

Playing from different tees

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Q *My buddies and I like to have a friendly wager in our weekly game but because of our handicap levels, we enjoy things more when we play from different tees. How can we make this work?*

A There is a mandatory procedure to use when players compete against one another while playing from different sets of tees.

First, take the tee that most players will use. For example, if four golfers are playing at The SCGA Golf Course with one playing from the blues, two from the whites and one from the gold, use white as your base for calculating. In fact, you can use any tee and adjust using this method.

Next, determine each player's Course Handicap using the Slope for the tees that he'll be playing (Slope tables are in the back of the *Southern California Directory of Golf*). For example, Bob, a 4.0 Handicap Index,

is playing the blue tees with a Slope rating of 131, so he plays to a 5 handicap. Kevin (12.5 Index) and Ray (14.4 Index) will play the white tees with a 126 Slope rating, so Kevin plays to a 14 and Ray plays to a 16. Doug, with a 22.7 Index, will play the gold tees with a 121 Slope rating, will play to a 24.

Because Bob is playing a longer course than Kevin and Ray, he needs to adjust his Course Handicap higher, using the following formula: the white tee course rating is 70.9 and the blue tee course rating is 73.0. The difference between the two course ratings is 2.1 shots, so Bob gets an additional 2 shots added to his Course Handicap (i.e., he plays to a 7 handicap). By contrast, Doug is playing a course with a lower course rating; in this example, the gold tees are 68.8, which is 2.1 shots lower than the white tees (round to the nearest whole number). Consequently, Doug lowers his Course Handicap for the round to 22.

The same principle applies when women are competing against men.

Remember that for these purposes if women and men are playing from the same set of tees, they are, in effect, playing different courses since a profile for a female golfer differs from a male.

Using the above example, if Emily, with a Handicap Index of 5.8, is playing from the white tees, she first converts her Index to a Course Handicap of 8 using the women's Slope rating from the white tees (148). Next, she takes the course rating of 78.6 and subtracts the men's white tee rating of 70.9 (the base calculation, in this case), which leaves a difference of 7.7. Because her white course rating is higher than the men's white tees, she adds 8, shots giving her a Course Handicap of 16.

If Emily had been playing from the red tees (with a 129 Slope rating), her 5.8 index would convert to a 7 course handicap and she would receive 1 extra stroke because her Red tee course rating of 72.2 is 1.3 shots higher than the men's white tee rating of 70.9.