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April, 2010

Dear Golfer,

We are happy to print and circulate this booklet on 'Golf Etiquette'. The sport is gaining popularity across the world including our country. Among the numerous attractions of the sport is the spirit in which it is played world over and also the 'Etiquette' that is followed by Golfers.

Golf etiquette is an essential part of the sport which makes it enjoyable to one and all who play or watch. In keeping with the requirements of the sport we have initiated printing this booklet as a first step towards learning the nuances of conduct before, during or after a round of golf. We seek feedback on this booklet so that it can be improved further.

We encourage every golfer to learn the basic etiquette and also the 'Rules of Golf'. A separate book on the Rules is available from the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews & USGA.

Chairman  
Handicap & Tournament Committee  
Hyderabad Golf Club

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## The Spirit of the Game

Unlike many sports, golf is played, for the most part, without the supervision of a referee or umpire. The game relies on the integrity of the individual to show consideration for other players and to abide by the Rules. All players should conduct themselves in a disciplined manner, demonstrating courtesy and sportsmanship at all times, irrespective of how competitive they may be. This is the spirit of the game of golf.

### Safety

Players should ensure that no one is standing close by or in a position to be hit by the club, the ball or any stones, pebbles, twigs or the like when they make a stroke or practice swing. Players should not play until the players in front are out of range. Players should always alert green staff nearby or ahead when they are about to make a stroke that might endanger them. If a player plays a ball in a direction where there is a danger of hitting someone, he should immediately shout a warning. The traditional word of warning in such a situation is “fore.”

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## COURTESY ON THE COURSE

### A. Consideration for other Golfers :

- i) **Please Play Fast** : Nothing is as upsetting for a golfer as getting caught behind a slow group. Just follow these basic tips and make them a part of your routine - and you – and those behind you- will enjoy the game more.
- a) **DON'T TAKE TOO MANY PRACTICE SWINGS** – If necessary, stand to a side and take a couple of practice swings while your fellow golfer is lining up a shot.
- b) **WALK BRISKLY BETWEEN SHOTS** –
- c) **PREPARE FOR YOUR SHOT/LINE UP YOUR PUTT WHILE YOUR FELLOW GOLFERS ARE PLAYING** – You need not wait till your turn to play before putting on your glove, or fishing around in your pocket for a tee.
- d) **CLEAR THE GREEN IMMEDIATELY AFTER HOLING OUT** - avoid practicing your putting if there are others waiting to hit their approach shots.

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e) **KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR WHERE YOUR BALL COMES TO REST** - Even if you do have a fore-caddy, this will eliminate the possibility of losing a ball - It will save you golf balls and plenty of time.

f) **IF YOU DO LOSE A GOLF BALL** - Don't penalise those behind you for your poor shot. Wave them through as soon as you realise it may take some time to find your ball - even if you have not searched for the permissible 5 minutes. Under no circumstances should you ever spend over more than 5 minutes searching for a golf ball.

ii) **Order of Play**: On the first tee, it is generally the lowest handicap golfer who tees off first. Through the green and on the putting surface, the player furthest from the hole should be allowed to play first. Try to follow this convention at all times, except if necessary in the interest of speeding up the game, in which case please ensure that you seek approval from the golfer whose honor it is.

iii) **Priority on the course** : In the absence of any special rules, follow these codes :

- a) A group playing a tournament has priority over any other group.
- b) A single player has no standing, and must give

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- c) ON WEEK DAYS : Two ball matches have precedence, and should be entitled to pass any three or four ball match.
  - d) ON WEEK ENDS/HOLIDAYS : Two ball matches have no standing on the course, and must give way to any three or four ball matches.
  - e) Any match playing an 18 hole round is entitled to pass a match playing a shorter round.
  - f) Any match that is unable to keep its place on the course, and loses more than one clear hole on the players in front must allow the group behind to play through.

#### iv) General

Do not move or talk, or otherwise create any disturbance when a fellow golfer is about to play. Do not play till the group in front of you is out of range of your best shot.

Golfers understandably get excited when they sink a long putt, or hit a good shot. Keep audible expressions of this excitement under check, however, particularly if there is another group within earshot.





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## CARE OF THE COURSE

**Bunkers :** Before leaving a player should carefully fill up and smooth over all indentation's of footprints made by him. Enter and leave a bunker from the rear, do not climb the bunker walls as you may damage them.

**Restore Divots, Repair Ball-Marks and Damage by Spikes :** Through the green, a player should ensure that any turf cut or displaced by him is replaced at once and pressed down (caddies should till divots with sand which they are supplied before round), and that any damage to the putting green made by the ball is carefully repaired. Damage to the putting green caused by golf shoe spikes should be repaired on completion of the hole.

**Damage to Green :** Players should ensure that, no damage is done to the putting green, and that neither they nor their caddies damage the hole by standing

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close to it, in handling the flagstick or in removing the ball from the hole. The flagstick should be properly replaced in the hole before the players leave the putting green. Players should not damage the putting green by leaning on their putters, particularly when removing the ball from the hole. Repair the pitch marks if any.

**Damage Through Practice Swings :** In taking practice swings, players should avoid causing damage to the course, particularly the tees, by taking divots.

HELP US TO PROVIDE YOU WITH THE BEST OF PLAYING CONDITIONS BY OBSERVING THESE SMALL COURTESIES.



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## ON THE TEE

**Distraction** : Don't stand behind the tee while a player is teeing off, as it may distract him. Neither move, talk, or draw your favourite club from the bag just as he is about to swing, as it might upset his concentration.

**Practice Swing** : A practice swing is certainly a good thing but don't take too many, as you are unnecessarily delaying the others from getting off. Worse still, in your enthusiasm to limber up, please don't take a divot off the tee with your driver. Tees take a lot of beating, so do not ruin them unnecessarily.

**Litter** : Try not to litter a tee, with the wrappings of your new golf ball, empty cigarette packs, guthka wrappers etc. Throw your litter in the litter box which is meant for that purpose.

**Out of Bounds** : If you have the misfortune to go out of bounds, don't immediately pull a second ball from your pocket and try to hit it as well. The custom is that the other players should tee off first, before you play again.



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**Clear fairway :** No golfer on the 1st tee, or for that matter on any tee, likes to be kept waiting. However, though we are all great enthusiasts, we must not let our enthusiasm be felt physically by those ahead of us! You must let players ahead of you play their second stroke and be well clear before you address the ball. It is not only rude but dangerous to play before the players ahead are clear.

**Tees :** Most tees are provided with an obvious ingress and egress. Please use them and don't climb on a tee like a mountaineering expert and leave the sides looking like a rubble heap, just to test your new spikes. It neither helps the tees nor the appearance of your golf course generally, and it certainly exasperates the green keeper.



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## THROUGH THE GREEN

**Relief :** Any relief by the rules of golf or our local rules, other than those pertaining to loose impediments, does not apply in the rough, as you should not really be there in the first place. We all know that golf equipment is expensive and it is certainly distressing to ruin a club on a stone, but you cannot take a free lift in the rough, or utilise a better lie just because it is 'a club length away. The answer is to declare your ball unplayable for one stroke, and then drop according to the applicable rule(s).

**Lost Ball :** The rules of golf permit you five minutes to look for a lost ball, but they do not mean you to hold up everyone behind you, in doing so! Please be charitable enough to wave on those behind you if you must look for your ball, and don't then stand in their line of play while you continue your search.

**Provisional Ball :** If you have any doubts whatsoever that your ball may be lost or out of bounds, play a provisional ball before walking up. This not only saves time but eliminates the necessity of walking back later, to play it.

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**Bunkers** : These are certainly exasperating to a lot of us, but believe us when we say that they are really meant in most cases, to stop you getting into worse trouble. However, remember not to vent your spleen on the bunker not only with your club, but your two feet as well, and then leave it looking like a toddlers sandpit, to the utter horror of those behind you. If you must build castles in a bunker, you must make equally sure of leveling them out with some effort and endeavor when you leave. Use your club to do so if a rake is not available, and do it conscientiously. Nothing annoys a fellow golfer more, than to find himself bunkered in your foot prints.

**Grounding your club in a Hazard** : As you know, you are not permitted to ground your club in a hazard. However, the rule does not apply only at the instant of addressing the ball. You can never ground your club, and any ideas you may have to using it as a shooting stick in a hazard, while waiting your turn to play, can only be under penalty of two strokes. The answer is not to enter a hazard until you are required to play.

**Right of Play** : Should there be fairways that cross, the right of play is always that of the players ahead of you. Neither your age, rank or status permit you otherwise.

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**'Fore'** : This is indeed a familiar cry on any course, but one usually hears it sometime after the ball has just missed your head! We know its customary to over assess our prowess at the game, but please don't do so to the physical detriment of your fellow golfers. Shout 'fore' before you play whenever there is a possibility of some one being in your intended or unintended line of play. Its far more gentlemanly.

The other point on this issue is that 'fore' has now been corrupted into 'hup', 'hai', 'ho' and a lot of other undecipherable monosyllables. Please stick to 'fore', its not only conventional, but one need not be a linguist to understand it.

**Shadows** : Don't let your shadow fall on your opponent's ball just as he is addressing it. It is both discourteous and rude and will certainly upset him.

**Loose impediments** : This is very clearly defined in the rules of golf and includes anything 'loose' like a stone, twig or a piece of cut grass lying anywhere but in a hazard. Loose impediments as you well know, cannot be removed from hazards. However, the rebel



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provided by this clause does not permit you to tear down or dig up anything on the course that you or your caddy can handle, just because it happens to interfere with your lie, or the swing of a club. We all know that there are times when a good saw and a pick in your bag, would often prove more useful than all the 14 clubs, but that's golf. The impediments must be loose, and you are certainly not permitted to so make them.

**G.U.R.** : The relief from 'ground under repair' is decided by the Committee and is always appropriately marked. If the Committee has erred in not marking a lie that is possibly G.U.R., please bring it to their notice immediately, but do not decide to give yourself any relief on your own initiative. The Most you can do is to course them mentally, but you cannot get a free lift.

**Slow Play** : Concentration is a good thing on a golf course, but don't make all the other members aware of your powers of 'Yoga' by dragging out a round and holding up everybody. Please remember that there are others playing a round, and they are just as keen as yourself.



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You are liable to be warned of slow play when there is a clear hole ahead of you. You must then let those behind you, go through.

**Order of Play** : Through the green, the order of play is always the same and is governed by your distance from the pin. The fact that you are on the green and your opponent is not, is no reason for asking him to Play the next shot. The criterion is always your distance from the hole.

**The Spirit of the Game** : Unlike many sports, golf is played, for the most part, without the supervision of a referee or umpire. The game relies on the integrity of the individual to show consideration for other players and to abide by the Rules. All players should conduct themselves in a disciplined manner, demonstrating courtesy and sportsmanship at all times, irrespective of how competitive they may be.



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## ON THE GREEN

**Line of Putt :** The rules of golf do not permit you to improve the line of the putt by tapping it with your putter, or sweeping it clear with your hand. You may only remove the loose impediments or repair the pitch mark of a ball. Anything else is an infringement of the rules. You may well have green fingers, but gardening is out of the question.

**Conceded Putt :** If your opponent concedes you a putt, pick up your ball immediately. To putt it thereafter, just to show him that you are almost as good as Vijay Singh, is not on. If you then miss, it would only make you look foolish.

**Care of the Greens :** This is a greenkeeper's nightmare. Don't add to his troubles by tearing up the green with your spiked shoes. Be just a trifle thoughtful and tread carefully on it. If we could all do this, many a put would run truer, and not be taken off line, by the thoughtless marks of a fellow golfer's shoes. These, we may add cannot be repaired before you putt. Do please repair any pitch marks you may see on the Green - Yours or anybody else's.

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**Advice from Your Caddy :** Your caddy usually knows the borrow of a green a little better than you do, and you may certainly ask his advice. He cannot however, so advise you, by placing the flag stick or touching his finger on the actual spot, to indicate the line.

**Clearing the Green :** If you must discuss the errors and omissions of your play, or even mark your card, don't stand on the green doing so. Clear the green for those behind you and then get down to the 'debrief'. A golf course usually has a lot of room other than a green.

**Marking your ball :** Don't use Tees, Leaves or other objects to mark your ball. Use the conventional marker and if you do not have one, you may use a small coin.

It is sometimes necessary to mark your ball on the green at a position other than the actual lie, to clear your opponent's line of putt. The way to do so, is to place the heel of the putter just off the lie, line up your putter with a prominent mark off the green like a tree, or post, and then place the marker at the toe of the putter. Don't span it with your hand just because you've got a new signet ring, or vaguely mark it a few inches away. Be precise.

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## LOCAL RULES

1. The following are integral parts of the course, and relief is not permitted under rule 24-2:
  - a) Perimeter (boundary) walls of the course.
  - b) Driving Range fence
2. Under Rule 24-2: Immovable Obstructions, relief may be availed of from all other artificial objects and constructions on the course, including fixed sprinkler heads, irrigation hydrants and pits thereof.
3. OB (out of bounds) is as follows:

The entire perimeter wall of the course is deemed OB. The fort wall while playing inside Naya Quila. The fence of the Driving Range is also considered OB.

  - a) The inside points at ground level of walls, fences and hedges marked with a white stone/stake;
5. Some areas (including lateral water hazards) have specific penalty drop areas marked. In such areas, under penalty, the ball may be dropped in the dropping zone.

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6. Ground Under Repair marked with white lime lines - Relief under Rule 25-1.
  7. Water hazards are demarcated with yellow stones/stakes. Lateral water hazards are demarcated with red stones/ stakes.
  8. A crab is a burrowing animal - Relief under Rule 25. If the cast made by the burrowing animal is flattened out, it is to be treated as a surface irregularity and there is no relief.
  9. Bunker slopes are considered closely mown areas.
  10. The score-card has more 'local rules' printed on it.

**Penalty for breach of Local Rule - Match Play:**  
**Loss of hole,**  
**Stroke Play: 2 shots penalty**





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## GENERAL

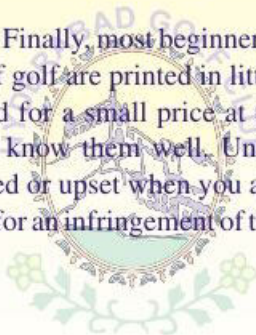
**Playing with the Caddies or Pro :** Playing with a caddy or the pro, certainly improves one's game as they are usually better than most of us. However, a lot of us forget that professionals and caddies earn their 'keep' on the course. Some courses lay down a fee for this, while others require you to pay for the caddy and forecaddy of these gentlemen. Whatever it may be, please find out and foot the bill, and don't just think you have done them a favour by asking them to play with you.

**Practice Areas :** The practice areas and timings are always clearly laid down, and must be adhered to. Your membership does not permit you to practice at a place of your choosing. Regrettably too, practice areas are usually on one of the fairways. When you see someone playing a round on this fairway, please stop your practice until he is clear. We know it cuts your practice time, but this is the best we can do at the moment.

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**Clothes** : The impression you may gain as a beginner that golf and old clothes go together is both erroneous and very unfortunate. You are not required to look like a model in golf magazine, but it is indeed poor taste to look like the local Hippie. Please be neat and tidy in your turnout, as this is not only necessary, but it certainly reflects well on you and your club.

**Rules of Golf** : Finally, most beginners may not know that the rules of golf are printed in little booklets that are usually sold for a small price at the club. Please read them and know them well. Unless you do so, don't be annoyed or upset when you are penalized by your opponent for an infringement of these rules.



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## Many Ways to Enjoy Golf More

1. Get there early enough to feel relaxed.
2. Leave all of your concern in the car.
3. Take your watch off.
4. Turn off your cell phone or better still, leave that in your car too.
5. Decide to let nothing bother you for eighteen holes.
6. Play like it's your first time.
7. Play like it's your last time.
8. Hit your favorite club off of the first tee.
9. Smile, or better yet, laugh, after a bad shot.
10. Play with someone who makes you laugh.
11. Compliment your partner every time he or she hits a great shot.
12. Repair someone else's ball mark on every green.
13. Let the group you're frantically trying to stay ahead of play through.
14. Become your partner's biggest fan.
15. Walk for a change. Or ride for a change.
16. Play it as it lies. - **ALWAYS**
17. Golf with your spouse, and look only for his or her best qualities.
18. Give advice only when asked, especially with your spouse.

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19. Take your child golfing on a weekday.
  20. Really see and appreciate the beauty all around you.
  21. Keep reloading until you clear that water hazard.
  22. Slice one on purpose.
  23. Pretend the objective is to hit in the sand on every hole-and see if you can for all eighteen.
  24. Quit taking your game-and yourself-so seriously.
  25. Remember: it may be business golf, but it's not work.
  26. Recognize that if golf stresses you out, may be you should just go back to the office.
  27. Read a great golf book.
  28. Keep a journal of your accomplishment and special moments on the course.
  29. Caddie a round for a friend.
  30. Play the course of your dreams with a favorite companion.
  31. Practice, Practice, Practice. It may not make you perfect but no practice will definitely make you imperfect.
  32. Play more often.
  33. Lose attachment to the outcome stuck in your head.

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34. Celebrate the balance between doing well and just being-in golf and in life.
  35. Remember that in golf-as in life-you get what you focus on. Focus on the best parts.
  36. Be respectful of other golfers.
  37. Golf with strangers at every opportunity— you'll end up with more friends that way.
  38. Aspire to be the best version of you on the course.
  39. Play a round with the person who introduced you to the game as a tribute to them.
  40. Do something to help make golf accessible for everyone,
  41. Introduce a kid to the game.
  42. Think of the friends or relatives that could benefit from golf like you do, and then make it a goal to introduce them to the game.
  43. Give that old set of clubs to a new golfer.
  44. Take a moment to really appreciate the sunrise or sunset that you normally take for granted.
  45. Think what a great world it would be if everyone golfed.
  46. Thank God that this wonderful game exists, and that you have the ability to play it!

-Mark and Chrissy Donnelly.



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## The Many Lessons of Golf

Golf teaches that we all have handicaps... and that hardly anybody knows what they really are.

Golf teaches that the best courses are the ones that hardly change at all what God put there to begin with.

Golf teaches that although there are a few people who are honest in golf but cheat in life, everybody who cheats in golf cheats in life.

Golf teaches that even though we need strict rules, we also need a leaf rule.

Golf teaches that even people who wear green pants deserve some place where they can go, get a little exercise and not be laughed at.

Golf teaches that both success and failure are temporary.

Golf also teaches that success is a lot more temporary.

Golf teaches that although practice does not always make us perfect, no practice always makes us imperfect.

Golf teaches that no matter how good you are, there is always someone better and that person will usually find you and tell you.

Golf teaches that when you are good you can tell people, but when you are great they will tell you.

Golf teaches that although patience is a virtue, slow play is not. Golf teaches that even though the best golfers have the most chances to win, the other golfers have the most chances to improve.