

## Message from the Men's Club President on the Players' Assistants and Pace of Play

Blitz teammates: Last Tuesday, 13 April, was the first day of the new "lottery draw" order of teams. It also was a Blitz with a much slower than normal Pace of Play. While there is no reason to believe that the slow play was a direct result of the new order of teams, it is an item of concern that I want to address.

The order of teams was done fairly and equitably and although I know that not everyone is happy with their new team number, the team order will be in effect until the next Blitz Lottery which is usually one year after the last one. The frequency of the Blitz Lottery is solely up to the Board of Governors and will be discussed by them at a future meeting.

The Players' Assistants are NOT to be thought of as "Course Marshals" whose purpose is to require slower teams to speed up. I know some Blitz players think that is their purpose. The Player's Assistants are there for more important reasons. They are there to assist any player who needs help due to a physical problem or has to leave the course quickly for other reasons, such as an emergent call requiring his presence elsewhere. Additionally, they help in locating clubs, towels, etc, that a player misplaces on the course. All of those reasons have proven the huge asset the Assistants have been over the past many years. So what is a Players' Assistant's role with Pace of Play?

The Players' Assistants do not have the responsibility or the authority to REQUIRE that a slow group either speed up or face consequences; however, they do have the opportunity to see where the "Gaps" are between groups. The only thing that individual Blitz teams know for sure is if they are waiting on every shot or that the hole ahead is mostly clear and there is no wait. The Assistants, on the other hand, can see exactly if and where a team is playing abnormally slow. They have the opportunity to inform the slow group(s) that they are holding up the teams behind them and ask them to please pick up their pace. They cannot order the teams to play faster or require them to step aside and let the groups behind to play through.

So what happens when a slow group chooses to ignore a Players' Assistant and continue to hold up the Blitz groups behind them? Well, in extreme cases the Players' Assistant can call the Pro Shop and report that the Pace of Play on the course is much slower than normal and the reason appears to be "Team XX." The Pro Shop can take action on that information.

The Pro Shop Staff, who **ARE** responsible for the whole golf course, **DOES** have the authority to **REQUIRE** an excessively slow team to take remedial actions immediately. What "Remedial Actions?" They can **require** the slow team to "Pick up their golf balls and proceed to the next hole immediately. The Rules of Golf allow a player(s) to do that and to mark down their "Most probable score" on the scorecard, and the round remains "postable." The Pro Shop Staff can also **require** that team to step aside and let the team(s) behind play through; or if the slow team refuses to comply, they can be ordered to immediately leave the course." I have never seen that to be required in my 21 years as a member, but please know that it is an option and within the authority of the Pro Shop Staff.

Does anyone else have an official role in helping with the Pace of Play in Men's Club events? Yes. Any elected Governor of the Men's Club has the authority to "remind" a slow group to pick up their pace, and, after a period of time, if that does not work, he has the authority to require them to immediately

proceed to the next hole. If the slow team refuses to comply with either the “pick up the pace” reminder or the “proceed to the next hole” order, then the consequence is that they will be Disqualified from that day’s Blitz. A Governor does not have the authority to order anyone to leave the course, but he does have the responsibility to inform the Blitz Director or me and the matter will be addressed as covered by the Constitution.

Obviously, those official “reminders” and more severe actions from the Pro Shop Staff or a Governor are NOT DESIRABLE but since so many of you have expressed displeasure about “5+ hour rounds” we feel that it cannot be ignored.

To be sure neither the Pro Shop Staff NOR any Men’s Club Governor would enjoy confronting a group about slow play. Therefore, you can avoid any such occurrence by paying attention to the group ahead and behind yours. If the group ahead is fast and you never have to wait for any shot, then fine! You are not required to speed up just because they are fast since your “falling ‘behind” may not be due to your own Blitz team’s fault. **HOWEVER**, if you see that the group behind you is always waiting on your team’s shots, then that is a signal that just maybe your team has “fallen a bit off the pace.” ALSO, if a Players’ Assistant announces to your team that you are causing the team(s) behind you to bunch up, then please pick up your pace. DO NOT show disrespect or discourteousness to the Players’ Assistants. They are doing their job as it is defined by the Head Professional and his staff, and which is fully supported by me, and your Board of Governors.

Any and all complaints about anything in a Men’s Club Event should be directed to only the Blitz Director (Bobby Skinner,) or me, or to any Governor. We will do our very best to equitably resolve any complaint or criticism.

John Bepko

President