



FIRST SWING

GOLFER'S GUIDE



CHAPTER 3

Beginning to Play the Game

Safety


Golf, when compared to other sports, is very safe. However, golf injuries can and do occur.

FORE!

One safety hazard in golf is the risk of being struck with a club by a fellow player. The best rule to follow is to “Stop and Look” before you swing. Make sure that your surroundings are clear and only swing when all is clear. When others are playing make sure to

stand quietly, either directly behind or to the side of the person playing a shot. A second safety hazard in golf is the possibility of being struck with a golf ball. Golf is a game where the furthest ball from the hole is played first. When playing on the course make sure that you are positioned where the ball cannot strike you. On occasion a player not in your group might hit an errant shot that lands close to you.

Golf uses its own safety warning, calling “Fore,” to warn other golfers that a ball in flight has the potential for reaching another group.

 Lightning can pose another serious danger on the golf course. Always move into a safe area when you see or hear thunder or lightning.

Speed of Play

The time it takes to play a round of golf depends on several conditions: the difficulty of the golf course, the number of players on the golf course and your skill level. On average an 18-hole round of golf should be approximately four to four-and-a-half hours. This breaks down to about 15 minutes per hole. To speed up play several strategies should be used:

1. Be ready to play: Make sure you have tees, an extra ball, ball markers and a divot repair tool in your pocket during play.
2. Limit your practice swings to one before it's your turn to play.
3. Watch your ball land and select a spot in the distance to use as a visual marker when looking for your ball. Have others in your group watch each player's shots. This helps speed up the time to find a ball that is not in the fairway.
4. Search for a lost ball for 5 minutes or less.
5. Carry your bag, roll your pull cart or park your golf car on the side of the putting green closest to the next hole. When carrying a bag or pulling a cart always move your equipment forward to avoid walking back to get your clubs.
6. Putt out. Play is faster if you finish putting rather than marking your ball on the putting green.
7. Record your score on the next tee, not on the putting green.
8. Keep up. You are playing too slow if the group in front of you is one hole ahead.
9. Let faster groups play through.

Golf Etiquette

Behavior on the course has easy rules to follow. A code of etiquette was established when golf originated as a game. According to the USGA the etiquette of golf is a series of suggestions that point out certain standards of behavior for play on the golf course. A few rules of etiquette include:

1. Safety first – Don't play until others in front of you are out of range.
2. A player who has the honor (low score from previous hole) should be allowed to play first from the teeing ground.
3. Do not talk, move or stand directly behind someone when they are playing.

4. Play without delay.
5. Allow others to play through when searching for a lost ball.
6. Take care of the golf course and repair any divots that your club makes on the teeing ground, fairway and ball marks on the putting green.
7. Before leaving a bunker, rake and smooth over all holes and footprints. When finished, lay rake with teeth down.

First Tee

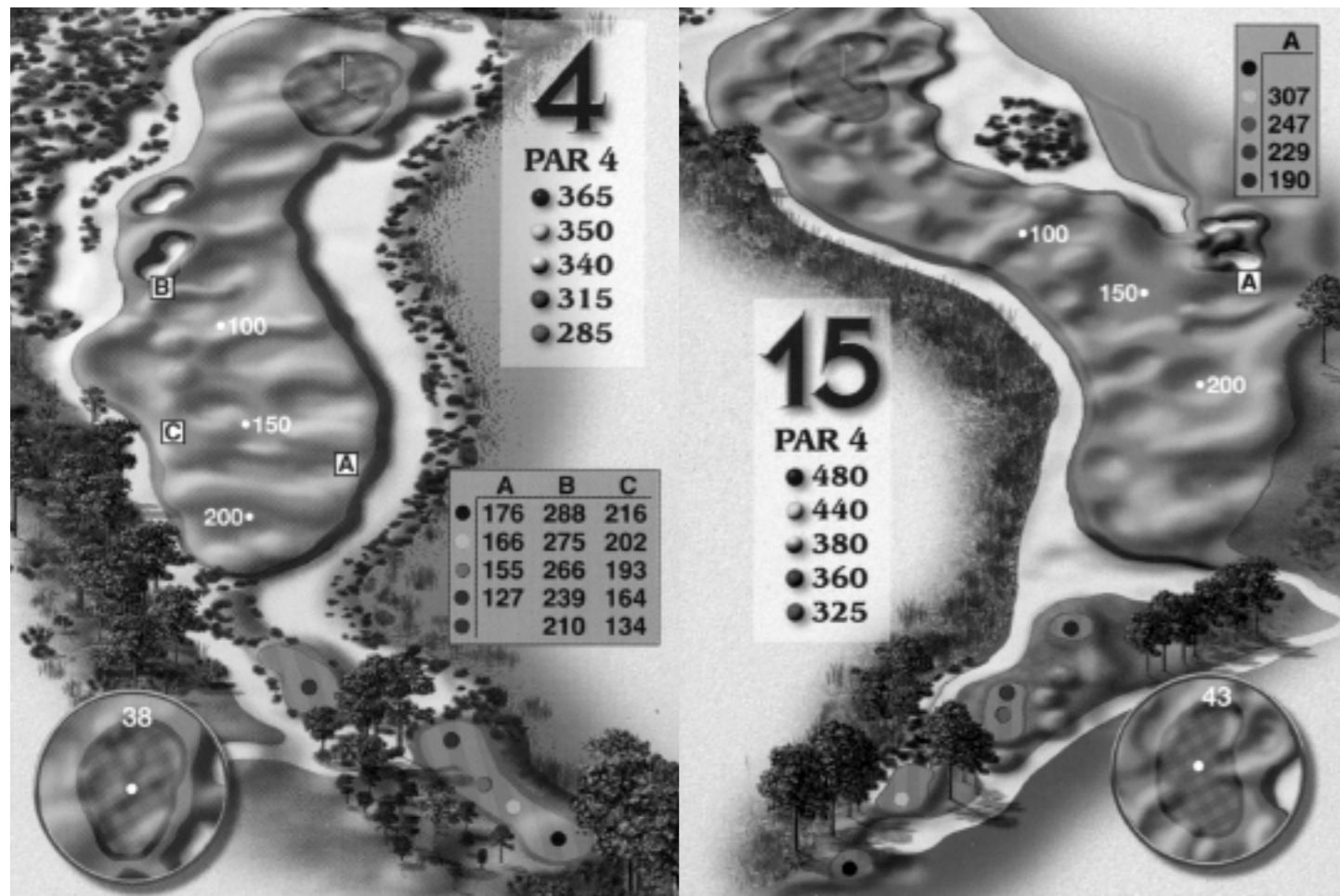
Determine the tee markers appropriate for your skill level. Golf courses use different colored tee markers to represent course yardage. The forward tees are designated for beginners and players with a high handicap. The longest yardage tees are designated for low handicap or professional players.

Once you have selected the tees that you will be playing and the starter has given you the go-ahead to begin play, determine who will play first. And, "Play Away." The first player should tee his/her ball between or no further than two club lengths behind the tee markers.

Determine the shape of the golf hole and aim toward

a target in the fairway. A helpful strategy is to tee your ball on the side of the tee box closest to any trouble such as water hazards, trees, or bunkers. This allows you to have a wider target area and to hit away from the trouble. Take no more than one practice swing, line up and play your ball, watch it land. This will allow you to find your ball easily as you move from the tee to the fairway.

Once the hole has been completed, the order of play remains the same as on the first hole unless another player in the group earns a lower score. This is called "having the honor." Honor establishes the order of play on each successive tee.



The Dye Course

PGA Golf Club, Port St. Lucie, FL

Approach Shots

Approach shots are those shots that are played between the teeing ground and the putting green. Ideally, an approach shot is played from the fairway. At times a golfer's tee shot misses the fairway and the ball must be played from the rough or natural areas that line the fairway.

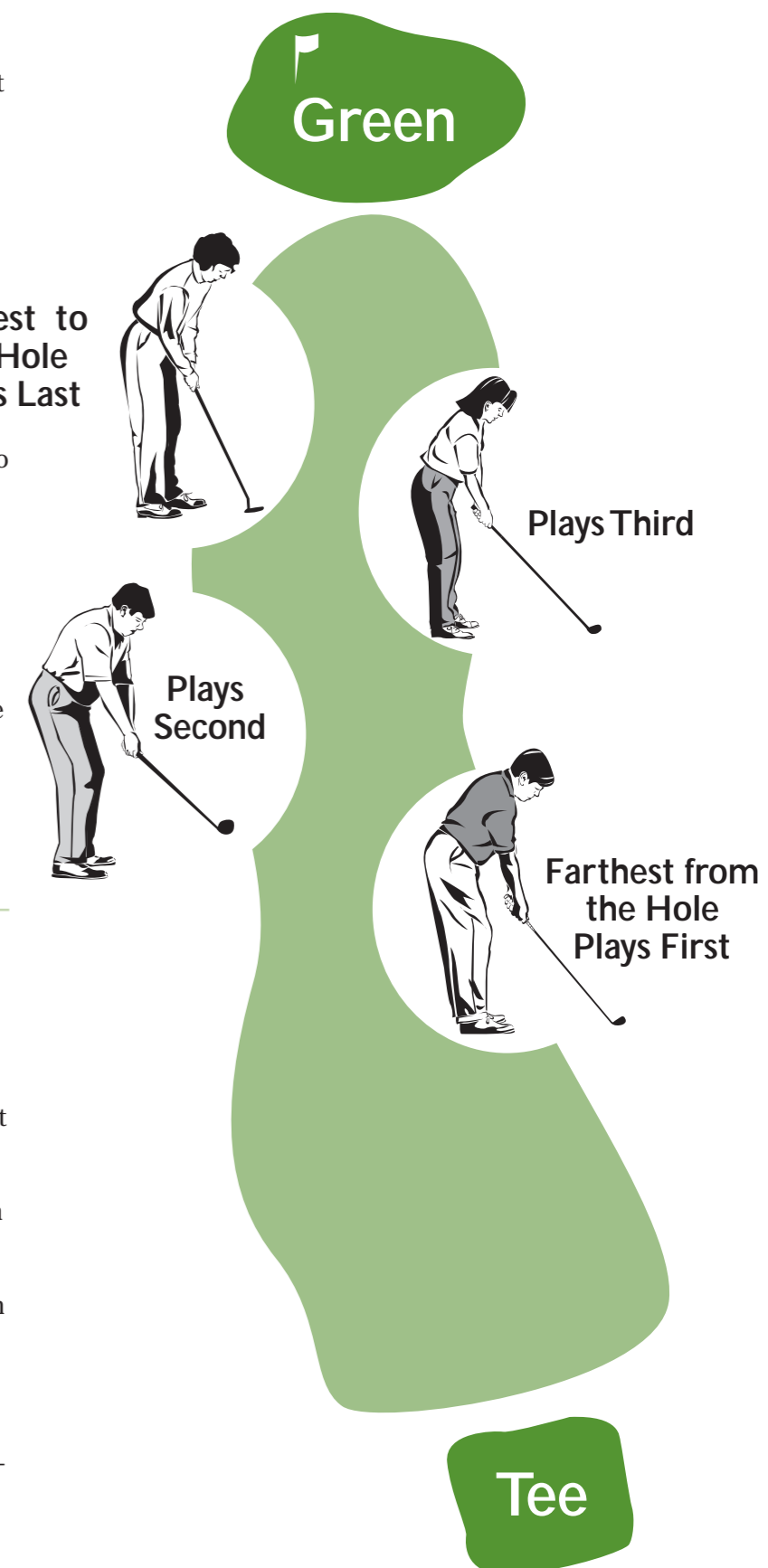
The ball furthest from the hole is the ball that is played first. The order of play continues to the next closest ball and so on until play on the hole for everyone is completed.

Two factors contribute to successful approach shots: distance and direction. Depending on the flagstick location, a golfer will aim to a target on or near the putting green. Distance is important for advancing the ball to the target. What club should you hit? Before you select a golf club, it is important to know the distance to the center of the putting green. All golf courses provide a scorecard with hole yardages and some type of yardage markers, usually found in the center of the fairway. Typical marking locations are 200, 150 and 100 yards from the center of the putting green. Before you play it is important to determine how far, on average, your ball travels.

All golfers should be prepared to play ready golf!

Bunker Play

Often a putting green will be surrounded by green-side bunkers filled with sand or grass. These bunkers are designed to catch errant shots or force players to hit shots that carry onto the putting green. Several rules and etiquette need to be applied when a ball lands in the bunker. A bunker is a hazard. While in a hazard, a player is not allowed to ground his/her club (touch sand) before attempting to play the ball. Each practice swing in a bunker that touches the sand would result in a 2-stroke penalty. A player is not allowed to remove any loose impediments, such as: stones, leaves or twigs around a ball in the sand. Once the ball has been cleared of the bunker, the sand should be smoothed or raked clean of footprints and divots. The rakes are provided, usually on the golf car or on the ground just outside and near the bunkers.



Putting Green Play

Play on the putting green begins with the player furthest from the hole. Each player's ball should be marked by a flat object such as a small coin or ball marker. Care should be taken when on the putting green to avoid damage to the green's surface.

The putting green is an area where the ball should roll smoothly. Avoid dragging your feet, place clubs and the flagstick down carefully, and stay clear of the hole when retrieving your ball from the hole. Ball marks, or indentations that the ball makes when landing on the putting surface, should be repaired with a divot repair tool.

The putting green also requires knowledge about putting green etiquette. Long putts may require

another player to tend (pull out) the flagstick once the ball has been putted. Players should be aware of all balls and markers to avoid stepping on a player's line of putt. Be sure to stand far enough away from others so that your shadow does not interfere with another player's line of putt. When retrieving your ball from the hole, avoid stepping on or near the cup. If extra clubs, for pitching or chipping, are carried to the green, make sure to place them gently on the apron (edge) of the green and on the side closest to the next hole. Always check the surrounding area before leaving so that all extra clubs that have been carried there are collected.



Recording Your Score

The objective of golf is to play the ball from the teeing ground to the putting green and into the hole in the fewest strokes possible. You should count every swing, including penalty strokes and misses (whiffs). Your score for the hole is the total number of strokes you play from the tee until the ball is holed. The scorecard lists each hole and a score listed that is considered par. Although beginners may score higher than

par, par is a standard to help measure your skill while playing on the golf course. Golfers use special terms for scoring a hole. Finishing the hole with the same score as a par is called making par. Scoring one stroke below par is a birdie and two strokes under par is an eagle. Scoring one stroke over par is a bogey and two strokes over par is a double bogey.

HOLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	TOTAL
PAR	4	4	4	5	4	3	4	3	5	36
Lisa	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	38
Mike	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	36

THE SCORECARD

PAR:
Same score as par

BIRDIE:
One stroke under par

EAGLE:
Two strokes under par

BOGEY:
One stroke over par

DOUBLE BOGEY:
Two strokes over par