



Quick Guide To Golf Game Formats

For social days of any description, it's usually best to choose a team format, and spread your non-golfers around so you can pair them up with some better players.

This keeps the day fun for everyone and gets your field in before dark!

Usually the golf course will prefer you play in groups of four, so you'll either have teams of four playing alone, or two teams of two playing together.

Two player format means both teams can check the others score, (which keeps your serious golfers happy) but the four player format is generally easier and more fun, especially if you have a large number of non-golfers.

Eitehr way, here's a list of golf game formats for groups of any size!

Recommended Outing Game Formats

4-Ball Ambrose

Players play in groups of three or four. All drive and then select the best shot and mark it. Everyone then hits the next shot from this point. Repeat procedure with each shot until you hole out.

This event is usually played off handicap: add all the teams member's handicaps together and divide by eight. Deduct the handicap from the final total.

If you have players with no handicap, nominate a handicapper and assign a handicap to each player based on their previous golfing experience, usually a maximum of 27 for men, and a maximum of 36 for women, reduced to about 18 and 27 respectively if they've played a bit of golf before.

4 Ball Scamble

As above, except... after the tee shot, the player who's shot is selected does not play the next shot. So everyone plays from the tee, but only three people play each shot after that until the ball is holed. Next tee you go back to all four hitting. This format is a little more challenging for the serious golfers and can get the field around a little faster if you've got a lot of players.

Strings

Instead of handicap strokes, each player is allocated one foot of string for every shot of his/her handicap. Non-golfers are assigned a maximum handicap. You can play this as an individual game or in teams of two or four.

Each player can then move the ball before any shot, by measuring the distance moved and cutting that amount from their length of string. You can use the string to remove your ball from hazards, get it out of a difficult lie or to hole out. If you like you can offer the option to gain one foot of string for each birdie scored. Remember to take your scissors!

Pink Ball

In teams of three or four, each player plays their own ball and one is selected to play the pink ball. The pink ball score plus the best of the other three counted for each hole. The lowest aggregate score and the lowest pink score take the money. Mind you if you lose the pink ball, you're out!

Bloodsome Scramble

As per an ambrose except the worst shot is selected. Beware, as everyone has to hole out for a hole to be completed! Best played over nine holes or you'll never finish in daylight.

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## 4 Player Golf Formats

### Foursomes

Two players form a team and hit alternate shots at each hole until they hole out. One player tees off at the even holes and one on the odd holes. Handicap allowance is half of the combined total of both players. Played to strict rules of matchplay golf!

### **Greensomes**

Matchplay game for teams of two where both partners drive and they choose the best drive and then play alternate shots for the rest of hole as in foursomes. For handicap matchplay, take the combined handicaps of both teams and the lower pair gives seven-eighths of the difference.

### **Gruesomes**

As above, but after both players have driven, your opponents choose which ball you should play.

### **Shambles**

As per greensomes, but after both players have driven, you choose the best tee shot and then both players play from that spot with their own ball and complete the hole. Scoring can be done any number of ways, such as using the lowest score per hole or the combined score per hole.

### **Canadian Foursomes/Pinehurst Foursomes**

Same format as greensomes, but you choose which ball to play after you and your partner have both played your second shots.

### **American Foursomes**

Another variation on greensomes, where both players drive and then play their partners shots before deciding which ball to play.

### **St Andrews Foursomes**

Similar to an ordinary greensome, except that one player plays all the second shots on the odd numbered holes and the partner plays the second shots on the even numbers holes. They still both drive and elect the better drive for the appropriate player to play.

### **Scotch Foursomes**

Similar to ordinary foursomes except the alternate shot is carried on from hole to hole. That means if Partner A holes out on the first green then Partner B will drive off on the second and so on throughout the round. Watch out for the occasional tactical miss on the green to ensure that the stronger driver tees off on the next tee...

### **Fourball-Betterball (4BBB)**

Teams of two play their own ball and count the 'better ball' or score on each hole. Played in matchplay, handicaps are three-quarters of the difference from the lowest handicapper.

### **Lagging**

After everyone gets on the green and regardless of the number of strokes, the player closest to the hole gets 3 points, the next player closest to the hole gets 2 points, the next player closest to the hole gets 1 point and the player farthest from the hole gets 0 points. Total the points for all eighteen holes and pay the winner.

### **Fourball-Aggregate**

Teams of two play their own ball and take the combined score for the team. Handicap is full difference from the lowest handicap player and then you add the nett scores for each player together to get the team score.

### **Better-Aggregate**

A combination of Betterball and Aggregate (funnily enough). On each hole a point is awarded for the betterball and one awarded for the combined. Good game for mixed handicap groupings and should be played off full-difference.

### **Four-Ball Multiplier**

Both players' stableford score for each hole are multiplied together, so two net pars would give  $2 \times 2 = 4$ . Two net birdies would give  $3 \times 3 = 9$ . But a net eagle and a wiped hole would give  $4 \times 0 = 0$ !

### **Daytona**

If you like risky games, you'll love this. Each team of two add their scores together, so if they both had fours the score is 44. If the scores were different then the scoring depends on how you fared to par. If one of you got a par or better you would take the lower score first. For example a 4 and 6 on a par 5 scores 46. If you are both above par, say on a par three, then you take the higher score first giving 64. The lower total takes the money, but be prepared for some big swings.

### **Bisque**

Players can nominate to take their handicap strokes at any time. Strokes must be nominated before playing the hole. Can be used to liven up matchplay, strokeplay or stableford events.

### **Bingo, Bango, Bunco**

Also known as Bingo, Bango, Bongo. A great format when the company is of mixed ability because final scores don't count. Instead points are awarded for firsts: first player to reach the green, player closest to the hole, first player to putt out - and any others you'd like to include. Great fun and a brilliant way of including everyone in the day.

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3 Player Golf Formats

Skins

Each hole is worth one 'skin' and whoever wins the hole gets the skin. If no-one wins the hole outright then the 'skin' is carried over so the next hole is worth 2 skins, and so on until someone sinks that pressure putt. Play off scratch or handicap as per singles matchplay.

Split Sixes

There a six point up for grabs at each hole. If someone wins it outright then they get 4 points. The second best score gets 2 points and the third zero. If one person won the hole and the other two halved then it would be 4-1-1. Two players halving and beating the third 3-3-0. You get the picture. You don't need a maths degree and can be tactical near the end. Use full handicap allowance.

Stableford

Points are awarded for your score on each hole on either a nett or handicap basis. 1 point for a bogey, 2 for a par, 3 for a birdie, 4 for an eagle and 5 if you bag an albatross (fat chance). Anything worse than a bogey, pick up and stop wasting everyone else's time.

Murphys

Modified Stableford played in exactly the same way except the points are different: -3 for bogey or worse, -1 for bogey, zero for par, +2 for birdie, +5 for eagle, +8 for albatross.

Chairman

The player with the lowest net score on each hole becomes the Chairman on the following hole. The Chairman can win the hole if he/she again has the lowest net score. The winner is the person who wins the most holes. If two players tie then the current Chairman continues for the next hole.

Stringball

Instead of handicap strokes, each player is allocated one foot of string for every shot of his/her handicap. Each player can move the ball by measuring the distance moved and cutting that amount from the ball. You can use the string to remove your ball from hazards, get it out of a difficult lie or to hole out. If you like you can offer the option to gain one foot of string for each birdie scored. Remember to take your scissors!

Ghost

This is a game of Fourball Better Ball matchplay (see below), but with 3 real players and one imaginary player called the Ghost. One player elects to play with the Ghost who always pars every hole. The Ghost plays off scratch and gives shots to every other player in the group as per normal. The game is usually best when the highest handicapper plays with the Ghost.

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## **2 Player Golf Formats**

### **Matchplay**

The classic form of golf played off scratch or full handicap difference. This is played hole-by-hole, with the lowest nett score winning the hole. The winner is decided by the number of holes won rather than the total of shots taken. The match over when the player who's behind can no longer win.

### **Skins**

Each hole is worth one 'skin' and whoever wins the hole gets the skin. If no-one wins the hole outright then the 'skin' is carried over so the next hole is worth 2 skins, and so on until someone sinks that pressure putt. Play off scratch or handicap as per singles matchplay.

### **Stableford**

Points are awarded for your score on each hole on either a nett or handicap basis. 1 point for a bogey, 2 for a par, 3 for a birdie, 4 for an eagle and 5 if you bag an albatross (fat chance). Anything worse than a bogey, pick up and stop wasting everyone else's time.

### **Strings**

Instead of handicap strokes, each player is allocated one foot of string for every shot of his/her handicap. Each player can move the ball by measuring the distance moved and cutting that amount from the string. You can use the string to remove your ball from hazards, get it out of a difficult lie or to hole out. If you like you can offer the option to gain one foot of string for each birdie scored. Remember to take your scissors.

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No matter which format you choose always treat other players with respect & courtesy, look after the course and equipment and enjoy your day.

If you have beginners with you, explain some basic golf etiquette before you start: fill your divots, repair your pitch marks, keep up with the group in front, keep buggies and carts off the tees and greens.