

**Question:** What Are the PGA Tour Slow Play Rules and Penalties?

**Answer:** The basic guideline on pace of play in [PGA Tour](#) tournaments is the same thing as is dictated by good [golf etiquette](#) for the rest of us: Keep up with the group in front. If you are out playing with your friends on a busy day at the local course, that's your obligation: Keep up with the group in front of yours.

Basic golf etiquette guidelines say that if your group falls more than one hole behind the group in front, you need to let faster groups behind you [play through](#); or, if there is a [course marshal](#), you might even be asked to skip a hole to get back on a good pace.

Obviously, PGA Tour groups can't skip holes; and the practice of playing through doesn't exist in professional golf tournaments. So what does the PGA Tour say about groups in tournaments who fail to keep up with that one simple pace-of-play guideline?

PGA Tour slow play rules and penalties are based on what the tour calls "bad times." Let's say Group X has fallen off the pace and is out of position (meaning, too much space - usually a full hole - has opened between this group and the group ahead of it).

A rules official or Tour official will notify all players in the group that the group is being put "on the clock." Once a group is on the clock, PGA Tour officials begin timing each player. Once that timing of a group begins, each player has 40 seconds to play each stroke, except in the following cases when he has 60 seconds:

- He is the first of his group to play from the teeing ground of a par-3 hole;
- He is the first to play a second shot on a par-4 or par-5;
- He is the first to play a third shot on a par-5;
- He is the first player to play around the putting green;
- He is the first to play on the putting green.

A player who can't meet those requirements is informed that he has a "bad time." A bad time can, in theory, lead to penalty strokes or even disqualification from a PGA Tour event. The slow play penalty process goes like this:

- The player receives a warning for his first "bad time" of the round.
- If he records a second bad time in the same round, he gets a 1-stroke penalty and \$5,000 fine.
- If he records a third bad time in the same round, he gets a 2-stroke penalty and a \$10,000 fine.
- If he records a fourth bad time in the same round, he is disqualified.

We noted above that slow play penalties can, "in theory," lead to penalty strokes or DQ. We included "in theory" because, in practice, the PGA Tour almost never hands out penalty strokes for slow play. In fact, at the time this FAQ was written, it had been nearly 20 years since the last slow play penalty stroke was assessed on the PGA Tour. The most recent stroke penalty for slow play on the PGA Tour happened in 1995, and the recipient was Glen Day. (Since this FAQ was written, a 1-stroke penalty for slow was given to 14-year-old amateur Tianlang Guan at the 2013 Masters.)

"Bad times" accumulate throughout the season, and a player receiving multiple bad times during a year is fined. A second bad time results in a fine of \$5,000; for the third and each subsequent bad time, the fine is \$10,000.

Also, players who are put "on the clock" can also be fined if they are on the clock too often, even if they don't commit "bad times." Once a player is put on the clock for the 10th time in a season, he receives a \$20,000 fine, and each "on the clock" afterward results in an additional \$5,000 fine.