game.

As kids' skills develop, parents can play nine holes with their youngsters. The time spent bonding on the course will be unforgettable for parents and children. Older children might want to bring a friend along when playing with parents, and this, too, can be a great way to foster a love of the game in kids.

- **Make it about fun, not the final score.** It's up to parents if they even want to keep score, but the primary focus when golfing with young children should be fun. Try to take lessons on the range or putting green out to the course, but don't overemphasize technique or score. If kids are having a frustrating round, note that every golfer has such rounds and divert their attention by pointing out the surrounding beauty. And keep in mind that it never hurts to leave

time for some post-round ice cream.

- **Set a positive example.** Golf can be a frustrating game for novices and veterans alike. Parents can



set a good example by remaining positive even if their own score is nothing to write home about. Resist any inclination to lash out after a shank or slice, and stay patient

even when struggling with your short game. Kids are always watching their parents for cues, so it's best to ensure any frustration does not manifest itself outwardly.

- **Avoid forcing the issue.** Parents who are avid golfers understandably want to share their passion for the game with their children. But forcing the issue when kids are young might compel them to avoid the game at all costs. Let kids' love of the game develop organically, even if that means putting their clubs away until they're ready to try again.

Golf is a great game that can teach kids invaluable lessons. Certain strategies may foster a lifelong love of the game in youngsters.

Big odds for sinking a hole-in-one

Few individual accomplishments in sports may be more coveted than sinking a hole-in-one on the golf course, but golfers from all walks of life may not want to hold their breath hoping to accomplish that feat the next time they hit the links.

According to the National Hole-in-One Registry, the odds of the average player making a hole-in-one are 12,500 to 1. Even professional golfers may want to temper

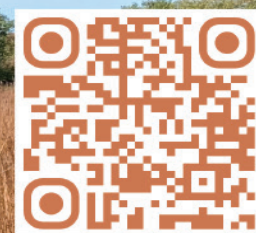
their expectations of sinking a hole-in-one, as the Registry cites the odds of a pro accomplishing the feat as 3,000 to 1.

Golfers who like to play in foursomes should know that their odds of sinking a hole-in-one if someone in their group has already done so are especially long. According to the Registry, the chances of two players from the same foursome sinking a hole-in-one are 17 million to 1.

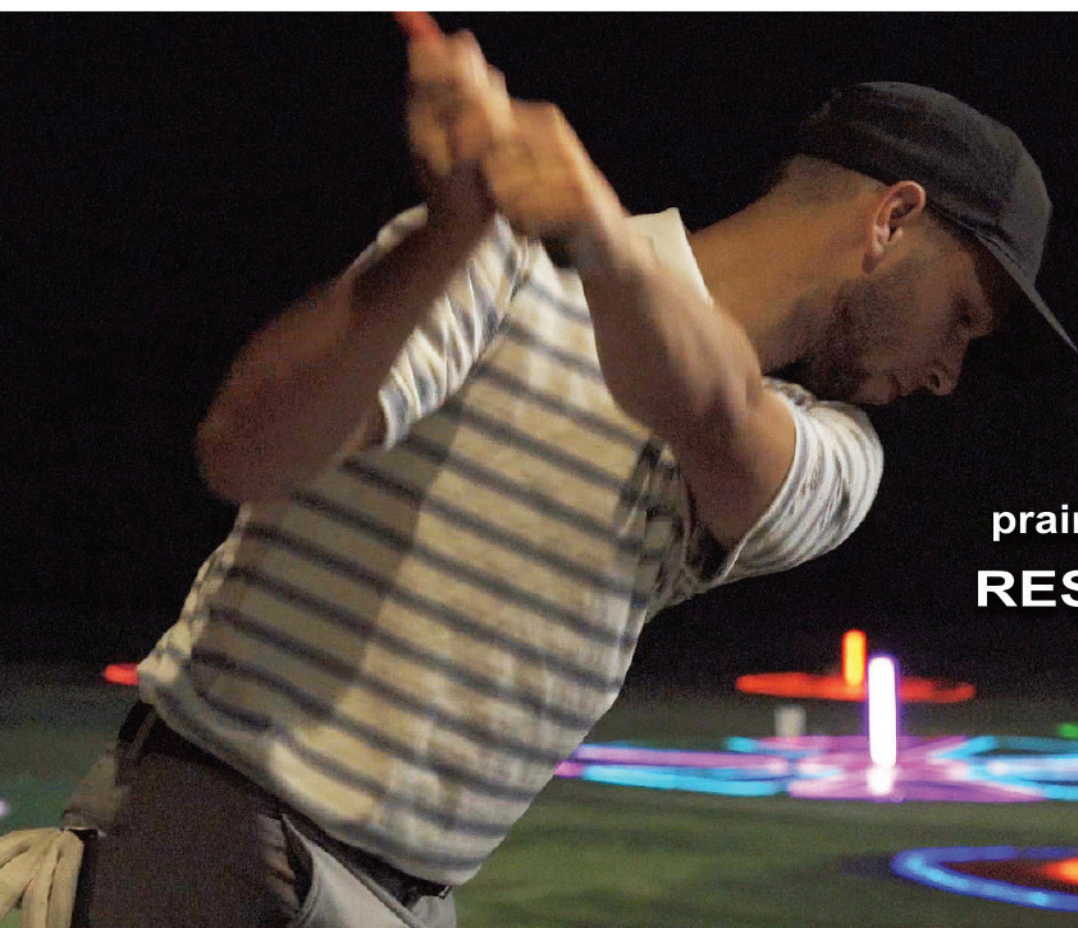


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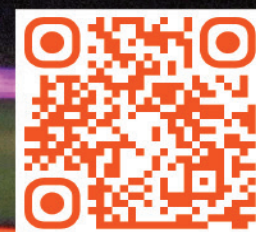
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