

ALTERNATIVE GOLF FORMATS

Definition: "1-2-3 Best Ball" is a competition format for 4-person teams. Each player on the team plays his own ball throughout the round. On each hole, a predetermined number of the lower scores is used.

On the first hole, the lowest score among the four players counts as the team score. On the second hole, the two lowest scores become the team score. On the third hole, the three lowest scores become the team score. On the fourth hole, it's back to the one lowest score, and so on throughout the round.

1-2-3 Best Ball is a good way to keep all the players involved in the fate of their team.

Definition: "2-2-2" is just another name for the \$2 Nassau. A \$2 Nassau consists of three bets, each worth \$2 - the front nine, the back nine and the full 18 hole score.

Also Known As: \$2 Nassau, Best Nines

Definition: 2-Man No Scotch golf tournament format, team members tee off, then switch balls, each playing the second shot from where the balls lie. Beginning with the third shot, the two team members play out the hole as a scramble, and record the one low ball as the team score.

Definition: 2-Man Scramble is a competition format that is exactly what it sounds like: a scramble in which the teams consist of two players each. After each shot, the best of the two shots is selected and both players play from that spot, until the ball is holed. One team score is recorded.

Also Known As: 2-Person Scramble, Two-Person Scramble

Definition: "2-Person Best Ball" is a best-ball competition format in which the teams consist of two players. Played as one team vs. another, whether stroke play or match play, it's simply another name for Four Ball. Each player on the team plays his own ball until completing the hole, then the lower of the two scores is recorded as the team score for that hole. For more explanation, see Best Ball.

Also Known As: 2-Man Best Ball, 2-Person Better Ball, Four Ball

Definition: Four Ball is a match pitting two teams of two players (a total of four balls being played, hence the name) against each other using better-ball scoring.

All four players play their own ball throughout; at the end of each hole, the low score between the two partners on each team is that team's score. For example, Players A and B form one team. On the first hole, A scores a 5, B scores a 6, so the team score is 5.

Four Ball can be played as stroke play or match play and is one of the formats used at the Ryder Cup.

Handicap allowances for various Four Ball competitions can be found in the USGA Handicap Manual, Section 9-4 (www.usga.com).

Definition: Thirty-Two is a side bet for golfers that focuses on putting. It's essentially a challenge from one golfer to another to avoid a three-putt. Let's say your buddy is facing a long, difficult putt. You invoke the thirty-two side bet. If your buddy three-putts (or worse), he owes you two units of the bet. If he two-putts (or better), you owe him three units of the bet. (If the bet is \$1, for example, and he three-putts, he owes you \$2; if he two-putts, you owe him \$3).

Definition: In the 4-Man Cha Cha Cha tournament format, each member of the team plays his or her ball throughout. But a 3-hole rotation exists for determining how many scores are used to create the team score. On the first hole (cha), the one low ball counts as the team score. On the second hole (cha cha), the two low balls count as the team score. On the third hole (cha cha cha), the three low balls count as the team score. The rotation starts over on the fourth hole.

Definition: "Irish Four Ball" is very popular in Australia. In Irish Four Ball, teams of four golfers - each playing his or her own ball throughout - use a Stableford or Modified Stableford scoring system. The scores of a predetermined number of team members per hole are combined for one team score. For example, if the low two scores are being counted on a given hole, and those scores are 0 and 1 (Stableford, remember), then the team score on that hole is 1.

There are many variations to an Irish Four Ball (sometimes called Irish Stableford). Many Irish Four Balls use the two low balls per hole throughout the tournament. A more popular variation calls for the number of scores per hole to vary throughout the round in this fashion:

Definition: Stableford competition is a golf tournament in which the object is to get the *highest* score. That's because in Stableford, golfers are awarded points based on their scores in relation to a fixed score at each hole. That fixed score can be par, or any number of strokes a tournament committee chooses (6, 8, whatever).

The USGA and R&A define Stableford points in this manner:

- More than 1 over fixed score (or no score returned) - 0 points
- One over fixed score - 1 point
- Fixed score - 2 points
- One under fixed score - 3 points
- Two under fixed score - 4 points
- Three under fixed score - 5 points
- Four under fixed score - 6 points

Rules related to Stableford competitions can be found in the official rules under Rule 32.

Stableford competitions are usually played with full handicaps, but might be played at scratch with handicaps used to determine higher point rewards for higher handicappers. For example, golfers might be flighted as A, B, C and D players, with points adjusted so that a par gets an A player 0 points, a B player 1 point, a C player 2 points and a D player 3 points.

Definition: Modified Stableford is a Stableford competition whose rules have been modified.

OK, that was glib. Here's a real definition: A Stableford competition employs a points system that is set forth in the Rules of Golf under Rule 32. A Modified Stableford is a competition that employs the same principle - golfers are awarded points based on their performance on each hole, with the highest point total winning - but with a different set of points than what is described in the rulebook.

Modified Stableford is better known than Stableford because a PGA Tour event, The International, is played using Modified Stableford. At The International, points are awarded on this scale:

- Double Eagle: 8 points
- Eagle: 5 points
- Birdie: 2 points
- Par: 0 points
- Bogey: -1 point
- Double Bogey or Worse: -3 points

A Modified Stableford can have different point totals for different accomplishments as a tournament committee decides. It can also offer different points to different players for the same accomplishments.

For example, if handicaps are not being used in competition, they *can* be used to flight players into A, B, C and D. Then points are adjusted so that, as an example, a par gets an A player 0 points, a B player 1 point, a C player 2 points and a D player 3 points.

Definition: Lone Wolf - 4 player golf game

This is a great game to play with equal or unequal talents. This is not a good game to play if one golfer is significantly better than others. The premise of the game is that someone is the wolf and gets to pick their partner. As each golfer tees off, the wolf decides whether to pick that golfer as their partner, or wait for the next golfer to tee off. When the first golfer tees off, the wolf decides if that will be their partner. When the second golfer tees off, the wolf can no longer pick the first golfer and decides if the second golfer is their partner. When the third golfer tees off, the wolf can no longer pick the first nor second golfer as their partner. The wolf makes a decision at this point whether to pick the third person as their partner or to go it alone as the lone wolf.

The wolf tees off last. If the wolf picks a partner, the wolf and the partner must beat, no ties, the other two players to win the hole otherwise the other pair win the hole. If the wolf decides to be the lone wolf, the wolf's score must beat, no ties, all the other players to win the hole, otherwise the other three win the hole. Keep track of each a player wins and add them up at the end. The player with the most wins is the winner.

Definition: The Skins Game - The skins game is played with three or four golfers.

The PGA puts on a skins event every year after the season, usually in Thanksgiving. The skins game is played exactly like this. Each hole is assigned a value. Usually the first six holes are assigned a low value, the middle six holes are assigned a middle value, and the last six holes are assigned a higher value. The premise is that if you beat all members of your foursome you win a skin. The game starts on the first hole. If someone in the foursome beats all others in the foursome the golfer wins the value of the skin for that hole. If at least two players tie, the skin carries over to the second hole and all members of the foursome have a chance to win the 2nd hole value in addition to the 1st hole value on the 2nd hole. Keep track of the value of each skin a golfer wins. The golfer with the highest cumulative value wins.

Definition: Doubles - 4 player golf games

Doubles can be played many ways, here are a few ways I've played coring with doubles...most points wins after 18.

1. Aggregate score of doubles partners, with low score winning the hole.
2. Low individual score wins the hole for the partners.
3. Use both methods for 2 points per hole.

Variation on scoring: If a birdie wins the hole doubles the number of points. If an eagle wins the hole quadruples the number of points.

How to pick partners

1. 6-pack method, Every six holes switch partners, everyone in the foursome plays with everyone else in the foursome.
2. Left/Right method...Partners change every hole based on the position of the balls. The two golf balls on the left are partners against the two golf balls on the right.
3. Same partner throughout the round. Partners are picked based on golf ability.