



Merging play between 1st and 10th holes

Following some recent confusion about how to merge groups of players, I'm writing to clarify the procedures.

The basic principles for merging players on 1st/10th to the shared green are:

- If a group have already teed off on the 10th, any players waiting on the 1st should give way to them and wait until that group has cleared the 1st/10th green before teeing off.
- If a group are waiting to tee off on the 1st and another group are on the 10th tee but haven't yet teed off, the group on the 1st should start and those about to play the 10th can tee off (if safe) but should wait for the first group to clear the 1st/10th green before playing their approach shots.
- If a group on either the 1st or 10th have already given way once to another group, then they have priority.

There will be circumstances where these principles may not work exactly as planned, for example if a group has teed off the 10th but are delayed by a lost ball so some common sense should be used, but if everyone is aware of and honours the intent of the principles then it should help alleviate the merging issues we sometimes experience.

During competitions there is an added complication that players are sometimes tempted to tee off as soon as the 1st is clear. However, this usually results in bunching on the course and at the turn, which only adds to the problems we are trying to prevent.

It is important therefore that players respect their allocated tee times – indeed the Rules of Golf impose a two-stroke penalty for teeing off early. In our case, the starter has discretion to allow groups to tee off a few minutes early or late but only to accommodate the requirements for merging.

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