

Mixed Golf

Mixed Golf is really only a “special case” of players playing from different Tees that have had separate Standard Scratch Scores allocated. This is covered in Appendix O (p74) in the 2008 Manual. It should be noted that the Appendix makes it clear that, where players are playing from tees that have been allocated SSS’s, an adjustment MUST be applied to the handicaps of players playing the course with the higher SSS.

It is hoped that the fact that the UHS brings the adjustment and management of Men’s and Ladies’ handicaps under one system will encourage clubs to introduce regular Mixed Competitions to their calendar.

Which Courses to use?

CONGU® states quite clearly that each set of players should play a course for which the Standard Scratch Score (SSS) has been allocated whenever possible. Normally this will mean that the men play from the Men’s Tees using the Men’s SSS and the ladies from the Ladies’ Tees using the Ladies’ SSS. Even then a handicap adjustment must be applied if the Ladies’ and Men’s SSS’s are different (see below).

Why not all play from the same tees? Surely this would be fairer?

Recently it was advocated that, when running mixed competitions the ladies should play from the Men’s Tees. This would be totally unfair as, unless a Ladies’ SSS has been calculated allocated for the Men’s course (and there are few, if any, where this has been done), it would be impossible to make a fair and reasonable assessment of the adjustment that should be applied. Some will be surprised at the size of adjustment that would be necessary. If the competition were played solely off the Men’s Tees, with a fairly typical course length of 6,100 yards:

Course length 6100 yards	
Typical Men's SSS would be	69/70
Typical Ladies' SSS would be	74/75

The adjustment here would be to increase the ladies’ handicaps by 4 to 6, this may seem a lot but is the only way that the competition would have any semblance of being equal to all. Even then, playing a course that is probably 500 yards longer than that on which their handicap has been obtained will, for a good number of rounds anyway, still leave them at a disadvantage.

Even if the men played from the Ladies’ Tees a Men’s SSS would have to have been allocated by the Union for that course and an adjustment for ladies would again be calculated from the difference in the SSS’s.

Course length 5600 yards	
Typical Men's SSS would be	67/68
Typical Ladies' SSS would be	72/73

Again the handicap adjustment would still be 4 to 6 added to the Ladies' Handicaps. Of course if the allocated SSS for the course being played by the men were higher than that of the course being played by the ladies the upward adjustment would be to the Men's Handicaps (or there would be no adjustment at all if the allocated SSS's were the same).

Handicap Adjustment and the Reasons for it

When organising Mixed competitions of any type, stroke play or match play, it must be realised (and understood) that, as explained above, the competition is effectively being held over two separate courses (as the Men's and Ladies' Tees will each have their own Standard Scratch Scores) albeit that they may share common fairways and greens. It would be entirely unfair if this difference is not accounted for by making an alteration to the handicaps of the players playing the harder course (that with the higher SSS) hence the requirement that handicaps MUST be adjusted.

An SSS is, by definition, the score a Scratch player would be expected to return over a particular course. All handicaps are then adjusted relative to players' performances against that score. It may seem obvious to state (but seems to be a point not appreciated by a good number of administrators) that the Ladies' SSS is determined against the performance of a Scratch handicap lady player and the Men's likewise for a Scratch man. As golfers will know from the performance of professional golfers in both Europe and the USA, the best ladies cannot return scores that compare with the best men. As there is no compensation allowed in professional golf, ladies and men do not compete in mixed events for a single prize, or if they did the winner would only be a man.

It could be argued (and is in one of the world's leading handicap systems) that a club running a competition without making the adjustment for any difference in the SSS's is introducing a Condition of Competition that is, at best outside the spirit of, and at worst contrary to, Rule of Golf 6.2 (which does not allow a player to declare a handicap higher than that to which they are entitled). The argument being that if an upward adjustment is not applied to the player on the harder course (higher SSS) those on the easier course are effectively playing off too high a handicap, contrary to Rule of Golf 6.2.

Which Stroke Index should we use?

There is often a debate about which Stroke Index (SI) should be used. For Stroke play it is recommended that each player uses the SI appropriate to them. For match play it is recommended that SI appropriate to either the Men's or Ladies' course is used for both sets of players. This should have minimal effect for two reasons:

1. Players rarely play their best (or worst) golf on the holes where they get a shot
2. When players don't get a shot where they should it means they do get a shot where they shouldn't.

The CONGU® requirements and recommendations for running Mixed Competitions based on these principles are detailed below.

HANDICAPPING IN MIXED COMPETITIONS

The following procedures should be adopted when clubs run Mixed Competitions .

1 SINGLES COMPETITIONS

(a) Stroke Play

It is recommended that, for handicap purposes all players play off their CONGU® handicap and from tees with a Rated SSS making the competition Qualifying for handicap purposes. The handicap adjustments are then ONLY APPLIED for COMPETITION RESULT PURPOSES.

In all Stroke Play competitions, where appropriate, the Ladies' handicaps must be adjusted to take account of the difference in the Standard Scratch Scores (SSS) of the courses being used according to the following:

$$\text{Ladies' Competition H/cap} = \text{Ladies' CONGU H/cap} + (\text{SSSladies} - \text{SSSmen})$$

(In the unlikely event of Men's SSS being higher than the Ladies' the reverse would apply).

Scores are then returned normally. The Ladies' Netts are then re-calculated for the Competition Result using the handicaps adjusted as above formula to get the "Competition" Ladies' Handicap this is then subtracted from the scores as returned to get new Ladies'; Netts for result purposes. Example:

Courses: SSS men 72, SSS ladies 74. Man off 18 plays to H/cap. Lady off 18 plays 1 under H/cp					
	Man		Lady		
	Gross	Nett	Gross	Nett	
Scores as returned	90	72	91	73	Left unadjusted man has low Nett
Adjust Ladies H/cap	90	72	91	71	Ladies Handicap for the Mixed Competition now 20 (18+(74-72))
After applying the adjustment the lady has lower nett and wins the Mixed competition					

It should be emphasised that the adjustments are NOT COURTESY SHOTS.

As was stated earlier, if the Men's SSS is higher than the Ladies' SSS on the courses being used then an adjustment would be made to the Men's Handicaps.

(b) Stableford or Bogey/Par

The approach to Stableford / Bogey (Par) competitions has been modified. In this type of competition account has to be taken of three factors, the SSS and Par of the course and the Player's Handicap. It has been decided that the easiest way of doing this is to determine the

points a player playing each course would return when playing to handicap. Then the difference between the two (if any) is SUBTRACTED from the scores of the players who would have the higher score when playing to their handicap.

Courses: SSS(men) 72, SSS(ladies) 74. Par(men) 69 Par(ladies) 74			
Par men = 69	Man	Lady	
Par lady = 74	Points	Points	
Scores to play to H/cap	33	36	Points to play to handicap = 36 - (SSS - Par)
Play to handicap	$36 - (72 - 69) = 33$	$36 - (74 - 74) = 36$	
For the result of the Mixed Competition the ladies would have three points deducted from the score returned (and used for handicap purposes)			

This approach takes into account all the differences in Par / SSS and at the effect of SSS on the handicaps. It was considered simpler to administer as it allows both sets of players to play “normally” ie using their handicaps unadjusted and score exactly as if it were not a mixed - gender competition.

It was also looked on as fairer, in that the subtraction only takes place if the player has scored on the SI hole to which it applies (if one point it would be deducted from the highest SI hole where the player gets a shot, if two from the 1st and 2nd highest etc).

For clubs with computer administration of handicaps all these process should be incorporated in the software.

2. PAIRS COMPETITIONS

In all Mixed Pairs competitions it is strongly recommended that the ladies play from the Ladies’ Tees, whatever the format.

(a) Stroke Play, Stableford / Bogey

For Mixed partner better- ball competitions the ladies’ handicaps should have the SSS adjustment added before the recommended fraction (3/4) applied. (new). If these are Stableford or Bogey Competitions players should score against a common Par and Stroke Index (either the Men’s or Ladies’, although the Ladies’ is recommended).

For Foursomes and Greensomes the Ladies’ handicaps should have the adjustment added before the partnerships’ handicap is calculated as in Appendix F (p59)

(b) Matchplay

The SSS adjustment should be applied to the Ladies' handicaps and then the appropriate fraction applied.

In better-ball Matchplay shots should be taken from the low player. The ladies should have the SSS adjustment applied before this is determined.

Team Competitions etc

In all cases the Ladies' Handicaps should be altered to account for the SSS differences before any appropriate allocation is determined.

Where scoring is Stableford or Bogey (Par) the handicap adjustment to account for any SSS difference should be made and all players score against a common Par and Stroke Index - again the Ladies' is recommended).

Note: use of the Ladies' Par and Stroke Index is recommended as this does not then require ladies to play holes than have a lower Par than CONGU would recommend. It does mean that the men will return somewhat higher scores than against their own Par however to do otherwise would militate against ladies making an appropriate contribution.

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