



AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP PACE OF PLAY POLICY 2025 PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important that players in R&A Championships and their National Governing Bodies and coaches understand The R&A's Pace of Play Policy before competing in R&A Amateur Championships.

This document is intended to give additional information to that included in [The R&A's Pace of Play Policy](#), so please ensure that you read that before reading this document. This policy will be strictly enforced at R&A Amateur Championships.

An accompanying player education video is also available to view [here](#).

1. Why does The R&A have a Pace of Play Policy?

- The Rules of Golf require the sport to be played “at a prompt pace” and they recommend that players should make a stroke in no more than 40 seconds once they are able to play without interference or distraction.
- The R&A Amateur Championship Committee requires that the pace of play is acceptable to all players and that particularly deliberate players should not be allowed to hold up play or delay and distract their playing partners by taking excessive time to play shots.
- Many of The R&A's Amateur Championships are televised and it is appropriate to ensure that golf is seen to be an engaging sport to watch. It becomes more challenging for TV Directors to ensure that is the case when individuals take excessive time.
- The R&A has received feedback from some of the professional Tours that a number of players coming onto Tour directly from the elite amateur game find themselves being timed frequently when they first start playing on Tour due to them not being familiar with the processes involved.
- The aim of The R&A's Pace of Play Policy is to encourage all players to play at a good pace throughout the round, thereby reducing the average shot time across the field and reducing average round times.

2. What are my responsibilities as a player?

- Always be ready to play when it is your turn and ensure you play every shot in less than 90 seconds, though you should be aiming to play much more quickly than that.
- Play within the published maximum times allowed and keep up with the group in front.
- Even if you lose a ball, have a lengthy search or a ruling, it is still the responsibility of your group:
 - To play to the scheduled time, and
 - To get back into position as soon as possible.
- If you keep up with the group in front, the maximum amount of time that you have to play each shot is 90 seconds. If you are being officially timed, this is reduced to 40 seconds (or 50 seconds if you are the first to play).
- In stroke play, you are encouraged to play ‘Ready Golf’ when appropriate and providing you do so in a safe and responsible way. For example, you should play Ready Golf:
 - When the player farther away has a difficult shot and is assessing their options

- When a longer hitter has to wait for a green to clear
- On the tee if the player with the honour is delayed
- By playing your shot before helping to look for a lost ball
- When another player in the group is waiting for a referee
- Note – do NOT tee off until all players in your group have finished putting out on the previous putting green and they are in a position to see you play your tee shot.

3. What does the term 'out of position' mean and how do I know if I am over the time schedule or out of position?

The time schedule for the course (i.e. the time allocated to play each hole) will be made available to you during the practice days and on competition days.

Your group will be considered to be 'out of position' when you have:

- Taken longer than the allocated time for the holes you have played, and you've lost time on the group in front of you (i.e. you have not maintained the starting interval with the group ahead of you).

If you are out of position, you will normally be given an official warning by a referee and asked to catch up with the group ahead (but if your group is significantly out of position, the referee may start official timing immediately).

- If your group is not back in position within two holes or no effort was made after one hole, your group will be officially timed (the referee may refer to this as you being put 'on the clock').
- That means that each player in your group will be timed individually for every shot that is played.

4. What is the allowable shot time for a stroke?

The time that you are allowed for a stroke depends on whether your group is being officially timed by a referee. This is the case when a referee has advised you that you are being officially timed.

a. When your group is NOT being officially timed (not "on the clock")

You have a responsibility to play all shots within a reasonable period of time whether your group is in position or not. That means that a referee may time how long you take to play a shot at any point during your round. In these situations, if you take more than **90 seconds**, you will be told that you have a bad time.

This is known as an 'excessive shot time'.

b. When your group is being officially timed ("on the clock")

If you or your group is told that you are 'being officially timed', that means that you no longer have the opportunity to take a little extra time to play your shots.

In that situation, the maximum time allowed per shot is 50 seconds if you are the **first player** to play:

- A stroke from the teeing area;
- An approach shot to the green on a par 4 or par 5 hole;

- A lay-up shot on a par 5 hole;
- A stroke from around the putting green; and
- A stroke from on the putting green.

The maximum time allowed per shot for the other players to play is **40 seconds**.

5. When does the referee start the clock?

- **Tee shots** – once you have put your bag down (or stopped your trolley), have reached the tee, have had a reasonable time to calculate your yardage (for example either by using a distance measuring device, or by a combination of pacing from a sprinkler head to their ball and a yardage book, but not both), and you are free to play without distractions, timing will start. The time you take to interpret your yardage, to assess the stroke and decide what club to play, to put your ball in the ground, to take practice swings and to align yourself must all be done within the time allowed.
- **Approach shots to the green and chip shots** – once you have reached your ball, you have put your bag down (or stopped your trolley), have had a reasonable time to calculate your yardage (again with either a distance measuring device, or a yardage book, but not both) and you are free to play without distractions, timing will start. The time you take to interpret your yardage, to assess the stroke and decide what club to play, to take practice swings and to align yourself must all be done within the time allowed.
- **A putt** – if you are first to putt, you will be given a reasonable time to take the following actions:
 - mark, lift, clean and replace your ball,
 - repair damage (such as pitch marks),
 - remove loose impediments, and
 - remove the flagstick (or have it attended).

The timing will start when you are free to play without distractions and you start to assess your line of putt. Any time that you take to assess your line of putt, to realign your golf ball, to align yourself and to take practice swings must all be done within the time allowed.

If you are the second or third player to putt, timing will normally start when you have had time to replace your ball, because you should have been repairing damage and reading your line of putt while the first player was preparing for their shot.

Note – you cannot manipulate when the referee will start the timing by taking these actions in a different order. For example, if you take time to assess your line of putt before removing loose impediments, the timing will start when you start assessing your line of putt, but the time would be paused while you remove any loose impediments.

6. When are referees likely to time me to check for excessive shot times?

You may be timed by a referee without warning and without being told. This includes when your group is keeping up with the group in front. You should expect referees to check for excessive shot times in the following situations:

- When your group has been given an official warning for being out of position, but you are not yet being officially timed.

- When there is a gap between your group and the group in front of you.
- When you are seen to be taking an unreasonable amount of time to play your shots.
- When your group has been taken off the clock, are no longer being officially timed and are back in position, but only because the groups ahead have had difficulty and lost time.

In these situations, if you play your shot in less than 90 seconds you will not get a bad time.

7. What happens if I get a bad time?

At any time, if you get a bad time for taking too long to play a stroke, the penalty structure is as follows:

1 Bad Time	=	You will be told you have one bad time, that you have a warning and that a second bad time will result in a penalty
2 Bad Times	=	You get a one stroke penalty
3 Bad Times	=	You get an additional two stroke penalty (stroke play), or a loss of hole penalty (match play)
4 Bad Times	=	Disqualification

Note: Bad times are carried forward throughout the entire stroke play Championship or for all stroke play qualifying rounds. For example, a player who gets a bad time warning in Round 1, will get one penalty stroke if they get a second bad time later in Round 1 or during any subsequent stroke play round of the Championship.

In match play, bad times only apply to a specific match, whether that be an 18-hole match or a 36-hole match.

As explained above, you can be given a bad time for taking more than 40 seconds (or 50 seconds if you were first to play) when you are being officially timed, or for taking more than 90 seconds at any other time during your round.

8. Why do referees tell players that the group in front is being officially timed?

Firstly, this is as a courtesy, so you know that something is being done about the slow group ahead of you. Secondly, the group in front of you is likely to play more quickly which means that your group will also need to play more quickly to ensure you keep up with them.

9. Will the referee tell me or the group if we are back in position and no longer being officially timed (“off the clock”)?

The referee will normally tell you when you are back in position and you are no longer being officially timed.