

GolfGiving Handicap Edition Part 1

October 8th, 2025

GolfGiving Index Update: The Truth Behind the Trip Handicap

As the annual Golfgiving pilgrimage approaches, it's time to address the turkey in the fairway: **the GolfGiving Index**. Yes, it's different from your GHIN. No, it's not a mistake. And absolutely yes—it's intentional.

Why a Separate Index?

Your GHIN is calculated under ideal conditions—home course familiarity, rested bodies, and sober minds. The GolfGiving Index? It's forged in the fire of:

- **Unfamiliar terrain:** New courses with tricky layouts and hazards magnetically attracted to our golf balls
- **Sleep deprivation:** Late-night poker, early tee times, questionable mattresses
- **Liquid courage:** Bourbon, beer, and bravado tend to loosen up swing mechanics

Your GHIN might say you're a 9.2. But your GolfGiving Index? A battle-hardened 11. It's not a knock—it's a badge of honor.

The Surveillance System

Behind the scenes, Dennis Jr. and Jason track every score—entered, unentered, or scribbled on cocktail napkins. Their methods include:

Eyewitness Accounts: Every foursome is a tribunal. If you chunked three into the water on 7, someone saw it.

Photo & Video Forensics: Group selfies and swing videos are reviewed. Timestamped evidence near scoreboards helps reconstruct "forgotten" rounds.

Trash Talk Trail: The chirps don't lie. Group chat receipts are admissible in GolfGiving court.

Statistical Modeling: Jason's spreadsheet includes regression models, historical averages, and "libation multipliers." If you're an 8 who shot 94 last year on a similar course, the algorithm knows.

Memory Bank: Dennis Jr. has photographic recall of GolfGiving carnage. He remembers who seven-putted in 2021 and who "forgot" that 10 on the par-5.

The Result: All of this feeds into your index—reflecting not just skill, but trip performance under pressure, fatigue, and fireball. It ensures fair play and maximum chirping rights.

The Bottom Line

The GolfGiving Index isn't USGA-sanctioned, but it's spiritually accurate. It accounts for:

- Historical performance across multiple trips
- Course difficulty and conditions (wind, rain, hangovers)
- Mental toughness under pressure (final hole with three side bets on the line)
- Peer reputation—if the group thinks you're a sandbagger, we adjust accordingly

It's protective, not punitive. It levels the playing field and reflects the true difficulty of playing under Golfgiving conditions.

GolfGiving Indexes will be unveiled in the final newsletter.

So when you see your number, don't panic. Embrace it. It's a reflection of the grit, grind, and glorious dysfunction that makes this trip unforgettable.

Now go hydrate, stretch, and pack your Advil. GolfGiving awaits. 🍷🍺

GolfGiving CTP Awards - A Festive Twist on Precision Golf 🎯

GolfGiving brings a unique spin to competitive golf with its Closest to the Pin (CTP) awards—festive tree ornaments awarded on select par 3 holes across three celebrated North Carolina courses:

- Talamore Golf Course (Southern Pines)
 - Hole 2(White) - 157 yards
 - Hole 5(Blue) - 138 yards
 - Hole 13(White) - 121 yards
 - Hole 15(White) - 178 yards
- Legacy Golf Links (Aberdeen)

- Hole 5(White) - 130 yards
- Hole 9(Blue) - 156 yards
- Hole 11(White) - 182 yards
- Hole 17(Blue) - 146 yards
- Bayonet at Puppy Creek (Raeford)
 - Hole 3(Blue) - 153 yards
 - Hole 9(White) - 142 yards
 - Hole 14(Blue) - 166 yards
 - Hole 16(White) - 148 yards

Here's how it works:

☀️ Format & Rules

- 12 CTP ornaments will be in play, distributed across par 3 holes at the three courses.
- Every par 3 will feature one ornament award, making each short hole a chance to win.
- All players, regardless of whether they're playing the back tees or forward tees, will hit from the same designated tee box on par 3s to ensure fairness and consistency.

🎁 The Awards

- Winners of each CTP hole receive a custom tree ornament, blending holiday spirit with golfing achievement.
- These ornaments are not just decorative—they're a badge of precision and bragging rights for the season.

Whether you're chasing birdies or just hoping to stick one close, these CTP ornaments add a playful and festive incentive to every par 3. It's golf with a holiday twist—where your best shot might just end up on your tree.

A ROOKIES JOURNEY THRU THE SANDHILLS

Ethan had never held a golf club before November 2024. His idea of golf was limited to mini-golf dates, watching Tiger Woods highlights on TikTok, and seeing Dennis Jr's golf clubs in the garage he owns and trains out of despite Dennis Jr owning the rest of the house. His golfing career highlight up to this point was his only ever hole in 1 at Monster Mini Golf in Chantilly, VA at the 18th hole for a future free round which he has yet to use after carding a 92. So when he was invited to join the GolfGiving crew on their annual pilgrimage to the sandhills of Pinehurst, he packed his bags(Dennis' old clubs and bag) with more curiosity than confidence.

The trip began with what the crew affectionately called the "appetizer round" at River Ridge Golf Course. Ethan, wide-eyed and grinning, stepped onto the first tee like a kid at recess. He didn't know which club to use, didn't understand why people whispered on the greens, and had a peculiar habit of putting from 40 yards out. His score? A mystery lost to laughter and divots.

But the real adventure began the next day.

Tot Hill Farm: Baptism by Strantz

Tot Hill was a beast. Designed by the legendary Mike Strantz, the course was as much art as architecture—bold, dramatic, and unforgiving. Ethan hacked his way through the course, scoring a 128(probably more). He celebrated every contact with the ball like a victory, even if it ricocheted off a tree or rock. The crew watched in amusement as Ethan tried to chip with a driver and putt from the fringe with a sand wedge. His childlike wonder softened the sting of triple bogeys. Tot Hill didn't break him—it baptized him.

Hyland Golf Club: A Lesson in Grace

Then came Hyland. Ethan was paired with Dennis Sr., a seasoned golfer with the patience of a monk and the wisdom of a caddie. Dennis didn't just play—he mentored. He taught Ethan how to breathe before a swing, how to read a green, and most importantly, how to laugh at a shank. Under Dennis' wing, Ethan posted a 113—his lowest score ever taking out Will & Jeff in the process 3-0. It wasn't just a round; it was a rite of passage.

Pine Needles: The Meltdown as predicted by Donald Ross

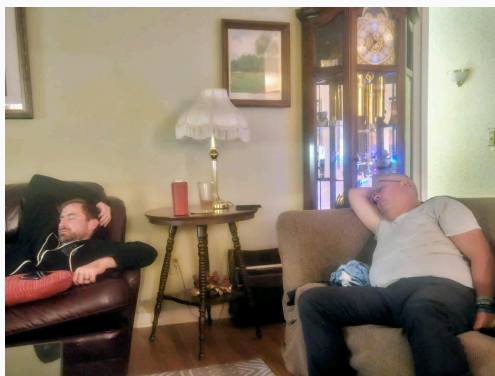
Pine Needles was less forgiving. A Donald Ross design, it carried the weight of history and the precision of a master neither words you'd ever use to describe Ethan. Ethan shared a cart with Jason, who was having a rough day himself. Jason's frustration boiled over, and Ethan, sensitive to the tension, began to unravel. The course was long, the greens were fast, and the sand traps felt like quicksand. Ethan quit six holes, defeated not just by the layout but by the vibe. He carded a 136, but the real score was in lessons learned: golf isn't just about the swing—it's about the company.

Epilogue: The Spirit of GolfGiving

By the end of the trip, Ethan wasn't a golfer in the traditional sense. He was a storyteller, a laugh generator, a reminder of why GolfGiving existed in the first place. His scores were high, but his spirit was higher. He didn't know etiquette, but he knew joy. And in the sandhills of Pinehurst, that was enough.

Not many golfers can say that out of their first four courses played, one was designed by Mike Strantz and another by Donald Ross. That's like learning to swim in the deep end of golf's architectural pool. Ethan didn't just play—he survived, he learned, and he laughed.

Next year, he vowed to break 110. But even if he didn't, the crew knew: Ethan was already a legend.



Player Spotlight

Joey - Chief



Meet our hero: a man who's been running into burning buildings since he was 16, proving that bravery and good judgment don't always go hand-in-hand.

On the course, our protagonist battles his most persistent nemesis: the slice. Every drive is a bold journey toward the right rough, like a boomerang that forgot to come back. He's mapped more of the woods on the right side of fairways than Lewis and Clark charted heading west. The trees have gotten to know him by name.

And yes, he's a Cowboys fan—which means he's highly experienced in watching things fall apart in critical moments. It's excellent training for his golf game, where clutch putting goes to die. At least his loyalty is consistent: whether it's America's Team or that cursed driver, he sticks with lost causes like it's a personality trait.

But here's the thing: you can't help but root for a guy who saves lives as a hobby, married the woman he once took to court, and still tees it up every weekend despite a swing that defies physics. That's not just commitment—that's delusion bordering on inspirational.

Patrick - The Runner



The apple has fallen far from the tree, rolled down a hill, and ended up in a completely different orchard. Meet Patrick—or as the family knows him, "The One Who Got Out."

While his father spent his youth running into burning buildings and developing a slice that could cut diamonds, Patrick became the family's athletic crown jewel. An accomplished runner, he's shattered every O'Donnell family record that didn't involve "most beers drank at the firehouse" or "worst ball flight." His trophy case is fuller than his dad's incident reports, and he's actually good at a sport that requires moving in a straight line—a concept that remains foreign to his father's golf ball.

Then there's his golf game. Or rather, his golf *attempt*. He's only played a handful of times, which is exactly the right amount when you're this bad. But here's the thing: he's got the O'Donnell excuse locked and loaded—"I barely play!" It's the perfect defense. Meanwhile, his dad has played thousands of rounds and still slices it into the parking lot. At least Patrick has potential.

Career-wise, he's an engineer working on projects so classified that even he's not sure he's allowed to know about them. Ask him about work and you'll get the conversational equivalent of a redacted government document. "I could tell you, but then I'd have to kill you" isn't a joke—it's Tuesday. The man calculates things for national security but can't calculate how to keep a 7-iron out of the water hazard.

Still, he's proof that the O'Donnell gene pool has depth. Athletic ability? Check. Actual career accomplishments? Check. Ability to not become a washed up volunteer firefighter? That's setting the bar low, but we'll count it.

The golden child has arrived.

Brett - South Riding guy



Brett is a study in contradictions: he served his country with honor and dignity, then came home to become the guy HR sends in when someone needs to be escorted out of the building. He's the corporate grim reaper, the layoff specialist, the man who walks into your office and suddenly your "brief chat" with management makes terrible sense. Thank you for your service—both military and as the destroyer of livelihoods.

On the lanes, Brett is a king. His bowling game is tight, controlled, precise—the discipline of a veteran on full display. Then he gets to the golf course and it all falls apart like his 3am decision-making. Terrible doesn't even begin to cover it. If bowling is chess, his golf game is hungry hungry hippos played in a lightning storm. The man who can thread a 7-10 split can't keep a golf ball on planet Earth.

Speaking of questionable decisions: Brett has swiped right so many times his thumb has developed its own muscle memory. He's seen every profile in a 50-mile radius. Twice. Tinder isn't a dating app for him—it's a census project. He's doing anthropological research at this point. Someone give this man a grant.

And then there are the 3am texts. You know the ones. The messages that start with "Yo" and end with ideas that seem to suggest he is going to quit golf and bowling at 3am and the apology arrives by 9am. Brett operates in a time zone where judgment goes to die and autocorrect is your worst enemy. If you've got Brett in your contacts, your phone is never on Do Not Disturb—it's basically a national security liability.

But here's the thing: the man served. He's earned the right to terrorize corporate America, destroy his handicap, and send incomprehensible messages at dawn..

Hooah, you beautiful disaster.

Tyler - Nathan's Friend



Tyler is Nathan's friend, which automatically means he's the better golfer in that relationship—a bar so low it's basically a speed bump. But credit where it's due: Tyler can actually break 90, posting low rounds in the mid-80s this year. In this crew, that makes him basically Rory McIlroy.

This summer, Tyler decided to fully commit to the game by doing his best Scottie Scheffler cosplay—and we're not talking about winning the Masters. No, Tyler went full method actor and landed himself in the slammer for public intoxication. Nothing says "I'm serious about my golf" quite like a mugshot. Scheffler got arrested on his way to the course; Tyler probably doesn't remember where he was going. But hey, both got cuffed, so the tribute is complete.

When he's not busy auditioning for "Cops: Golf Edition," Tyler's dialing in his distances with his shiny new TaylorMade P790s. And by "dialing in," we mean launching approach shots 20 yards over every green like he's trying to clear the parking lot. Sure, when he pures one it's beautiful—a majestic flight that would make angels weep. Unfortunately, it lands in the next area code. Distance control is a journey, and Tyler's GPS is broken.

Oh, and let's talk about his 18 Birdies profile. Tyler had a few "scramble rounds" casually logged in there, padding his stats like a college freshman padding a résumé. It took an intervention to get those fraudulent entries removed. We get it, man—scrambles feel great when you sink that 4-footer after your buddy stuck it close. But that's not your birdie, Tyler. That's charity.

Still, the man can play. Mid-80s is legit, even if he occasionally ends up in handcuffs or launches a 7-iron into orbit.