

# LPGA GOLF 101

Golf for women, from LPGA Teachers

## **Peggy Briggs LPGA Class A Teaching Professional Golf Game of Lifetime Friendships**

### **Basic Rules – What you really need to know**

#### **1. Take the Right Equipment**

- Take no more than 14 clubs in your bag. (recommend a driving club, iron, wedge/9 iron, and putter)
- Bag of tees (Can be purchased in the pro shop)
- Minimally 2 sleeves of balls (6 total).  
Ball marker/coin and ball mark repair tool/tee Call ahead to reserve a tee time. Be sure to ask when they less busy if you do not want to feel rushed.  
Show up 30 minutes before you plan to tee off. This will allow time to pay your greens fee and get ready.

#### **2. Make a Tee Time, then *Make* the Tee Time**

#### **3. Dress the Part**

Many golf courses have dress codes. Find out what the dress code is at the course you're playing and dress appropriately.  
Avoid wearing jeans and heels

#### **4. Arriving and Teeing Off**

When you get to the golf course, and after parking, look for signs that indicate the pro shop entrance. That's where you want to check in (especially if you have a tee time - let the staff know you've arrived) and where you'll pay, pick up the scorecard and be given any information the staff thinks you should have.

No signs? Not obvious where the pro shop entrance is? Don't worry. Follow other golfers. Or - don't be shy, they want your business! - walk in any door and ask.

On the teeing ground, you must place your ball between the tee markers, either even with them or up to two club-lengths behind them. Never in front of them.

Tee markers are usually small, colored cones or stones or some other similar indicator. For example, if you're playing from the red tees, look for markers painted white.

## 5. Honors, Away and Ready Play

The player who has "honors" plays first from the teeing ground. On the first tee, this can be decided randomly (draw straws, play paper-rock-scissors, whatever). On ensuing tees, the player with the best score on the preceding hole goes first, the second-best score goes second, and so on. Ties carry over to the next tee box, so you keep your place in the rotation until you beat someone on a hole.

"Honors" determines who tees off first; what about the order of play on shots from the fairway? He who is "away" (or "out") leads the way. The player who is farthest from the hole always plays first, from any position on the golf course other than the tee box. The exception is when all members of the group have agreed to play "ready golf," meaning hit-when-ready. Ready golf can be played when a group is trying to speed up the round.

## 6. Play It As It Lies

The Rules of Golf state that you have to play the ball as it lies, when hitting in between the tee box and green. This means you cannot move it. As a beginner, we want you to have fun! So it's okay to move the ball to get a better lie, while you are in the learning phase.

## 7. Out of Bounds & Lost Balls

Out-of-bounds should be clearly marked around the golf course, usually through the use of white stakes or white lines. The penalty for OB is stroke-plus-distance; that is, add one stroke to your score, then go back to where you hit the shot from and hit it again.

Of course, that takes time. At busy golf courses you won't have that time because there is likely to be a group behind yours waiting to play. So when you think you've hit a ball out of bounds, you'll need to play a second ball (called a "provisional ball") off the tee so you won't have to retrace your steps if the first ball really is OB.

Make sure to announce to your playing partners that you are hitting a provisional, then re-tee after everyone else has hit and play your provisional tee ball. If you find your first ball and it is actually *in* bounds, then you play the first ball. If you can't find your first ball, or find it out of bounds, then play your provisional ball (in which case your provisional ball off the tee counts as your third stroke, so your next shot will be your fourth).

The same applies to lost balls. If your shot goes deep into the woods, the penalty for a lost ball is stroke-plus-distance, so hit a provisional. (Balls hit into water are treated differently, see No. 9.)

Just remember what we've already said about the need to strictly know and adhere to the rules as a beginner: Put the priority on having fun. If you're playing your first round of golf, among friends, there's no harm in not knowing or not abiding by the exact, precise, rules of golf. If you lose a ball, it's OK to just drop another one and keep moving. It's unlikely anyone will mind if they know you're just starting out, or if your group of friends don't mind. As a beginner, it's important to keep up the pace and avoid slowing down other golfers on the course.

You'll learn to play more strictly by the rules as you go, and as you improve.

## **8. Keep Up the Pace**

Slow play has always been an issue on golf courses, and it's even more important as a beginner to be aware of your pace of play. You don't want to keep golfers behind you waiting, just as you probably don't want to be kept waiting yourself by slow groups ahead. Always be prepared to play when it is your turn to hit. Don't wait until it is your turn to decide which club to use, or to determine the line of a putt; use the time while others are hitting to make those decisions, so that when it's your turn you can step right up and play. If your group is slower than the group immediately behind yours - if your group is holding up another group - it's good etiquette to allow the faster group to play through. Not all groups will want to do this, but many will, and all that do will be very grateful for your show of etiquette.

## **9. What to Do About Water Hazards**

Water hazards should be clearly marked on golf courses. Yellow stakes or lines indicate a water hazard; red stakes or lines indicate a lateral water hazard (a lateral water hazard is a water hazard that runs alongside, rather than across, the line of play).

You can try to play a ball that is in the water, but that's generally a bad idea. Instead, for "regular" water hazards, take a 1-stroke penalty and drop a ball at any point behind the spot where your original ball crossed into the water hazard, but on the same line of play (think of it this way: look at the flag, and look at the spot where your ball crossed into the water hazard; now imagine a straight line drawn back from the flagstick to that spot; then imagine that line extending back behind you - that's the line on which you must drop).

For lateral water hazards, drop within two club lengths of the spot where the ball crossed the margin of the hazard (no nearer the hole), or on the opposite side of the hazard at an equidistant spot.

Note: It's a time-honored tradition in golf for beginners and other high-handicappers to carry "water balls." You don't want to lose a nice, shiny, brand new ball, right? Golf balls aren't free! But if you're a beginner trying to play across a water hazard, that new ball of yours is at risk. A "water ball" is an older, used ball that you won't mind as much hitting into the water as you would a brand new golf ball. So if you run across a water hazard that scares you, whip out that water ball and give it your best shot!

## **10. Course Care and Safety**

Golf courses are there to be enjoyed by all golfers, so part of your responsibility is taking care of the course while you are on it. If you are using a golf cart, always observe the posted cart rules.

Even better, a good idea is to keep the cart on the cart paths at all times (carts damage the grass). Never drive a golf cart close to or through a hazard (bunkers, ponds, etc.) or within 50 yards of a putting green.

If using a push cart, never take it onto the putting green or into hazards, and keep it at least 10- 15 yards away from the edges of greens and hazards.

Always repair your ballmarks (also called pitch marks) on the green. Ballmarks are indentations sometimes made in the putting green when a ball thumps to the surface. Always repair your divots in the fairway. Divots are the scrapes or chunks of turf sliced off (or dug up) by iron shots. Repairing a divot might mean picking up the sod that you've chopped up and placing it back in the resulting scrape; or it could mean pouring sand or seed into the spot of the divot. If sand or seed are provided by the course (usually in a container that rides on the golf cart), that's what they want you to do.

Always rake sand bunkers after you've hit your shot to smooth out the sand so that ensuing golfers don't have to play out of your footprints. (And by the way, another basic rule to know is that, when in a bunker, you are not allowed to ground the club; that is, your club must not touch the sand except in the process of making the stroke.) And always be aware of other golfers on the course, especially during your swing. Golf clubs can do serious damage if they strike another golfer, and so, too, can golf balls at close range. Don't play your shot until the group ahead is out of range.