

# How Not to Mulligan Your Business Golf Game

By June Campbell

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Golf season has arrived in the Northern Hemisphere, but it is always golf season somewhere in the world. Those who are savvy in business golf etiquette will finesse as many deals on the links as in the boardroom.

Spending four hours on a course with a potential client or business affiliate offers you a golden opportunity to build either bridges or chasms. Many believe that how a person conducts himself or herself on the golf course reflects how they perform in business situations. A business golfing date is a time to put your best golfing shoe forward.

According to biz etiquette experts, following these guidelines will help you build the bridge and land that deal.

1. First, if you are likely to lose your cool when your game is bad, stay off the "business" green altogether. If your golfing history is one of losing emotional control and acting badly, do not, repeat, do not, play business golf. You will not make a good business impression.
2. Be sure you know the rules of good golf etiquette in general. Your host will not be impressed if you make a bad impression at his/her country club or offend golfing buddies.
3. No cheating in your scorekeeping or in any other way. This is not the way to build trust.
4. When unsure about a rule, discuss it with your golf opponent. Abide by whatever is decided. Demonstrate your trustworthiness and show that you are a person who keeps your word.
5. Spend your time on the links building relationships. Avoid talking deals until the 19th hole. Experts advise that business talk during the game should be of a casual nature.

Business talk should not occur before the 5th hole or after the 15th hole.

6. No cell phones or beepers on the course.

7. Dress appropriately in attire that will take you from the links to the clubhouse. Denims, sleeveless shirts and short shorts are not acceptable.

8. In business golf, invite your guest to play first at the first hole. At other holes, the person with the lowest hole score in the preceding round tees first.

9. If invited to play business golf, offer to pay green fees, cart rental, etc. If you have invited someone to play, be prepared to cover the costs.

10. Drinking alcohol is not your best choice when playing business golf. If you drink at all, drink only if the host offers, and have no more than two.

11. Prepare a handicap card and be honest about your handicap.

12. Play the best game you can. Playing badly to "let the other person win" can be perceived as insulting and will damage your credibility.

13. If your opponent prefers to walk rather than use a cart, you will walk also. When using a cart, join your opponent on the green when he gets out to play or to look for a ball.

14. If playing in Asia, be prepared to bet. In other countries, abide by local customs. If wagering, keep the bets at a friendly level.

15. Arrive early to get organized and to practice before tee time.

16. Avoid whining, swearing and making excuses.

17. Avoid talking or otherwise making noise while other golfers are playing.

18. Avoid coaching or giving unsolicited advice to your opponent.

19. Plan ahead and identify business goals for the day. If you are the host, be sure to invite the right people who can make decisions. Business golf blends business and golf. Having

a goal for the day is as important as during any other business meeting.

Ready to tee up? Fore!

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