

Okie Scramble Handicap Logic

Following is a description of player categories and how handicaps are calculated and managed for the 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 past events, we have had 1 open flight and 2 senior flights (divided evenly based on team starting handicap. Open flight utilizes 5 different tees (Men-Blue, Senior Men-White, Super Senior Men-Green, Ladies and Super Seniors 75+-Gold, and Ladies 65+-Purple). Senior flight utilizes only 4 tees (Senior Men-White, Super Senior Men-Green, Ladies and Super Seniors 75+-Gold, and Ladies 65+-Purple). Maximum individual handicaps are capped at 54.0. GHIN caps handicap indexes at this number, so we do the same for anyone not having a GHIN. Granted, some individuals probably should be higher than 54, but it is not fair to give those that do not have GHIN more than those with GHIN. Daily adjustments to handicap are made, both up or down based on how well the team played compared to their flight average. These adjustments are made using a percentage designated by the tournament committee. Previously 50% of the strokes a team was above or below the flight average was used. Beginning in 2026, we will use different percentages based on whether a team is above or below that flight average. The reason for this is due to some teams with no Okie Scramble history having a handicap that is not accurate, or teams manipulating their scores on any given day to place themselves in better position to cash in future days. These percentages are not team specific; they will be used evenly across all teams. For example, every team that scores better than the flight average on any day may be adjusted 60% downward, while teams that score higher than the flight average could only be adjusted 30% upward. Okie Scramble is ever evolving, and constantly trying to keep its tournaments as fair as possible. It is difficult, but we are as close as any tournament could hope to be.

For handicapping purposes, we have 3 categories of teams:

- **RT** or Returning Teams (Same 2 players)
- **NT** or New Teams where one or both players have NO official GHIN handicap index
- **NTG** or New Teams where BOTH players have an official GHIN handicap Index

(RT) handicap is calculated after their last round of golf in a previous Okie Scramble Couples event. By the end of an Okie Scramble Couples event, we have a better idea of each team's scoring abilities. Even better, if a team comes back more than once, it just keeps getting adjusted, and is 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 it compares to the "Average" in their flight. We calculate the average for each flight by removing disqualified & withdrawn teams, then remove the highest and lowest score in each flight, and use the remaining scores to calculate the average. These handicaps are accurate for Okie events.

(NT) are teams that have never played together or teams that have not played together in the past few years. We inquire about their handicap, add the 2 handicaps together. Then consider 2 adjustments. First adjustment for NT teams, since at least one of the players has no official GHIN, their team handicap is hit with a percentage penalty. Historically, this percentage ranged from 20%-25%. Beginning in 2026, this percentage will probably be something higher since NT teams cash more than other teams on opening day. This is due to their provided handicap being too high. The reason for this penalty is based on extensive study. The fact that GHIN only uses the lowest 8 out of 20 scores to calculate an index, additionally GHIN restricts upward movement. The result of having GHIN is a handicap index that is approximately 33% less than what someone thinks their handicap should be based on simply calculating their average score to par. Remember we do not calculate handicaps based on score to par, but rather score to flight average. Second adjustment for NT teams, is for the tees each player is playing. Players play from different tees, depending on their age. The baseline is the longest tee box in each flight (Blue tee in all Open flights and White tee in all Senior flights). The number of strokes difference between each tee box is calculated using GHINs algorithm (course and slope rating) which is on

the USGA website. In the case of Santa Ana, it averages 2 strokes for each tee box you move up. First movement are those 55 and above (White Tees), second movement is for those 65 and above (Green Tees). Lastly, are those Senior Men 75 and above (Gold Tees). There is only 1 step up for ladies, from Gold to Purple, in which case their handicap will be adjusted 2 strokes. In the Open flight it is possible for men to move up 3 sets of tees (Blue to Gold), in which case each player incurs a 6-stroke reduction to the team handicap (2 strokes for each box moved forward). If they only move up 1 set of tees from the baseline, a 2-stroke reduction to their handicap would be used. Last adjustment for NT teams, a percentage (ie 25%) of that new adjusted team total is used for their Opening Handicap. In past years, 25% was used, but this could change in the future. We are looking for a number that pairs nicely with the Returning Team (RT) handicaps, which are the most accurate.

(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. Because continuous checking of GHIN indexes is so labor intensive, we verify every Player's GHIN index again, one time only, a few weeks ahead of tournament time, but only make changes if it is apparent the newer index is out of line from what was provided. If this is the case, we use either their new GHIN index, their GHIN Low Index (LI) in the case a handicap went up dramatically, or the Committee will assign a handicap if it is felt the information we received is not valid. From there we make an adjustment for the tee each player is playing. Just like the NT's, if their age lets them move up, they get a 2-stroke reduction for each set of tees moved. Last adjustment for NTG teams, a percentage (ie 25%) of that new adjusted team total is used for their Opening Handicap. In past years, 25% was used, but this could change in the future. We are looking for a number that pairs nicely with the Returning Team (RT) handicaps, which are the most accurate.

Example #1. Bob reports a 10 handicap; Sally reports a 25 handicap. Combined they have a team handicap of 35. Based on their age, they fall into an Open flight and Bob plays the Yellow tees and Sally plays the Gold tees. Neither has a verifiable GHIN handicap. They will get the percentage reduction from their total for not having a verifiable GHIN index. Last, we use a percentage adjustment (historically 25%) of their new team total as their Opening Handicap.

Example #2. Steve has a GHIN 10.5 handicap index; Mary has a GHIN 25.4 handicap index. Combined, they have a team handicap of 35.9 and are in the Senior Flight. Steve plays the Green Tees (age 73); Mary plays the Gold Tees (age 41). Steve does get to move up 1 tee box (Green Tees) due to being over 65 and gets a reduction of 2 strokes. This makes their team handicap 33.9. Lastly, we use a percentage adjustment (historically 25%) of their new team total as their Opening Handicap.

Example #3. Bill has a 20.3 GHIN index; Alice reports a 54.0 handicap but no GHIN. Combined, they have a team handicap of 74.3. Bill is 66 years old; Alice is 73 years old. Their age puts them in the Senior flight. They get the percentage penalty for BOTH not have a verifiable GHIN index. After that, Bill moves up to the Green tee box due to being over 65 and incurs a reduction of 2 strokes. Alice also gets to move up to the Purple tee box since she is over 65. She too incurs a 2-stroke reduction for moving up. Lastly, we use a percentage adjustment (historically 25%) of their new team total as their Opening Handicap.

The main thing to remember is; nothing is perfect for everyone, but based on years of data, and running tournaments that are as fair as one can hope, these calculations are equitable. In a perfect world, every team would be a Returning team with years of data from past Okie Scramble Couples to rely on, and no adjustments would need to take place, but that never happens. This is a lot to digest, but hopefully gives everyone a better picture of what goes on. Luckily, Okie Scrambles have been going on for years, most of this is automated, and happens with very little intervention.