

2026 USGA Amateur Championships Pace of Play Policy

Maximum Allowable Time

Maximum allowable time is the maximum time that the Committee considers necessary for a group to complete its round. This is expressed in a per-hole and aggregate time format on the player scorecard in stroke play and by asking a referee in match play. The hole is completed when the last player in the group removes their ball from the hole.

- Players should play at a prompt pace throughout the round.
- In Stroke Play, players are encouraged to play "ready golf" in a safe and responsible way (Rule 6.4b).
- In Match Play, players may agree to play out of turn to save time (such an agreement applies only to the stroke played out of turn and not to the entire match).

"Out of Position"

A group is **out of position** when they reach a tee 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.

Warning / "On the Clock" / "Bad Time"

When the Committee determines that a group is out of position, the group may either receive a warning or be put immediately on the clock (that is, to be timed) and the players will be notified by a referee.

- When warned, the group is expected to regain position with the group ahead as soon as possible. If the group does not make up time or regain position, the group will be put on the clock and informed by a referee.
- While on the clock, any player in a group who incurs a bad time will be informed as soon as possible.
- While on the clock, the Committee may assess a bad time to a player who delays play between shots or holes.
- A referee will not inform a group when it has regained its position and is no longer on the clock. A player may inquire as to the status of the group at any time.
- If the group in question regains its proper position, any previous bad times will be carried forward for the remainder of that round.
- Regardless of position, if the Committee determines that a player(s) in the group is taking excessive time to play a stroke without a valid reason, delaying play of their own or any subsequent group, or the competition in general (which includes a stroke play playoff or extra holes in a match):
 - The group or individual player may be warned and/or placed on the clock by a referee at anytime.
 - The penalty for breach of Rule 5.6a (Unreasonable Delay of Play) may be applied.

Time Permitted to Play a Stroke

A player is considered to have incurred a bad time when the player exceeds 40 seconds to make a stroke.

- An extra 10 seconds (for a total of 50 seconds) will be permitted for the first player to play:
 - A stroke on a par-3
 - A second stroke on a par-4 or par-5
 - A third stroke on a par-5
 - A stroke around the putting green
 - A stroke on the putting green
- The timing of a player's stroke begins when it is the player's turn to play without interference or distraction. Time spent determining yardage and other conditions, such as wind, will count as time taken for the stroke.
 - **On the putting green**, the actions allowed under Rule 13.1 are not included in the timing of a player's stroke, provided the player is not unreasonably delaying play. However, time spent surveying the line of play from any angle will count as time taken for the stroke.

Penalties

The following is the penalty structure for a player who receives a bad time while on the clock (timed):

BAD TIME	STROKE PLAY	MATCH PLAY
1 st bad time	No penalty	No penalty
2 nd bad time	1 stroke penalty	Loss of hole
3 rd bad time	Additional 2 stroke penalty	Additional loss of hole
4 th bad time	Disqualification	Disqualification