



2026 NCGA PACE OF PLAY POLICY

Maximum Allowable Time

For each competition, the Committee will establish the maximum allowable time for a group to complete both the round and each individual hole. These time limits will be printed on each player's scorecard. All players and groups are expected to maintain a pace of play that is less than the maximum allowable time.

- In stroke play, a hole is considered complete when all players in the group have holed out.
- In match play, a hole is considered complete when all players have holed out or the result of the hole has been determined.
- For four-ball competitions, refer to Rule 23.3c for guidance on when a hole is considered complete.

Out of Position

A group is out of position when they reach the teeing area over the maximum allowable time and fail to play a stroke:

- On a par-3 before all players in the group ahead have played from the teeing area of the next hole.
- On a par-4 before all players in the group ahead have holed out.
- On a par-5 before any player in the group ahead has made a stroke on the putting green.

Warnings, Checkpoints, and Penalties in Stroke Play

If a group has exceeded its maximum allowable time and is out of position, a referee may issue a warning and assign a checkpoint – typically within the next two or three holes – by which the group must regain its position. Once a warning is issued, all individuals within the group will be monitored for pace of play.

- If the group regains position by the checkpoint:
 - No penalty will be applied.
 - If the group falls out of position again later in the round, a new checkpoint may be issued.
- If the group fails to regain position by the checkpoint:
 - All players will be notified that the checkpoint was missed.
 - One or more players may be subject to a one-stroke penalty.
 - A new checkpoint will be assigned.
- If the group fails to meet the second checkpoint:
 - One or more players may receive the general penalty (two-stroke penalty).
- If the group fails to meet additional checkpoints beyond the second checkpoint, one or more players may be subject to disqualification.

Warnings and Penalties in Match Play

If a group exceeds its maximum allowable time and is out of position, a referee may begin timing strokes. The following penalty structure applies to any player who receives a bad time:

- First bad time – warning
- Second bad time – loss of hole
- Third bad time – additional loss of hole
- Fourth bad time – disqualification

Time Permitted to Play a Stroke

Players may be subject to individual timing after receiving a warning or checkpoint. A player is considered to have incurred a bad time if they take more than 40 seconds to make a stroke once it is their turn to play. An additional 10 seconds (for a total of 50 seconds) is permitted for the first player to play in the following situations:

- A stroke on a par-3 hole
- A second stroke on a par-4 or par-5 hole
- A third stroke on a par-5 hole
- A stroke played from around the putting green
- A stroke played on the putting green

Timing begins when it is the player's turn to play and there are no distractions or interference. Time spent assessing yardage, wind, or other conditions is included in the timing. On the putting green, actions permitted under Rule 13.1 (such as marking, lifting, cleaning, and replacing the ball) are not included in the timing—provided the player is not unreasonably delaying play. However, surveying the line of play from any angle is included in the timing. If the Committee determines that specific players are responsible for the delay, only those individuals may be penalized. Players who are meeting pace requirements may be absolved of penalty.

Unreasonable Delay: In addition to the foregoing, if a player unreasonably delays play, they may be subject to penalty as outlined in Rule 5.6a. If a Rules Official determines that a player's slow play amounts to serious misconduct, a penalty of disqualification may be imposed in the first instance. (Rule 1.2a.) Penalties for unreasonable delay are independent of penalties issued under the above pace of play policy (see Rule 5.6a).