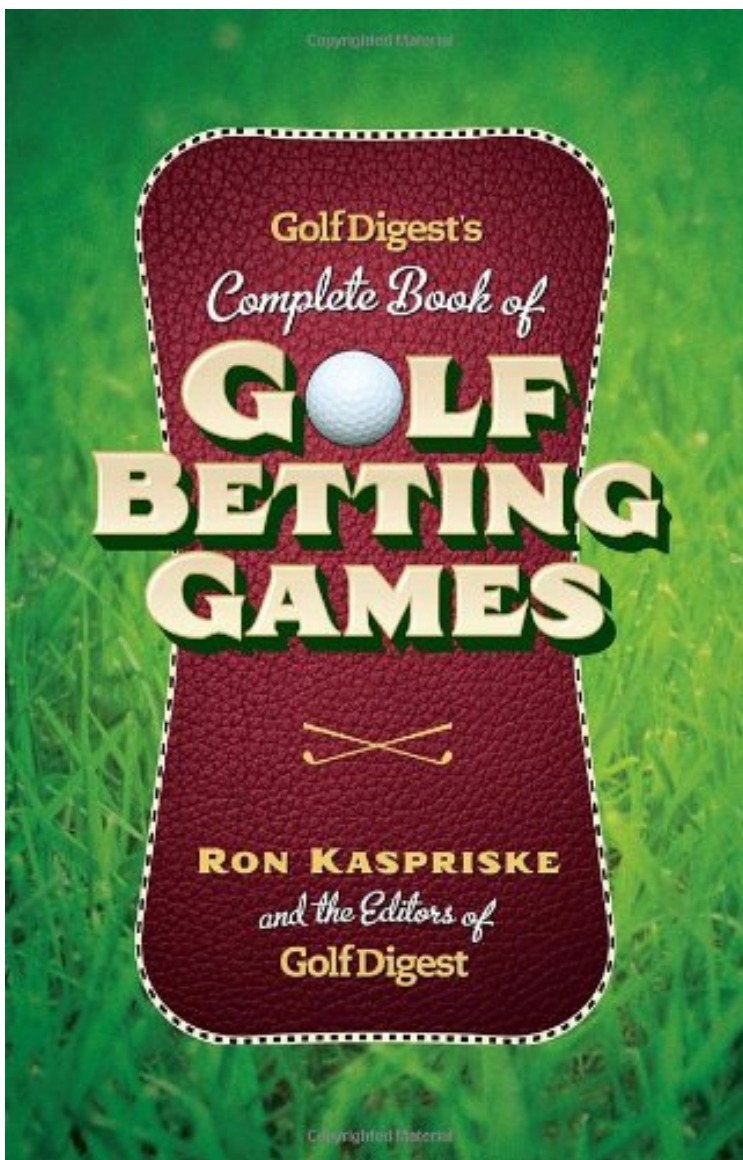


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Golf Digest's Complete Book of Golf Betting Games

Ron Kaspriske, Golf Digest

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Net and Gross . . . Nassau . . . the Hawk . . . Amigo . . . the Train Game . . . Second Ball . . . the Umbrella Game . . . What does it all mean? Recreational golfers around the world thrive on games within games as a way to enhance the golf experience, level the playing field, and, most important, have a lot more fun. Golf Digests Complete Book of Golf Betting Games lays it all out every game, every format, and every variation with a quick-reference glossary of every golf gambling term ever uttered. Organized by chapters for twosomes, threesomes, foursomes, or buddy trips with all the side games, each section is simple to navigate, with helpful strategy tips for each game and a set of clear-cut scorecard instructions.

About the Author Ron Kaspriske has been an editor at Golf Digest for six years and has been writing about golf for over a decade. He also coauthored a travel book called Golf Weekends, and writes articles for Golf Digest with David Leadbetter, Rick Smith, David Toms, and Chris DiMarco. The author lives in Norwalk, Conn., and usually plays \$5 Nassaus with junk and snake on the side. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. CHAPTER 1 GAMES FOR TWOSOMES Whether its a quick nine holes after work with the guy in the cubicle next to you or a match against your old nemesis, there are literally dozens of games you can play against a lone opponent. Even if paired with two strangers who fill out your foursome, most of these games can still be played without interrupting the rounds of the other two players. AIR HAMMERA skins game in which the value of a hole can be doubled, but only when a shot is in the air. So if theres a \$1 bet on a hole, and a players opponent hits a tee shot that's bound for a water hazard, while the shot is in the air the player can literally yell Hammer! at his opponent, and the bet has now doubled to \$2 for that hole. Low score wins on each hole (unlike skins, the bet typically doesnt carry to the next hole when the previous hole is halved). Of course, the opponent has the right to hammer back when the player hits an errant shot, as long as its airborne, so that \$2 bet could go to \$4 or \$8, etc. STRATEGY TIPS: Obviously youll want to air hammer someone if their shot is heading for big trouble. But if you get hammered, dont fret. Your opponent still has to play the hole and can screw it up just as easily. If you are in big trouble, dont try for the miracle shot. Play safe and wait for your opponent to make a mistake. BACK GAMMON (ALSO KNOWN AS HAMMER) Holes are worth a predetermined amount like a skins game and the low score wins that hole. However, during the play of the hole, either player can double the bet, at anytime, if they think they can win the hole even after the other player has holed out. The opponent can accept the new wager or decline it. An opponent who declines loses the original amount the hole was being played for. An opponent who accepts can double the new bet, and now its up to the other player to accept or decline the new bet. This process can continue until both players hole out. STRATEGY TIPS: A decisive advantage off the tee is grounds for doubling the bet. Its also wise to double if your opponent gets into a very difficult up and down situation near the green. If youre looking for a reason to double the bet, a good time to do it is when your score is all but secured and your opponent has a tricky putt to win the hole. This extra pressure often produces a missed putt. BACK IT UP A variation on the traditional skins game. The player who wins a hole has the option of pocketing the value or leaving it on the table and doubling the value of the skins by winning the next hole known as backing it up. In other words, a player wins a skin worth \$1. If this golfer leaves it on the table and wins the next skin, the value doubles and the player wins \$4 for the two skins (two skins worth \$2 each). If someone else wins the hole, that winner gets only the original value of two skins (\$2). If the hole is halved (tied), the value is reduced to a normal skin amount for the next hole (now three skins for \$3). Remember, the goal is to back up a win with another win. A variation of the game gives a double bonus for a backitup skin that is won with a natural birdie or better. In essence, those skins would be worth \$8. STRATEGY TIPS: After winning a skin, consider two things before trying to back it up: how your opponent is playing and whether the next hole suits your eye. If you are using handicaps, always back it up if the next hole is a stroke hole for you. (A stroke hole is a hole in which you subtract a stroke from your score but your opponent doesnt.) BAG RAID See game description under PickUp Sticks in this chapter. BOBBY JONES A great strokeplay or matchplay game for two players who have vastly different handicaps. Each player has to hit a tee shot and then play the others tee shot the rest of the way into the hole. In order to make this fair, the high handicap player should have the opportunity to choose between their own tee shot and the better players tee shot to prevent the better player from deliberately hitting a poor shot. That means the player with the higher handicap always tees off second. The game can also be played with handicap strokes. STRATEGY TIPS: Off the tee, the weaker player should play aggressively and try to hit the ball as far as possible with one exception. If the better player hits a tee shot into the water or out of bounds, the weaker player should play conservatively off the tee and force the better player to try to make bogey or better by having to play their own tee shot. BRIDGE See game description in the Foursomes chapter. CLOSE OUT A matchplay

competition with a potential for two bets. If the first match ends before the 18th hole, then a second match begins for half the amount of the original wager, and its played over the remaining holes.**STRATEGY TIPS:** Getting waxed over 1215 holes doesnt sting as much if you can win half your money back at the end. So if youre losing in a big way, try to hang on as long as you can so your opponent tires in time for the new bet to start. If you are getting strokes, pay particular attention if they come on holes late in the match, giving you a decisive advantage on the second bet.

CUBEA ninehole, matchplay game in which the player with the shortest tee shot on the first hole owns the cube. The cube is an imaginary item that allows the owner to double the wager for the front nineat any timeuntil the outcome is decided. Once the bet is doubled, the cube is transferred to the opponent, who now has the opportunity to double the bet. The transferring of the cube can continue several times until the nine-hole match is decided. On the 10th tee, a new cube is given to the shortest hitter and a new bet begins.**STRATEGY TIPS:** The original bet for each nine should be low, since doubling can escalate if the match goes back and forth. The player who owns the cube controls the game, so taking a decided advantage in the match gives you a great opportunity to double your money. If you're three up with four holes to play, it's time to use the cube.

HAMMERSee game description under Backgammon in this chapter.

MATCH PLAYEach player vies for the lowest score on each hole (their total number of strokes for the entire round is irrelevant), and one of them wins the match when they have won more holes than remain to play. For instance, a player who wins the first hole is said to be one up. If the opponent wins the next hole, the match is all square. If the opponent then wins the next hole, the opponent is one up and the player is one down. The game ends when someone has won more holes than there are holes remaining to be played. If the number of holes a player is up is equal to the number of holes remaining, the match is said to be dormie, and the player who is leading can do no worse than tie. Handicap strokes are often applied in this game to make it equitable. If a player has a handicap of six on a course and the opponent has a handicap of 12, the inferior player would be able to subtract a stroke from his or her score on the six hardest holes on the course.**STRATEGY TIPS:** Matchplay veterans will tell you that no matter how big your lead is, never let up or go easy on an opponent. Its OK to play safe and force the player who is trailing to play aggressivelyand possibly make mistakesbut dont play so safe that you start giving away holes. Each hole gives golfers a chance to start anew, so dont worry if you play one hole very poorly. Your strokeplay score is irrelevant.

MULLIGANSSee game description in the Foursomes chapter.

NASSAUA match-play competition with three bets: one for the front nine holes, one for the back nine, and one for the entire eighteen. Each bet is typically for the same amount, so a \$5 nassau is actually a \$15 bet overall. During the match, a variation of the nassau allows for the player who is trailing to request a new bet (usually for the same amount as one of the legs of the nassau) for the hole or holes remaining on that nine. That player calls for a press. For instance, if someone is two down with three holes to play on the front nine, that player can call for a press for the remaining three holes. That means there is a new three-hole bet. The other bet also remains intact. Sometimes the player in the lead can refuse a press, so its good to clarify what form of nassau youll be playing. Another variation allows for an automatic press when the deficit in the front or backnine match gets to a certain point, such as two down, by either player. Press bets can be pressed, so there can be several bets going on at the same time.**STRATEGY TIPS:** If handicap strokes are being used and presses are allowed, its good to press on holes where you are getting a stroke and your opponent is not. Its also a good idea to press on holes that suit your game or hurt your opponent, such as a long par 5 that you can reach in two but your shorthitting partner cannot. The final few holes on any side are crucial, so dont ease up, even with a big lead.

ONE CLUBCompetitors play an entire round with only one club. Match or stroke play can be used to determine the winner. This game can be modified to include a putter. Competitors have a choice of selecting which club each one will use, or a specific club can be agreed upon before the round begins.**STRATEGY TIPS:** If you can pick, go with a 7iron or 6iron. These clubs have enough loft to hit shots around the green and just enough distance to make some par 4s reachable in two, and most par 5s reachable in three. If youre using an iron on the green, focus on not breaking the wrists at impact, as the loft on the club will make the ball skid. Try to putt with the leading edge. Off the tee, concentrate on keeping the ball in play and not trying to play the hole in a traditional sense. If there's a good spot to lay up on a hole, use it.

ONE ON ONEA points game. Drives in the fairway longer than 150 yards earn one point, longer than 200 yards earn two points, longer than 225 yards earn three points, and longer than 250 yards earn four. (You can also have a sixpoint bonus for a 300yard drive in the fairway.) Approach shots that hit the green (they dont have to be in regulation, but there can be a onepoint bonus if one is) from 100 yards or less earn one point, longer than 100 earn two points, longer than 150 yards earn three points, and longer than 200 yards earn four points. Putts made from 30 feet or longer earn four points, from 15 to 30 feet earn two points, and from outside the length of the flagstick earn one point. The player with the most points wins and is paid the difference by the loser.**STRATEGY TIPS:** Twopoint achievements can easily be racked up in this game, with 200yard drives in the fairway and 101yard approach shots that hit the green, so focus on keeping the ball in play.

PICKUP STICKS (ALSO KNOWN AS BAG RAID)A matchplay or nassau game with a twist: A player who wins a hole gets to remove a club from the opponents golf bag. (Usually opponents agree that the putter is not eligible for removal.) Once a club is removed, it cannot be used again for the rest of the round.**STRATEGY TIPS:** The driver would seem a good candidate as the first club to go, but this strategy could backfire as your opponent will likely hit more accurate tee shots with a shorter club. Go for the wedges first,

particularly the sand and lob wedges. Or, take the fairway woods and hybrids out first to force your opponent to hit driver off as many tees as possible.

SECOND CHANCE Each player plays two balls and records the best score on each hole in a nassau match against the other player. This game is great for a round on an empty course, or on one in which you have long waits between holes.

STRATEGY TIPS: The second ball is often the better ball, but consider playing conservatively with your first ball and being daring with the second. Otherwise you might end up with the same score for each ball.

SKINS See game description in the Foursomes chapter.

STROKE PLAY The player with the lowest score after a predetermined number of holes is the winner. Handicap strokes can be subtracted from the total score to make the competition more equitable. A single bet can be made, or the loser can pay a predetermined amount for every stroke more than the winner had.

STRATEGY TIPS: Making a big mistake on one hole can prove a lot more costly than bogeying your way around the golf course, so always look to avoid big trouble on any hole. Making a bogey on a par 3 by laying up in front of the green, chipping on, and two putting might be hard on the ego, but it's a lot better than hitting a tee shot into the water, taking a drop, skulling the next shot into a bunker, and then three putting for a quadruple bogey. It's probably better not to pay attention to what your opponent is doing on a hole. You could lose focus on your own game.

SUPER NASSAU A matchplay competition where there are nine or more potential bets over the course of the match. Every three holes, one bet ends and a new one begins for a total of six, threehole bets. There also are three bigger bets in a traditional nassau format: the front nine, the back nine, and the overall 18 holes. The three big bets should be worth three times the amount of the smaller bets. So, say, \$1 for the threehole bets and \$3 for the ninehole and 18hole bets. Players can also decide if there are presses for each bet.