



Talking in the 19th Hole

DRIVER. Most golf clubs hold scramble tournaments. “A scramble is played with two, three, or four-person teams. Each player plays from the teeing area on each hole, one of the tee shots is selected, and all the players play their second shots from that spot. One of the second shots is then selected, and all players play their third shots from that spot, and so on until the ball is holed”. In this form, up to 180 players can participate in a shift; for this reason, it is the preferred form for entertainment, commercial and charitable tournaments.

The players who participate in these tournaments want to have a pleasant time, play a golf course in good condition, enjoy food and drinks, receive prizes and gifts, delight the pupil by seeing models (men and women), and finish in less than 6 hours. The organizers want to have the maximum number of participants, that the players and the sponsors are satisfied, that there are no complaints, that they make a good profit, and that the tournament is successful.



Let's look at some actions, behaviors, and details that will help participants and organizers enjoy more enjoyable tournaments and meet their goals.

- Registration on time and form. Players are responsible for registering on time and making the corresponding payment. Verbally setting aside places, paying on the day of the event, going out to play without paying, not showing up to play, leaving without paying, etc. They are deeply ingrained behaviors that cause problems in the organization of the tournament.
- Read the competition documents. When we were in school, we learned that you have to read the instructions before answering the exam. In golf tournaments, very few players read the terms of the competition, the local rules, and the notices to players, missing out on details that can benefit or affect your game.

- The handicaps. The organizers of the scramble tournaments, to make the competition more even, establish certain limits regarding the minimum handicap of the group and the number of low handicap players per group. When registering, the group must be aware that it is disqualified from the competition by not complying with this requirement. Why would the organizers make an exception for them if the rest of the groups comply with the established conditions?

Hand in hand with this, some players do not have a handicap, and by decree, they want to be given one. Likewise, the players who do not have a handicap give an inflated one to achieve the minimum required handicap. Out of respect for the players who have a handicap, the organizers do not allow players who do not have a handicap to win the competition. Moral: if you want to participate in golf tournaments and win them, get an official handicap.

- The preparation. Players focus on technical preparation for the tournament, but they must consider strategic preparation, which includes: caddy, cart, clubs, putting the business in order, etc. For example, a few minutes before starting the tournament, some players request a cart from a friend, and he wants it “ipso facto,” which is not possible because there is an internal procedure in clubs for these requests. What does it cost this player to request him a few days before?
- The pace of play. Many golfers do not play scramble tournaments for the duration of the round of around 7 hours. Of course, you have to have fun, but you also have to strive to finish in 6 hours. Let's look at some of the main causes that affect the pace of play:
 - Stay on the green. There are players, even the entire group, who, after finishing the hole, stay on the green closely watching the other group's putt. They do it because they think they will cheat (the lion believes that everyone is like him) and throw them a bad vibe. It seems to me to be unsportsmanlike conduct, which does not reflect the spirit of the game. The right thing to do is advance to the next hole and watch the putt from a distance.
 - Forget about their place on the course and how long they have been in the round. That a group is alone, without people behind and ahead, does not mean that it is in pace. Somewhere in the course, other groups must be stuck if this situation exists. It is best to be immediately behind the group in front of you, monitor your time, and follow the marshals' directions.
 - Spending too much time at the sponsors' stands. It is part of the event to visit sponsor stands, receive gifts, participate in competitions and enjoy food and drinks, but you have to be aware of the pace of play.
 - Spending too much time taking pictures. Players want memories of their participation in the event, but they have to be aware of the pace of play.
- Respect for the rules. Now the committee can modify the rules for the scramble and other forms of play. Scramble is considered an "alternative form of play". "Detailed modifications to Rules 1–24 that are required for these formats" are still being prepared by the USGA and are not available. In terms of the competition, it must be indicated that the tournament will be played following the USGA golf rules and the following modifications. Some of the modifications (unofficial, because they are not published by the USGA yet) could be:

- The preferred lies (winter rules). The committee must specify the procedure for putting the balls into play from the selected ball spot. It must be clear how to proceed from the different areas of the course: general area, penalty area, bunker, and green. For example, when the selected ball lies in (area of course) players can place the original ball or another ball and play it from this relief area:
 - o Reference point: the spot of the selected original ball.
 - o Size of the relief area measured from the reference point: (Specify the size of the relief area, for example, one club-length, one scorecard length or 15 cm] from the reference point, but with these limits:
Limits on location of relief area: must not be nearer the hole than the reference point, and must be in the (area of course).

Some players take advantage of this modification, and when placing their ball, they take a relief of several yards. As this abuse has no limits, some players move more and more yards.

- Agreement to consider putts within a certain distance as holed. The tournament is played with gimme putt to speed up the pace of play. The distance of the gimme putt is indicated by means of a circle around the hole or with a ribbon on the flagstick. I like the ribbon on the flagstick better. Some players take advantage of this modification and consider the gimme putt at distances greater than the established one.

Some modifications that are not recommended:

- Outside the teeing area, alter the surface of the ground and use a tee. Some players alter the ground with the club on strokes outside the teeing area, creating an edge to place the ball (make a burrito). Others even use a tee. Both behaviors are not recommended because they alter the conditions affecting the stroke.
- Repeat shots. When a group is not complete, one player plays two balls. This behavior is not recommended because it runs counter to the fundamental principle of playing “striking a ball with a club.”
- Respect for the course. For some reason (it could be the drinks), golfers forget about etiquette at scramble tournaments. Players put the carts onto the fairway without authorization, litter left and right, stay on the green for a long time, do not repair ball-marks, do not replace divots, etc. At the end of the tournament, the course is in deplorable condition.
On the other hand, the sponsors leave the garbage they generated, damage the grass with their stands, damage the grass with the vehicles they used to transport the merchandise, and with the exhibition cars. Organizers must ensure that sponsors take care of the course.
- Consumption of food and beverages. The players prefer the food and beverage areas on the course. We cannot imagine a tournament without these areas. But often the food and drinks are not enough, leaving the participants without enjoying them. The organizers considered food and beverages for a certain number of participants. Still, they did not consider non-participants, for example, 50 caddies, 35 from course maintenance, 20 from maintenance, 15 from golf staff, and an unknown number of

sponsors and club members that they did not play. We are talking about more than 100 people. When food and drinks are finished before time, the players have to buy them in the club's regular services (bar cart, snacks, restaurant, etc.). The players get annoyed by the wrong organization and the inadequate controls.

It is the right of the participants to consume food and beverages in the tournament. What is not correct is that the participants takeout service, invite the family or take to store in their locker, cart, or car. The organizers put a bracelet on the participants to solve this problem, which is good, but not enough. Organizers should educate staff and sponsor staff not to consume the food and beverages that are intended for the participants.

- Gifts from sponsors. The subject of gifts is similar to the problem of food and drink. Sponsors should have a list of players to keep track of their gifts or give gifts only to those who wear the bracelet. Non-participants should respect the right of players to receive gifts.
- Deliver the scorecard late. The organizers want to get the results as quickly as possible, but some groups take time to deliver the scorecard because:
 - It seems that they got lost in the course and did not finish.
 - They start to fill the scorecard until the end of the round.
 - They played badly, and they are not interested in delivering it.
 - After the round, they continue playing.
- Deliver a fake scorecard. Some groups return the scorecards with a false result. In general, this occurs because:
 - They are two very similar groups.
 - There are players interested in entering the scorecards because they have the habit of registering fewer strokes.
 - Most of the two groups are not interested in the result of the competition, but someone is, and he can alter the scorecards.
 - Some players have already done it, and it worked for them.
 - The caddies enter the scorecards and record a result that favors their players.
- The raffle. Before the pandemic, the raffle of gifts was the longest part of the award ceremony. I said it was because last year I attended a tournament where the raffle was different. At the end of the round, we went to a table where there was a tombola. We put on a glove and took a paper with a number out of the tombola. This number indicated the gift obtained. We immediately went to the gift area, and they gave us the one corresponding to our number. Very fast, safe, and useful. It was incredible.

I know that changing people's habits is very difficult. It's easier just to let the tournaments stay the same. I believe that we can change for the better. If the players and the organizers apply these actions, they will make the tournaments more enjoyable. **FORE.**

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