Tackling FRUSTRATION

Slow play, as at many other clubs, has been a contentious issue for Lyneham Golf Club in Oxfordshire since the course initially opened a little over two years ago. Now, at the approach of the first anniversary of the completion of the clubhouse and all 18 holes, positive steps are being taken to eliminate the problem for the benefit of players and the greenkeeping staff alike.

"There is little doubt that slow play is one of the greatest single frustrations on most courses in the country," commented general manager, Neil Biggs. "We appreciate that it is not unique to Lyneham but, being a new club, we are determined to nip the problem in the bud before members and visitors become set in their ways."

The result will, he hopes, improve not just the pleasure of playing a round at this scenic course, but enable the green staff to carry out their work with fewer hold-ups or interruptions.

Lyneham Golf Club is situated in the gently rolling Evenlode Valley, midway between Burford and Chipping Norton. Created out of former farmland, it covers 144 acres, measuring 6,808 yards with a par of 72. The club is privately owned by a founding board of directors, with both membership and 'pay and play' facilities open to the general public. In less than a year, membership has grown to almost 700, making the course very busy at weekends, public holidays and during fine weather.

"The problem of slow play was first drawn to the attention of members in a newsletter more than 12 months ago," explained Mr Biggs. "However, the ever increasing demand for golf brought matters to a head at the end of last year. Quite simply, we had to take urgent steps to speed up throughput which, at certain times, was painfully slow."

The club insists that no ball is played to a green while the flag is out. However, this has not always prevented frustrated players firing a 'warning shot' at a greenkeeper or slow-moving match ahead. The best ideas will be published. 

The editor will be pleased to hear from readers with views - different, unique or downright controversial - on ways of speeding up play. The best ideas will be published.