

555 GOLF EDITORIALS

'PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE'

GOLF'S MOST DEBATABLE RULES

They do not all make practical, fair or common sense.

For every step golf takes to catch up with the times, there are still occasions when it can't shake its stodgy reputation. We remember the day not long ago, at a pricey resort, when we overheard a well-dressed teenager on the phone: "No, you have to pick me up. I can't play. I don't have a collared shirt!" These are the moments when, as a sport, we can't get out of our own way. Take the assortment of rules still found at courses around the country. Not rulebook rules, but "etiquette guidelines" that, depending on who you're talking to, range from sensible to reprehensible. Here we list 10 of the most debatable rules in golf, some of which you might agree with, plenty of others that might leave you shaking your head.

1) No cell phones on the course, even for texting. We get it. No one wants a phone ringing in their backswing, and for some, the whole point of a round of golf is to escape real world pressures for a few hours. The other side to consider is that 18 holes when you may occasionally have to check in with the office is far more preferable to an afternoon chained to your desk, wishing you were teeing it up.

2) No hats on backward. There was a time when the only people who wore their hats backwards were baseball catchers. Then again, there was also a time when golfers were wearing neckties and plus-fours. So unless you're ready to start dressing like Francis Ouimet, perhaps you should accept that style evolves.

3) No women before 10 a.m. on weekends. If you don't want to hear our thoughts on gender equality, then at least consider the more pragmatic perspective: the best way to get your wife off your back about playing too much golf is to get her hooked on the game as well. Last we checked, telling her when she can't play isn't the way to do it.

4) No collarless shirts. Perhaps you'll feel differently if I told you I paid \$125 for it. Meanwhile, how about banning collared shirts purchased before 1982?

5) No denim. Fair enough, jeans just don't look right on the golf course. And they certainly don't feel right, either. So if you want to try to make a full turn while carrying a ball, tees, divot tool and scorecard in your jeans pockets, more power to you.

6) Hats off indoors. We're mostly OK with this one, too, although we're willing to make exceptions for religious reasons and receding hairlines.

7) Jackets and ties in the dining room. We'll make you a deal. When the time arrives that we break through to win the Masters and earn an invitation to the Champions Dinner, we'll be more than happy to wear a jacket and tie in the dining room. Anywhere else, perhaps we can treat golf like it isn't a corporate board meeting.

8) Guests can't purchase in the pro shop; must go on members' account. What better way to jump start a sagging golf economy than by limiting where and how people spend their money?

9) No pull carts. Here's what we think: if it's good enough for St. Andrews, maybe it's good enough for us. Seriously, as retirees get more health conscious, is it good for the sport to tell them they can't walk? Are we doing that well?

10) No cargo shorts or denim pants. We were going to say, if it's good enough for Obama, it's good enough for us. Then came the midterm elections!

ALWAYS STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE

All this having been said, 'The Great Game Of Golf' has a history and established protocols and etiquette that are worthy of recognition and respect.

It is up to all of us to engender this tradition and excellence ... whether we agree with all of it or not!

Have FUN out there!

**“Welcome Aboard!”
“Enjoy The Ride!”**

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