

Okie Scramble Couples Handicap Logic

The following is a description of the player categories and how starting handicaps are calculated for Okie Scramble Couples. We have 2 flight categories, Open flight (younger participants) or Senior flight (older participants). These are determined after we see how many participants and what their ages are. In the case of past Albuquerque events, we have had 1 open flight and 2 senior flights (divided evenly based on team starting handicap). Open flight utilizes 4 different tees (Men-Blue, Senior Men-White, Super Senior Men-Green, Ladies and Super Seniors 75+-Gold). Senior flight utilizes only 3 tees (Senior Men-White, Super Senior Men-Green, Ladies and Super Seniors 75+-Gold). Maximum individual handicaps are capped at 54.0. The GHIN system caps handicap indexes at this number, so we do the same for individuals who do not have a GHIN index. Granted, some individuals should be higher than 54.0, but it is not fair to give those that do not have an official index more strokes than those with an official index. For handicapping purposes, we have 3 categories of teams which are explained below:

- RT or Returning Teams
- NT or New Teams (No official GHIN handicap index)
- NTG or New Teams where BOTH players have official GHIN handicap Index

Returning Teams (RT) handicap is calculated after their last round of golf in a recent (previous) Okie Scramble Couples event. Handicaps are adjusted 50% up or down each day in Okie Scramble events. By the end of a 2 or 3-day event we have a fairly good depiction of each team's ability. Even better, if teams come back more than once, it just keeps getting adjusted, so it's extremely accurate. One point of clarification, we are not calculating a true GHIN type handicap, because GHIN is compared to Par, we calculate our handicap as how they compare against the "Average Score" in their flight. We calculate the average for each flight after each round by removing any disqualified teams, withdrawn teams, etc. and then remove the highest and lowest score in each flight, then calculate the average. From there we determine how each team compared to that average, and adjust 50% of that difference for the next round, or in the case of the final round of the year, where they would start the next year.

New Teams (NT) are teams that have never played together or teams that have not played together in the past 3+ years. We inquire about their handicap, add the 2 handicaps together for their team handicap. Then consider 2 more adjustment possibilities. First, since at least one of the players has no official GHIN, their team handicap is hit with a 25% penalty. The reason for this is based on extensive study into how GHIN only uses your lowest 8 out of 20 scores to calculate your index, and will not allow upward movement very quickly. The result is a handicap index that is at least 25% less than what someone thinks their handicap is based on simply calculating the average score to par. Second, is an adjustment for the tees each player is playing. All women play the ladies tee, so no adjustment for them. Men play from different tees, depending on their age. The baseline is the longest tee box in each flight (Men's tee in Open flight and Senior Men's tee in Senior flights). The number of strokes difference between each tee box is calculated using GHINs algorithm (course and slope rating) which is on their website. In the case of Santa Ana, it is 2 strokes for each tee box you move up. First movement are those 55 and above (Senior Tees), second movement is for those 65 and above (Super Senior Tees), and lastly is for Senior Men 75+ (Gold Tees). In the Open flight it is possible to move up 3 sets of tees (Men to Super Senior 75+), in which case each would incur a 6-stroke reduction to the team handicap. If they only move up 1 set of tees from the baseline, a 2-stroke reduction to the team handicap would be used. From there, we use 25% of that new adjusted team total. We have found that using 25% after the other adjustments compares real nicely against the Returning Team (RT) handicaps, which are in fact the most accurate.

New Teams both having an official GHIN handicap index (NTG) are teams where both players have an official GHIN handicap index and that index can be verified by the handicap committee. We check their handicap index using the GHIN app and add the 2 together for a

team handicap. From there we only need to make one adjustment which is for the tee each player is playing from. Just like the New Teams, if their age lets them move up, they get a 2-stroke reduction for each set of tees moved. From there, we only use 25% of that new adjusted team total.

Here is an example of a New Team (NT): Bob reports a 10 handicap; Sally reports a 25 handicap. Combined they have a team handicap of 35. Bob plays the Men's tee and Sally plays the Ladies. They are both in their 30's and in the Open flight and neither has a verifiable GHIN handicap. First, they get the 25% reduction for not have a verifiable GHIN index. Their team handicap goes to 26.25. Since Bob is in his 30's and no adjustment need be made for moving up a tee box, their team handicap is simply 25% of their adjusted team total, or 6.56.

Here is an example of a New Team with a verifiable GHIN (NTG) for both: Steve has a 10.5 handicap index; Mary has a 25.4 handicap index. Combined, they have a team handicap of 35.9. Steve is 57 years old; Mary is 40 years old. Not old enough for the Senior flight so they will compete in the Open flight. Steve does get to move up one tee box due to being over 55. A reduction of 2 strokes will be made for Steve moving up to the Senior Tee from the baseline Men's tee. This makes their team handicap 33.9. Lastly, their team handicap is simply 25% of their adjusted team total, or 8.475.

Final example is for another New Team (NT). Bill reports a 20.3 handicap and has an official GHIN; Alice reports a 54.0 handicap index but no official GHIN. Combined, they have a team handicap of 74.3. Bill is 66 years old; Alice is 63 years old. Their combined age puts them in the Senior flight. They get the 25% team reduction for BOTH not have a verifiable GHIN index. Their team handicap goes to 55.73. Bill gets to move up one tee box due to being over 65. A reduction of 2 additional strokes will be made for Bill moving up to the Super Senior Tee from the Baseline Senior tee. This makes their team handicap 53.73. Lastly, their team handicap is simply 25% of their adjusted team total, or 13.43.

The main thing to consider is; nothing is perfect to each and every team, but based on years of data, and running tournaments that are as fair as one can hope for. In a perfect world, every team would be a Returning team with years of data to rely on, but that never happens. Lastly, this is a lot to digest and take into account each tournament, however since Okie Scrambles have been going on for years, most of this is automated, and takes place with very little intervention.