

Understanding Golf Games & Scoring

A simple guide for new golfers

Golf can be played in lots of different formats. Don't worry if the competition names seem confusing at first — here are the most common ones you'll see at your golf club.

STROKE / MEDAL

Lowest score wins.

Count every shot you take on every hole.

At the end of the round, add up all your shots to get your **Gross Score**.

Gross Score - Handicap = Nett Score

Example:

You shoot 95 and have a handicap of 20.

95 - 20 = 75 Nett

The player with the **lowest Nett Score** wins.

Remember: You generally need to finish (hole out) every hole.

STABLEFORD

The most points wins.

Your handicap gives you extra shots on certain holes. Your score on each hole is converted into points based on your **Nett Score**.

Nett Result

Points

Double bogey or worse

0

Bogey

1

Par

2

Birdie

3

Eagle

4

Example:

It's a Par 4 and you receive **1 handicap shot**.

You take 5 shots = Nett 4 (Nett Par) = **2 points**.

 **Beginner tip:** If you can no longer score a Stableford point, pick up your ball and move onto the next hole.

PAR

Each hole is a Win, Half or Loss against your Nett Par.

After applying your handicap:

Nett birdie or better = +

Nett par = 0

Nett bogey or worse = -

Add your results together at the end.

Example:

7 wins (+), 8 halves (0) and 3 losses (-) = **4 Up (+4)**

The player with the **best +/- result** wins.

4BBB / FOUR-BALL

Two players form a team — but you each play your own ball.

Both players play the hole normally and the **better score from the pair** counts as the team's score for that hole.

Often played as **4BBB Stableford**, where the better Stableford score counts.

Example:

Player A = 2 points

Player B = 3 points

Team score = **3 points**

FOURSOMES

Two players share ONE ball.

Partners take turns hitting the same ball.

One player tees off on the odd-numbered holes and the other tees off on the even-numbered holes. After the tee shot, you continue taking alternate shots until the ball is holed.

Example:

Player A tees off → Player B hits the second shot → Player A hits the third → and so on.

AMBROSE

Everyone hits – choose the best shot – everyone hits again.

Usually played in teams of 2, 3 or 4.

Everyone hits a tee shot. The team chooses the **best ball position**, then everyone plays their next shot from that area.

Repeat this process until the ball is holed.

It's a fun and relaxed team format and a great way for newer golfers to play with more experienced golfers.

MATCH PLAY

You're trying to win holes, not count your total score.

You play against another player (or team).

Win the hole = **1 Up**

Lose the hole = **1 Down**

Same score = **Hole Halved**

The match finishes when one player is ahead by more holes than there are holes remaining.

Example:

You're 3 Up with only 2 holes left to play → you've won the match **3 & 2**.

 DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK!

Golf has lots of different formats and terminology, and nobody expects a new golfer to know everything straight away.

If you're unsure about the day's format, handicap or how to fill in your scorecard, ask another player or a member of the club before you tee off.