

How Did I Get in This Flight? Why Did I Get a Bye?

The question of a competitor's placement in a particular flight is undoubtedly asked at every match play and stroke play championship. To completely understand flight placement, a player must understand the entry procedures and how those procedures are applied to qualifying round scores. Despite what one may think, the draw is a mathematical procedure. Whether it is match play or stroke play, entry procedures are consistent. When completing the entry form, the competitor must submit her ghin handicap number or a verified handicap from her golf professional (if she is a member of a club which utilizes in-house handicapping services). Additionally, she must state whether or not she desires to compete from the championship tees. Qualifying from the championship tees does not guarantee the player a position in the Championship flight anymore than qualifying from the regular tees guarantees a player a position in the First (or Second or Third...) flight. The difference between the match play and stroke play procedures is essential in understanding placement in flights.

After the qualifying round in the match play championship, competitors are numerically placed in flights. The Championship flight consists of the low 16 qualifiers (or the low 15 qualifiers and the defending Champion if she chooses not to qualify, thus automatically assuming the number one seed). Other competitors who chose to qualify from the championship tees and were not one of the low 16 qualifiers, comprise the Mary Perrin and/or Lou Miller Flight(s), which consist of eight (8) players. In all flights the lowest qualifying score results in the number one seed (except for the defending champion, as noted above). The second lowest qualifying score receives the number two seed; the third lowest (and so on...) Quite often, ties occur in qualifying scores. If a tie does occur, the competitor with the lowest handicap index is awarded the lower seed. If still tied, the USGA system of breaking ties in stroke play events (as outlined in the AWGA Standing Rules, Section B,1-G is utilized.

The identical procedures are used in determining flights for competitors qualifying from the regular tees. Flights are comprised of eight (8) players. Often, the number of competitors is not a multiple of eight. Please consider that the AWGA does not determine the number of players in the field. We do not want to place players on a waiting list just to have a balanced field. We all know that something will invariably happen and a competitor may have to drop out of the competition). With this in mind, the AWGA Tournament Director has the option to balance flights. Every effort is made not to "split scores" (i.e. players posting the same qualifying score being placed in different flights). Thus, a flight may only consist of 6 or 7 players and byes must be awarded. If flights were not balance, often there would only be three or four competitors in the last flight. It is not the desire of any Tournament Director to have byes, but at present it is may be necessary. Otherwise, players who post the same qualifying scores could be in different flights. The handicap index may be used to determine the cut, but we feel there is still a percentage of players whose handicap indexes may not be completely accurate. The AWGA highly encourages players to post all their scores, regardless of whether or not you feel that they are higher or lower than your "normal" score!

Stroke play procedures are quite similar to those used in match play. Ideally, flights consist of eight (8) players. The Championship flight is typically the low eight qualifying scores and/or any competitor within eight (8) shots of the leader. Thus, the number of competitors in the Championship flight is solely dependent upon the qualifying scores. Competitors who

qualified from the championship tees who do not make the Championship flight comprise the President's and/or Governor's flight(s). Every effort is made in all flights (championship tees and regular tees) to maintain balance. Once again, we make every effort not to "split scores". The Tournament Director has the option to have flights consisting of less than eight (8) players (while still awarding prizes in three places) or flights consisting of more than eight (8) players (and awarding additional prizes). In order to be prepared, the prize chairman always has a contingency plan for awarding additional prizes.

The AWGA Championships have a duo-fold purpose. Yes, the Championships exist to determine a champion, but it is the sincere desire of the AWGA Board of Directors to provide a friendly competition for female golfers of all abilities. Each and every competitor is important. Please encourage your friends who have yet to play in one of our events "to come join the competition, fun and fellowship".