

Golf Games

While many may assume the game of golf is slow and dragged out, it is important to note that the various types of golf games available to you can offer a fun factor. Golf does not have to be a slow and monotonous affair, as so many young golfers are now finding out. There are several options to choose from when it comes to playing golf. Knowing what games you enjoy best will be a matter of trial and error with golf partners and friends alike.

There are basically 12 different games that a casual golfer can play with a partner or friends on the golf course. While not all of these 12 are popular, there are some that really stand out as common favorites.

Stroke play and match play

For the most part, all golf games can be categorized as either stroke play or match play. Stroke play is the most popular method of scoring in golf and it is the type of scoring most frequently used by professional golfers from around the world. In stroke play, golfers play a predetermined number of holes and keep a running stroke tally for each player throughout the match. After the last hole, the player with the lowest overall stroke count is the winner.

In match play, running tallies of strokes are not kept. Instead, two or more players or teams of players face off in an attempt to win each individual hole. With individual players, the winner of a given hole is the player with the lowest score for that hole. When playing in teams, all golfers play the hole as individuals and the single golfer with the lowest score for that hole wins the hole for his or her team. Each hole is worth one point, and the player or team with the most points after the predetermined number of holes are played is the winner.

Because no player or team can win more than one point per hole in match play, these games can sometimes be decided before the predetermined number of holes is played. If one player or team trails the other by more points than there are holes left to play, the game can officially be called for the leading team. However, casual golfing partners often opt to play out the rest of the course anyway for fun and practice.

Common alternate games

The play and scoring methods described above are the most traditional versions of stroke and match play, but there are dozens of modified versions played by golfers of all skill levels. The following list includes a few of the most popular variations.

Skins

A skins game is a variation on match play and is a popular game choice when cash is being wagered. Every hole in a skins game is associated with a specific and predetermined point value or monetary value. After all of the golfers complete the first hole, the points or dollars designated for that hole are immediately awarded to the player with the lowest score for that

hole. If two or more players tie for the lowest score in a single hole, however, the points or cash for that hole are rolled into the points or cash for the next hole.

This last element of the game is what can make it very exciting, particularly when the game is played among fairly evenly-matched players. When several consecutive holes end in ties for the lead, the point or dollar values for the later holes can grow to become exceedingly large.

If the last hole of a skins game ends with a tie for the lead, all of the players play a playoff of one additional hole. If a single player wins that hole, that player wins the final skin and all points or cash that has been added to it. If the playoff hole ends in a tie for the lead, only those who tie for first can proceed to subsequent playoff holes. Play continues until a single player wins the hole outright.

Foursomes

As the name suggests, a foursome requires exactly four players and is a popular game for couples to share. In a foursome, the players square off into two teams consisting of two players each. But unlike typical match play games involving two teams of two, each team plays only one ball. If Player A on Team A tees off, Player B on Team A will take the second shot onto the green and Player A of Team A will resume control for the putting. Team members alternate the lead on each hole.

Foursomes are typically played as match play games, but they can just as easily be played as stroke play.

Greensomes

A greensome is a slight variation on the foursome. In a greensome, both players on a single team will tee off for the hole. The ball with less favorable placement is picked up while the ball with better placement is played in alternating turns for the remainder of the hole.

Scrambles

Scrambles are most frequently employed in golf tournaments where the focus is more on fun and perhaps raising charity funds than on cutthroat competition. Scrambles are used in team play, most frequently when teams consist of four players.

In a four player team scramble, all four teammates drive from the same starting tee. The best shot of the four is selected, and all four players take their second shot from that point. The best placement of all these shots is determined, and so on, so that all four teammates take every shot from the best possible placement managed by the team. Each team earns one final score, calculated in the stroke play method, and competes against all other four player teams playing in the same tournament.