



Golf Game Variations

Getting bored? Try some Variations of your Game. Here's a list of some commonly played variations of the usual game of golf.

Courtesy of www.LearnAboutGolf.com

Single Stroke

Single Stroke or Medal play is the simplest of all variations. The game requires all strokes to be counted and players are unable to pick up the ball without penalty. The score for the 18 holes is tallied and the handicap is deducted from that total. The lowest score wins, both for gross and net.

Four-Ball Best-Ball Stroke

Played the same as the single version but this time you have a partner. The best net score on each hole is used and only the gross and the best net need to be scored on each hole.

Once a player cannot beat his partner's net score, then the ball should be picked up. If both players record the same net score, then the player who first holed-out is marked on the card as scoring.

Both player's names and handicaps must be on the card. The card needs only to be signed by one marker and one player from each pair. The lowest point score wins.

Single Stableford

Each player scores stableford points on a hole based on their handicap and the stroke index for the hole. During the round, each player and marker has to calculate the points allocated to each score on a hole based on the stroke index. A player on a handicap of 12 receives a shot on the 12 hardest holes, while a player on a 27 handicap receives 2 shots on 9 holes and 1 shot on 9 holes, based on the course index:

SCORE	Points	Points	Points	Points
	with no shots	with one shot	with two shots	with three shots
3 under par	5	6	7	8
2 under par	4	5	6	7
1 under par	3	4	5	7
PAR	2	3	4	5
1 over par	1	2	3	4
2 over par	-	1	2	3
3 over par	-	-	1	2
4 over par	-	-	-	1
> 4 over par	-	-	-	-

You mark both the stroke score and stableford points on the card, and the highest point score wins. Only the stableford points are tallied.

Four-Ball Best-Ball Stableford

The team version of a single stableford. The scoring is the same as the single event but only one player can score for each team on a hole. The score is the best result in the team. When the two partners score the same result then the score is marked for the player who holes out first. If a player cannot beat the partner's score the ball is picked up to speed up play.

The stableford points only are tallied and the highest score wins. Only one player and one marker from each team need sign the card.

Four-Ball Aggregate Stableford

A team version of single stableford where all scores count on every hole. Each player must record a score on each hole and the scores of both players are added together for the total points each hole. The result for the round is then calculated and recording by adding the total point scores for each hole. The points scoring system is the same for a single stableford.

The highest point score wins the competition.

Single Versus Par (VSS)

Scores are recorded only as plus (+), Minus (-) or halved (0). The easiest way to understand it is to compare it with stableford scoring.

STABLEFORD POINTS VERSUS PAR RESULT

3 points or greater	Plus (+)
2 points	0
Less than 2 points	Minus(-)

The scores are recorded by marking down the player's stroke score with the appropriate symbol (+/-/0). If a player is unable to score a Plus (+) or Half (0) then the player should pick up and mark the hole as Minus (-). The final score is calculated by comparing the pluses and minuses as they negate each other. Thus a player with 6 pluses and 3 minuses would score 3 for the round.

The highest score wins the competition.

Four-Ball Best-Ball versus Par

Played under the same rules as the single version but this team game allows both partners to contribute according to their handicaps and score on a hole.

Only the best result on each hole is counted and if the two players have the same result only the score of the player who holes out first needs to be recorded.

The highest score wins the competition.

Ambrose

Ambrose is played in teams of two, three or four. The team selects a captain on the tee (usually the lowest marker) and they decide on the order of play. Every subsequent shot must be played in the same order. The players then play a shot from the tee and proceed to their ball. The captain then decides on the best positioned ball and the other players retrieve their balls.

The player whose ball was chosen has the first shot and then each remaining player drops their ball within one club length of the spot, but no nearer the hole, and plays their next shot in the order originally decided by the captain. This procedure continues irrespective of whether the ball is on the fairway, in the rough or in a hazard, until the play reaches the green.

On the green, the best position is again decided upon and marked. Each player places their ball within a club length of this spot and has one putt in turn. They must not putt out, but each ball position must again be marked and the procedure repeated until a ball is holed, or a score cannot be bettered.

The card is marked as for a single stroke round and the lowest score wins the competition. It is important to note that every player must have their handicap marked on the card. Only one score is kept for the entire team, regardless of the number of members. Handicaps are calculated by adding those of all players and dividing the total by: 4 in a two-ball event, 6 in a three-ball event and 8 in a four-ball event. The net score is calculated by subtracting the exact resulting handicap so all those fractions count.

Foursomes

This is a team game played in pairs with only one ball in play. Players alternate between shots after teeing off. The tee shots are also taken alternately so that one player tees off on all the even numbered holes and the other player tees off on all the odd numbered holes.

In mixed competitions ladies tee off from their own tees. It is played and recorded as if a single stroke event. The handicaps of both players are added and half the total is the team handicap for the day. The order of play is not changed if a player incurs a penalty.

Canadian Foursomes

Played on half combined handicaps. The players both tee off every hole and then select the best positioned ball to play alternately from there. Rules are the same as for foursomes.

American Foursomes

Similar to the Canadian foursomes on half combined handicap. After the tee shot, players play their partner's ball, and then select one ball to play alternately until holed.

Chapman Foursomes

Similar to American Foursomes but the second shots on each hole are played with their own ball and then the selection made. Again, half combined handicaps are used.

Matchplay

Holes are either won, halved or lost, based on the net score of each hole. The handicap is applied using the matchplay index on the scorecard. The two competitor's handicaps are compared and the difference e.g. $14 - 6 = 8$, is the number of strokes given away. The number of holes where one stroke is allocated is then decided, according to the match index.

When a player is ahead on wins more than there are holes left to play, that player is declared the winner. It's important to remember in matchplay that the player furthest from the hole always plays first. This is especially true on the putting green. You must not putt out if your opponent's ball is still "live" and furthest away from the cup.

You may pick your ball up if your opponent is heard to "give you the putt". The scorecard is generally not used.

Four-Ball Handicap Matchplay

The rules are the same as with single matchplay, but the handicap differences are based on the lowest handicapped player in the two pairs.

The lowest marker goes back to scratch. Then the other players have their handicaps lowered by subtracting the handicap of the low marker. For example, four players with the following handicaps would be treated like this.

A: 15 handicap

B: 13 handicap

C: 3 handicap

D: 22 handicap

C is the low marker and would have a new handicap of Zero.

The other new matchplay handicaps would then be:

A: $15 - 3 = 12$

B: $13 - 3 = 10$

D: $22 - 3 = 19$

The side which wins a hole is then the side with the best nett score on a hole after comparing the adjusted matchplay handicaps to the matchplay index on the holes (see Matchplay)

Flag Competitions

A player or side is allocated a set number of shots based on the total of their handicap and par for the course. For example, a player on a handicap of 14 would have 85 shots if the par for the course is 71.

The object of the game is to play every shot until you run out of shots. The winner is the player who gets the furthest around the course or furthest past the first tee if they have shots left after 18 holes. A flag is generally used as a marker to designate the finishing point.

Bisque Bogey

In this game, the competitor is allowed to choose on the tee before the start of each hole whether or not they will allocate any shots to the hole. The competitor must mark on the card how many shots are to be used before starting the hole. Once the handicap is used up, no more shots can be allocated. Scoring is based on Single Versus Par.