

*Notes from the*

# Etiquette Seminar on

# Golf and players with disabilities

Lone Tree Country Club, Littleton, Colorado  
August 13, 1995

One of the outcomes of the 4th National Forum on Accessible Golf held at Hilton Head in March of 1995, was the expression of the need to address issues related to assisting golfers with disabilities better play the game. Items related to this include pace of play, course etiquette, knowledge of rules and other general courtesies. Obviously, all of these items also apply to the non disabled golfer. **(Note: Proceedings from the National Forums' on Accessible golf are available from The National Center on Accessibility)**

In conjunction with the 3rd annual Electric Mobility- Association of Disabled American Golfers national tournament held in the Denver area, the National Center on Accessibility and the ADAG sponsored an etiquette seminar and instructional clinic. The instructional clinic was led by PGA and LPGA golf professionals and included basic instruction-demonstration for participants of the tournament. In addition the National Center on Accessibility conducted a pace of play research study during both days of the tournament, August 14-15, 1995. Information and results of this study may be requested from the National Center on Accessibility.

**THESE** notes focus solely on the content of the Etiquette Seminar held on Sunday, August 13 at the Lone Tree Country Club. The seminar focused on the singular issue of how to assist golfers and golf course operators in making the game more enjoyable for all. Participants included golfers with disabilities, golf course superintendents, architects, industry officials and others interested in the topic. (See participant list at end of these notes.)

The meeting was convened by Gary Robb, Director of the National Center on Accessibility who provided background information and overview of the seminar purpose. The format was essentially one of small group brainstorming and reporting of discussions.

The following is a synopsis of merged and synthesized comments from each of the groups. It is interesting to note that many of the same ideas and issues surfaced in each group.

Finally, this seminar was considered a beginning point to address issues and seek solutions that will positively impact the game of golf for both the golf course operator, and golfers with and without disabilities. It is the intent to further refine this information into a document(s) suitable for widespread dissemination so that the golfing experience for all might be improved.

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Etiquette Seminar Notes  
National Center on Accessibility/ADAG

The results of the work group discussions are divided into the following areas:

- Preparation for play:**
- Teeing Ground**
- Through the Green**
- Hazards**
- Greens**

## **Preparation for play**

Several suggestions emerged relative to preparation for play. Most suggestions apply both to the golfer with a disability as well as the golf course operator.

### ***Suggestions for Golfers with Disabilities:***

1. Call ahead. Make a tee time and if special accommodations are required, inform the golf course of the services that might be requested.
2. Get the names of the golf professional and green superintendent.
3. If applicable, ask specific questions relative to golf course policies. These may include:
  - >course policy on bringing private or modified golf cars (trail fees)
  - >course accessibility (e.g. bag drop; parking; pro shop)
  - >determine policies for coaches (blind golfers) or personal care attendants
  - >if this will be first time playing the course, check it out for accessibility prior to playing
  - >if applicable, you may wish to ask what information the golf course personnel would like to have about your assistive device(s)
4. Become familiar with the golf course and the layout.
5. Arrive early to insure plenty of time to check in, warm up and if necessary, answer any questions that golf course personnel may have.
6. If you are being paired with strangers, be certain to introduce yourself early and discuss playing conditions, etc.
7. Determine what the policies for golf car and/or assistive device access is that day. If available go to the practice range to warm up and test course conditions.

8. Know your limitations and determine the level of course difficulty you feel comfortable with (teeing area) well in advance of teeing off.

***Suggestions for golf course operators:***

1. Determine what, if any, information that you would like to have regarding special needs of a golfer with disabilities, so that the questions can be addressed appropriately. Any questions to golfers with disabilities should be asked in the context of making it easier for the golfer with a disability to be prepared to play the course upon their arrival.
2. Where possible and appropriate, disperse accessible parking to nearest points of access to the pro shop, club house and practice facilities.
3. Appropriate and accessible signage will save both time and inconvenience for you, your staff and the golfer with a disability.
4. As much as possible, determine what your course policies are relative to private golf car use, assistive devices, access points/areas on the course by cars and assistive devices, etc. These should be non-discriminatory and should be clearly indicated to all golfers.
5. Provide assistance in bag drop area if you know a golfer with limited mobility will be arriving at a predetermined time.

## **Teeing Ground**

***Suggestions for the golfer with a disability:***

1. Know ahead of time, where the most appropriate access is to the teeing ground of choice and which tees are accessible.
2. Know your playing capabilities and choose the tee most appropriate to your game if it is accessible.
3. Get to the designated teeing ground as quickly as possible. If it is on the forward tees, tee off first if it is safe and will maintain a good pace of play.
4. Insure that your playing partners know and are ready to assist, if requested, in getting to the teeing ground, teeing ball, placing and/or picking up tees, etc. (New players, may need reminding)
5. Always try to position yourself so that you are ready to play when it is your turn.
6. Pre-determine course policy regarding golf cars and assistive devices on teeing grounds. (There may be certain access routes that are preferred)
7. Always carry two balls to the teeing ground in case a provisional ball is appropriate or a ball is deemed out of play from the tee.
8. Play Ready golf (be ready to hit the ball when it is your turn)

***Suggestions for golf course operators:***

1. If possible, provide the golfer with disabilities with information on tees that are most accessible.
2. If possible at teeing grounds where barriers are present (curbs, ropes, etc.) leave openings for those golfers using assistive devices to independently access the teeing ground.

## **Through the Green**

***Suggestions for golfers with disabilities:***

1. Golfers with disabilities should always be certain of golf car policy and exceptions prior to teeing off.
2. Golfers should be familiar with access points to and from the fairways.
3. Determine areas that should be avoided such as sensitive natural areas or newly planted/seeded areas.
4. When golf cars are taken to various areas of the course because of access needs, the golfer should be sensitive to where car is parked in relationship to other golfers as well as to the proximity of their next play.
5. Good judgement should always be used. Golf cars and assistive devices can do damage. Sensitive areas should be avoided.
6. It is helpful to know where the accessible restrooms are, prior to the beginning of play.
7. Always be prepared to move as fast as your playing partners (if not faster)
8. Play Ready golf
9. Be sure to have right clubs with you when preparing to play the next shot.
10. Be prepared to move ball to maintain the pace of play of playing partners.

***Suggestions for golf course operators:***

1. Predetermine course policy on exceptions to be made for golfers with disabilities , e.g. car flagging, access areas, conditions under which golf cars are banned.
2. Attempt to eliminate as many barriers as possible, e.g. ropes, curbs, etc.
3. Mark access areas clearly and have a plan to inform both course personnel and other golfers that a specific designation is for golfers with disabilities and may not be available to all golfers.

## **HAZARDS/Bunkers**

***Suggestions for golfers with disabilities:***

1. Use discretion when ball comes to rest in a hazard. Often it is wiser to drop out of the hazard as allowed by the rules of golf, rather than risk injury or indignation.
2. Determine how you will treat hazards and/or bunkers prior to playing. Inform your playing partners of your intent.
3. Play Ready golf

## **Greens**

### ***Suggestions for Golfers with disabilities:***

1. Where possible, predetermine best and shortest access points to the greens surface.
2. Avoid turning on greens when using carts or assistive devices
3. Ask a playing companion to pick ball out of hole if necessary. Picking the ball out of the cup with the putter blade may damage the area around it.
4. If desired, suction cup devices that attach to the end of the putter are available for retrieving the ball from the cup.
5. Always carry divot or green repair tools
6. If necessary, request your playing partner(s) to repair ball marks and to mark your ball.
7. Be certain that you have done everything that you can to insure that your assistive device does not damage greens surfaces, e.g. properly inflated tires, etc.
8. Where possible, keep wheeled devices off intended putting line of other golfers.
9. Position your assistive device appropriately for exiting green at the shortest possible route.
10. Don't drive on green until your ready to putt
11. Move away from green quickly as possible and directly to the most accessible route.
12. Wear shoes (or have tires & devices) that will not damage greens
13. If you determine that your pace of play is holding up play, let group(s) behind you play through
14. Pick up ball when you reach your maximum stroke allowable for handicap stroke purposes.

## **SUMMARY**

A final discussion during the seminar focused on the fact that most of the above apply to ALL golfers. The discussion also centered on ways to disseminate information and to inform golfers (especially those new to the game) about proper etiquette. The following suggestions were made:

1. Develop instructional video(s) on etiquette and make them available to organizations promoting golf for persons with disabilities as well as to golf shops.
2. Encourage instructors of golfers with disabilities to include information on golf etiquette in their training programs.

3. Develop training and instructional materials that could be widely disseminated to golfers with disabilities and to golf course operators.
4. Publish information about etiquette in various magazines, journals and newsletters that are read by golfers with disabilities.
5. Include all of the above information in golf industry publications.

***For more information or to address your comments, contact Gary Robb, Director, National Center on Accessibility, v/tty - 800-424-1877 or Fax 317-349-1086***

ETIQUETTE AND GOLFERS WITH DISABILITIES SEMINAR  
and  
Instructional Clinic

Sunday, August 13, 1995  
Lone Tree Country Club, Littleton, Colorado  
Agenda Outline

8:00 a.m. Continental breakfast available in meeting room

(Times tentative)

9:00 a.m. Introductions and Seminar overview--Gary Robb, Director, National Center on Accessibility

- 10:30 a.m. Video tape on Golf Etiquette  
Small Group breakouts: Defining the issues  
Break (during break facilitators will merge the issues generated by each group)
- 10:45 a.m. Ranking of Issues  
Small Group breakouts: Potential Solutions
- 11:30 a.m. Recommendations for action:  
Instructional  
Materials Development  
Policies  
Other
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch Provided for morning Seminar Participants
- 1:30 p.m. Instructional Clinic begins
- 5:30 p.m. ADAG Tournament participant reception



**Participant List-Golf Etiquette Seminar  
Lone Tree Country Club  
Littleton Colorado  
August 13, 1995**

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