

Big Changes Coming to Saturday Golf League in 2020

SGL's December board meeting was full of discussion surrounding potential changes to the competitive structure of the league. Much of this was in response to member input and some of it was prompted by the implementation of the World Handicap System (WHS), which went into effect yesterday (1/1/20). Following is a summary of what's coming.

Your League Handicap Index

As you should be aware by now, a separate SGL handicap index will be going away. Your index under the WHS will now be what you compete with in the league. This will go into effect as soon as the AGA has its system up and stable, hopefully for our 1/11 tournament at Lone Tree.

New Tee Box Guidelines

The current SGL guidelines for tee box selection are the first rated tee over 6100 yards for men and 5100 yards for women. For years, there has been a desire for low handicappers to play from longer tees and from high handicappers to play from shorter ones. These desires, combined with the league's ongoing emphasis on pace of play, have resulted in the new tee box guidelines displayed below.

Flight / Handicap Range	Par-72			Par-71			Par-70		
	Base Yards	Upper Limit	Slope Limit	Base Yards	Upper Limit	Slope Limit	Base Yards	Upper Limit	Slope Limit
Men's Flight 1 (up to 8.5)	6500	None	133	6400	None	133	6300	None	133
Men's Flights 2 & 3 (8.6 to 20.0)	6200	6500	130	6100	6400	130	6000	6300	130
Men's Flight 4 (20.1 and up)	5900	6200	127	5800	6100	127	5700	6000	127
Men's Flight 4 Senior option	5600	5900	124	5500	5800	124	5400	5700	124
Women's Flight 1 (up to 8.5)	5300	5900	133	5200	5800	133	5100	5700	133
Women's Flights 2 & 3 (8.6 to 20.0)	5000	5600	130	4900	5500	130	4800	5400	130
Women's Flight 4 (20.1 and up)	4700	5300	127	4600	5200	127	4500	5100	127

As you can see, the guidelines are handicap-driven. The break at 8.5 represents the top 25% of men's handicap indices and therefore where the break would be for Flight 1 in a typical tournament. A good example of the difference this will make comes right off the bat at the 1/11 tournament at Lone Tree, which would line up like this:

Course Handicap				
Range	Tees	Yards	Rating	Slope
Men, up to 8.5	Blue	6496	69.9	118
Men, 8.6 to 20.0	Blue/White	6278	69.0	115
Men, > 20.0	White	5959	67.5	112
Women, up to 8.5	White/Red	5444	71.1	119
Women, 8.6 to 20.0	White/Red	5444	71.1	119
Women, > 20.0	Red	4973	68.6	113

There are cases like this where there is a nice division among groups and others where there is almost none at all. An example is Wigwam's Patriot (or Blue) course, which we will play on February 1. At this par-70 venue, the longest tee for men is 6000 yards. Only Seniors would have another option at 5572. There would; however, still be two options for women, as those at 20.0 and under would play at 5199 yards and those above 20.0 at 4791.

You will note the inclusion of a Senior tee box option for men in Flight 4. This will not always be available under these guidelines, but when it's not that will likely be due to having a tee already in a fair range for seniors. Senior men in the lower handicap groups will still have the option to move forward one tee box.

Also note that these guidelines represent minimum requirements, meaning depending on your handicap range you must play at least at the distance designated for that group. Using Lone Tree as an example, if your handicap index is 14.0, you will be designated to play the Blue/White tees, but you could choose to play Blue. You could not choose to play White, unless you are a senior.

Finally, while the word "Flights" is used in the table above, the flights for each tournament event will continue to be constructed as they are currently, with an equal number of players in each of four. That will create some situations in which players competing in the same flight may be playing from different tees. We already have that scenario due to our co-ed nature and the senior option, but it will likely occur more frequently now. Different slope ratings on the tees will help to make fair stroke adjustments in those situations.

New Skins Game Format Debuts This Week

At its December meeting, the SGL Board voted to change the format of the Gross and Net Skins games. Beginning with Saturday's tournament, the Skins pots will be divided evenly across all won Skins, rather than carrying them over from hole-to-hole. This will make all Skins equal in value and eliminate the awarding of leftovers to whomever earned the first one. This will add a bit of intrigue, as on some days Skins will be worth a lot more than on others.

CTP Competition Will Remain the Same

The oft-discussed issue of flighting the weekly Closest to the Pin competition was also on the Board agenda. Many have campaigned for this on the premise that the prizes go almost exclusively to lower-handicap players. The reality is not quite so skewed, nevertheless, it was decided to keep things as they are, since the new tee box arrangements will serve as an equalizer given higher-handicap players will be attacking the par-3 greens from shorter distances. All entrants will continue to have an opportunity to win on all par-3s.

New Season-End Awards

The Board also approved the creation of some new end-of-season awards based on the statistical categories we track. We will be handing out prizes for:

- Low Gross Scoring Average
- Low Net Scoring Average
- Lowest Putting Average
- Most CTPs

The awards will be based on totals through the end of our regular season, i.e., the May 2 round at Longbow. In order to qualify for these awards, you must have played in 14 events, or 40% of our schedule.

Winners will receive a certificate and \$25 playing credit. The awards will be given out at the luncheon following the Tony Albrecht Cup Final at Las Sendas on May 30.

Handy Links:

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