**THE MERE**

**GOLF MEMBERS HANDBOOK**

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**DEFINITIONS**

1. ***Club Year*** – 1st January to 31st December
2. ***Junior*** – any person under the age of 18 on the 1st January in any Club year
3. ***Senior***– any person man who is 55 or over or reaches the age of 55 within the Club year, or any lady who is 50 or over or reaches the age of 50 within the Club Year
4. ***Young Professional*** – any person above the age of 21, and below the age of 30 on 1st January in any club year
5. ***Member*** – a person having paid the appropriate subscription in respect of a Club year.
6. ***Proprietor*** – Mere Golf & Country Club Ltd and any Directors thereof
7. ***R&A rules*** – the rules laid down by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews.
8. ***Committee***– the respective Committees formed by the Gents or Ladies sections.

**WHO’S WHO AT THE MERE?**

**The Captain**

The Men’s Captain chairs the Men’s golf committee and leads the men’s section. He is selected by a meeting of Past Captains, having been recommended for selection by a sub-committee known as the Selection Committee. His office runs from one AGM to the next (usually mid-January).

**The Lady Captain**

The Ladies Captain chairs the Ladies golf committee and leads the ladies’ section. She is selected by a meeting of Past Lady Captains. Her office runs from one year to the next (usually mid-January).

**The Presidents**

Each of the Men’s and Ladies’ sections has a President who are selected in a similar process to the Captains. Their respective offices will normally run for one year as above but in some rare occasions the office may run a further one year.

**The Handicap Secretaries**

Each section has a Handicap Secretary. The Handicap Secretaries are responsible for maintaining a system and record of handicaps and for organising golf competitions with the assistance of the respective committees. The Handicap Secretaries are appointed by the Proprietor.

**Head of Golf Services**

The Proprietor shall designate a full-time member of staff as the Head of Golf Services who shall be responsible and have authority over all golf related matters at the Club.

**Course Manager**

The Proprietor shall designate a full-time member of staff as the Course Manager. The Course Manager shall head the team of greenkeepers and be responsible for the maintenance, development and presentation of the golf course. The Course Manager is NOT employed by the members and as such no member shall give instructions to him/her or any of the greenkeepers. *Any member wishing to make comment or recommendations in relation to the course shall be required to approach one of the Captains or other committee members.*

**DRESS CODE**

The following dress code applies to golfers **on** the course;

* **Men**
	+ Commercially-available golf-wear is acceptable.
	+ Shirts must be tucked-in.
	+ Shorts, if worn, must be tailored and above the knee. They should be accompanied by knee-length socks of any colour, or white socks which **must** be visible above the shoe line. Trainer liners are not permitted.
	+ Golf shoes must be worn (soft-spikes or rubber-soled only)
* **Ladies**
	+ Commercially-available golf-wear is acceptable.
	+ Golf shoes must be worn (soft-spikes or rubber-soled only)
* The following attire must **not** be worn on the golf course:
	+ Training shoes.
	+ Denim jeans or shorts.
	+ Cargo trousers or shorts.
	+ Non-golf sports shirts.

In the Club Lounge and other internal parts of the property: -

* Smart casual or golfing attire is required at all times. Whilst golf shoes may be worn, members are requested to ensure they are cleaned upon leaving the course at the designated shoe cleaning point.

**GOLF ETIQUETTE, USE OF THE COURSE AND THE RULES OF GOLF**

### Rules of Golf

All persons using the golf course shall observe the Rules of Golf as determined by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club (“the R&A Rules”), local rules in operation from time to time and the further rules contained here.

### Safety on the Course

Prior to playing a stroke or making a practice swing, please ensure that no-one is standing close by or in a position to be hit by the club or ball.

Do not play until the players in front are out of range.

Shout ‘fore’ immediately if there may be the danger of a ball hitting someone.

Keep clear of mowers and other green-keeping machinery. Remember that machine operators wearing safety equipment may not be aware of your presence.

Do not play to an area where greens staff are working until they indicate that it is safe to do so. Greens staff operating tractors and mowers wearing ear-protection will not hear distant shouts.

### Severe Weather Conditions

In the event of dangerous weather conditions, a horn may be sounded to suspend play. Players should stop playing immediately and take precautions. Only mark your ball’s position if it is safe to do so, otherwise leave the ball as it lies. You should only resume play when authority is given, or when you hear a further blast on the horn.

Horn signals will be given as follows:

* Suspension of play for a dangerous situation (e.g. lightning) – One long blast of the horn
* Suspension of play for a non-dangerous situation (e.g. extensive casual water, high winds, poor visibility, etc.) – Three short blasts of the horn
* Resumption of play – Two short blasts of the horn

In the absence of a horn suspending play, it is the player’s responsibility to discontinue play under Rule 5.7 of the R&A Rules if they believe there is a danger of lightning.

In Club competitions, the decision to suspend or abandon play, for whatever reason, will be taken by the Committee. Likewise, the Committee will also make any subsequent decision to resume play, or not, based on the prevailing weather conditions and any available weather forecast.

Any decision to close the course can only be made by the Proprietor. All players shall be required to leave the course and there shall be no further play when the course is closed.

### Courtesy to Other Players

The overriding principle is that consideration should be shown to others on the golf course at all times.

Avoid causing disturbance or distraction to other players in any group by talking or moving when they are making a stroke.

### Lost Ball

If a ball is lost, three minutes is the maximum time allowed to complete the search. If players are waiting behind, they must be waved through before the search commences rather than keeping them waiting during the search. Having waved players through, and at all other times, play must not proceed until the group ahead are out of range.

### Speed of play

Having played to the green, bags and trollies should be left at the exit from the green nearest the next tee. Having holed out, the green and its vicinity should be cleared immediately. If a group has lost one full hole on the group in front and the group behind are waiting to play, they must be waved through. Always adjust the pace of play to keep up with the group in front, rather than keeping just in front of the group behind.

The Mere adopts a “ready golf” principle for all golf other than matchplay competition, allowing golfers to play when ready, rather than on a distance from hole basis.

### Care of the Course

Divots: replace and firmly tramp down divots taken at any place on the course.

Pitch marks: repair your own groups’ pitch marks on greens and fringes, plus any others you find.

Bunkers: use the rake provided to repair any damage and footprints made by yourself or others. Do not climb up the face of a bunker, including those with grass faces: always enter and leave the bunker at the lowest point to avoid accidental damage to bunker edges or faces.

Bunker rakes: should be in the centre of the bunker with the handle facing the direction of play.

Trollies: never take any trolley on a tee, between a green and greenside bunker or beyond signs directing trolleys elsewhere.

Buggies: never drive a buggy within 15 yards of any green.

Roped-off areas: be aware that these are for the protection of the course or for your safety. Never take a trolley or buggy through a roped-off area. Please replace ropes and stakes if they need to be removed while you play a shot.

### 11th Green Bar

During Club competitions, golfers may stop for refreshments. However, when the group behind reaches the 11th green, golfers must be ready to leave the bar and shall make their way to the 12th tee so as to avoid any delay in play. Players leaving the bar shall generally proceed around the back of the 11th green unless the 11th fairway is clear and it is safe to walk in front of the 11th green.

**Practice on the golf course**

Any member using the course for practice shall not use more than two balls during play. Multiple practice shots (i.e. more than two shots from the same spot) on the golf course are not permitted at any time.

Members shall display their golf bag tag at all times when on the course.

All play will commence from the 1st tee, using the tees of the day, unless prior authorisation has been given from a member of the Proprietor’s staff. Play shall be individual, as a 2-ball, as a 3-ball or as a 4-ball, subject to the restrictions in this Handbook. Under no circumstances may more than four persons play in a group.

Members shall observe all rules, including local rules, when using the course and shall observe and obey the instructions of the Proprietor’s staff.

Members shall not be entitled to use the course under any circumstances when it has been designated closed by the Proprietor.

**HANDICAPS**

The Proprietor shall operate a system to provide for the maintenance of a record of Member’s handicaps in accordance with CONGU Unified Handicapping System. The system shall be maintained by the Handicap Secretaries and any queries should be directed to them.

Each member is responsible for completing and submitting to the Club a record of each round played as set out in CONGU regulations.

Members who maintain an “AWAY” handicap at The Mere are responsible for ensuring that their handicap is correct upon entering each score at The Mere.

A record of all member handicaps will be retained at the Premises and shall also be available on the Howdidido website.

**TEE TIMES**

The first tee shall be reserved for members (or members with their guests) at the following times each week:-

* Wednesday – all day from first available tee time to last (no guests shall be allowed to play from the first tee between 2pm and 5pm during the summer months (whist “Wednesday Medal” competitions are in operation). All play from the first tee between 2pm and 5pm shall be in 3-balls or fewer numbers.
* Friday - from 9.00am to 11.00am (for the Ladies weekly competition – members only)
* Friday - from 11am until 2pm
* Saturday – from start to 2pm (for the Gents weekly competition – members only)
* Sunday – from start to 11.30am

Members shall be entitled to reserve tee times with the Golf Shop in person or via telephone or online up to three weeks before the desired time. Members **must** reserve a tee time in advance of using the course and shall report to the Golf Shop in advance of commencement of play. If a member is unable to honour a reserved tee time, they are required to contact the Golf Shop as soon as practicable.

The Proprietor reserves the right to temporarily alter the above reserved tee times. Where such occurs, the Proprietor shall make every effort to give advance notification and shall liaise with the respective committees.

**VISITORS**

A Member shall be allowed to introduce a maximum of seven guests onto the golf course at any one time subject to the payment of the appropriate guest fee.

A Members’ guest shall be entitled to use the golf course a maximum of seven times in any Club Year;, four times subject to the payment of the appropriate member guest fee, and three times subject to the full guest fee. In calculating the seven times, the following shall be EXCLUDED - formal invitation day competitions, pre-booked golf events and other Club competitions where guests are eligible to play.

**COMPETITIONS**

The Committees, in consultation with the Proprietor, shall arrange competitions for members throughout the year. Members shall only be eligible to play in where they meet the criteria set for each competition. All competitions are subject to the course being fit for play.

**SATURDAY (GENTLEMEN from start until 1.30pm)**

Only 7-day gentlemen members shall be eligible to play, unless competition rules provide otherwise.

**WEDNESDAY**

On certain Wednesdays. Only gentlemen members shall be eligible to play, unless competition rules provide otherwise.

Competition play, with at least one fellow-competitor or marker (who must hold an active adult handicap, but is not required to be a Mere Golf Club Member), is allowed in any available tee time during the day provided that the round can be completed and cards submitted by 8:45pm.

**FRIDAY (LADIES from 9am to 11am)**

Only lady members (7-day or 6-day categories) shall be eligible to play in Friday competitions, unless competition rules provide otherwise.

**SUNDAY**

On certain Sundays, the Committees and Proprietor shall organise “mixed competitions”, open to all golf members.

The competition calendar shall be published at the start of each calendar year, but remains subject to change by the Proprietor.

Any competition entrance fees shall be set, in conjunction with the Committees and retained by the Proprietor. The costs of competition prizes shall be met by the Proprietor.

Entry to competitions shall be by way of each member entering their name on the Entry Sheet or the Proprietors booking system for each competition as prepared by the Proprietor. Once a member has entered a competition in this way they are required to be ready to play from the tee no later than 5 minutes before the designated time. Where a member, for whatever reason, is unable to honour a competition tee time they shall be responsible for advising their playing partners and the Golf Shop as soon as practicable.

In order for a member to be recorded in the placings of any competition his or her card must be signed by an adult (i.e. not by a junior)

Note that players with a non-competition handicap, are welcome to play in Major Competitions, Trophies and Board Competitions, but cannot be named as the winner in the event of returning the best score.

The maximum Gents handicap for Major Competitions, Trophies and Board Competitions is set at 35. Anyone with an active competition handicap of more than this, cannot play in the competition.

The maximum Ladies handicap for Major Competitions, Trophies and Board Competitions is set at 45. Anyone with an active competition handicap of more than this, cannot play in the Major competition, but is welcome to play in the 9-hole stableford competition (if applicable).