WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM

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Rules of Handicapping



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Welcome to the WHS



Six Systems to One

USGA

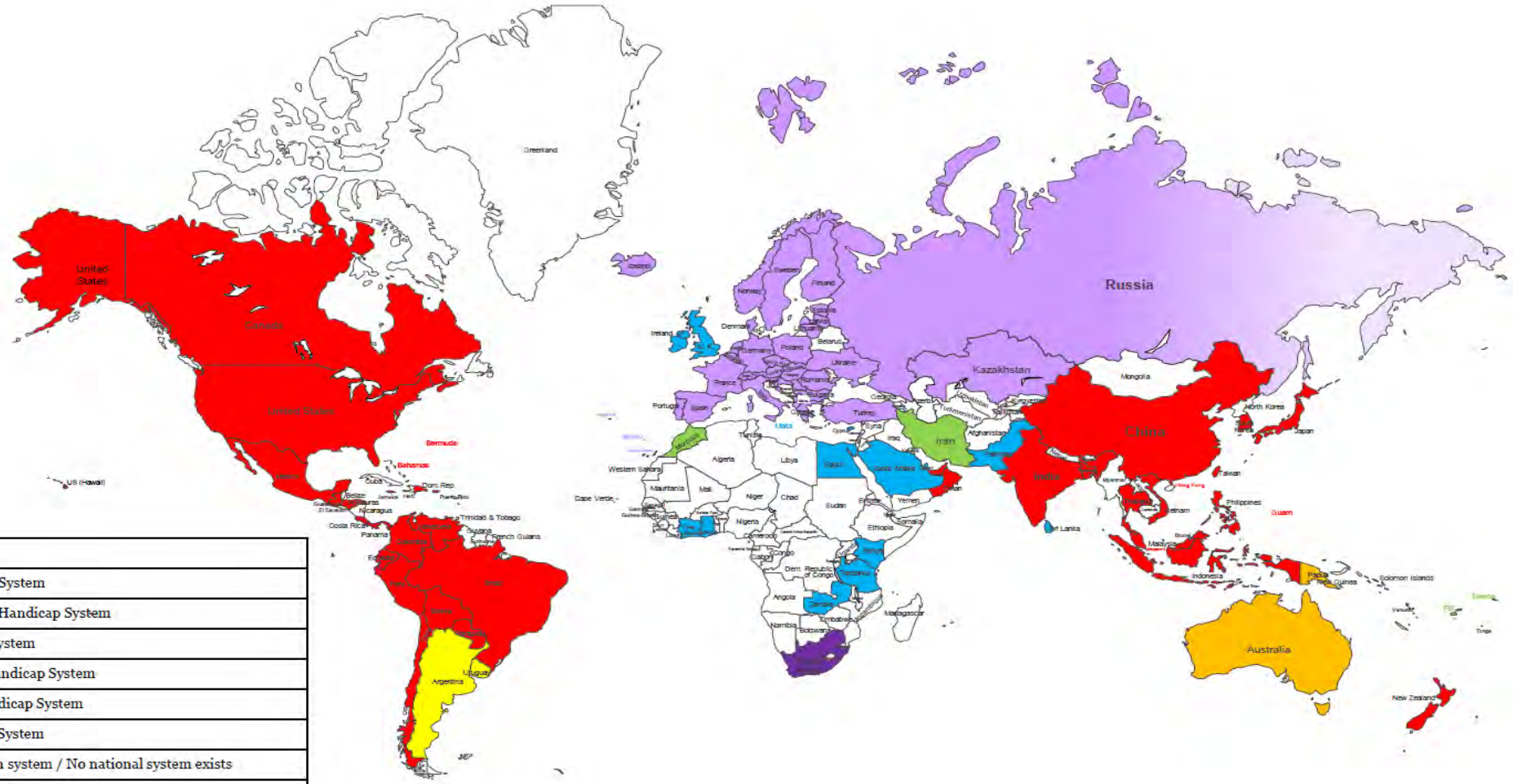
CONGU

EGA
European Golf Association

GolfAustralia

AAG 1926
ASOCIACION ARGENTINA DE GOLF

SOUTH AFRICAN GOLF ASSOCIATION



Key	
	USGA Handicap System
	CONGU Unified Handicap System
	EGA Handicap System
	Golf Australia Handicap System
	Argentinian Handicap System
	SAGA Handicap System
	Country uses own system / No national system exists
	Unknown (as yet)

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Governance

There will be one World Handicap System, governed by the USGA and The R&A, to be consistent with the other sets of Rules.

The World Handicap System will be comprised of the Rules of Handicapping and the Course Rating System.

Governance Functions

- Rules of Golf
- Rules of Amateur Status
- The Equipment Rules
- World Handicap System

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Fundamentals of Handicapping



Purpose of the World Handicap System

The World Handicap System includes the Rules of Handicapping and the Course Rating System. Its purpose is to enable as many golfers as possible the opportunity to:

- Obtain and maintain a Handicap Index,
- Use their Handicap Index on any golf course around the world, and
- Compete, or play recreationally, with anyone else on a fair and equal basis.



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Key Definitions

LOW HANDICAP INDEX	The lowest Handicap Index achieved by a player within the last 365 days.
HARD AND SOFT CAP	A reduction or limit on the increase of a player's Handicap Index over a rolling 365-day period, measured against the player's Low Handicap Index within that period of time.
PLAYING CONDITIONS CALCULATION	A procedure used to evaluate if course and/or weather conditions on the day of play deviate from normal playing conditions to the extent that they have a significant impact on players' performance.
EXCEPTIONAL SCORE	A score differential which is at least 7.0 strokes better than the player's Handicap Index at the time the round was played.
NET DOUBLE BOGEY	The maximum score for a hole for handicap purposes, which is the sum of: • The Par of the hole, • An additional two strokes, and • Any handicap strokes applied on that hole.
NET PAR	Net Par is the new term for Par Plus, and it is used when a hole is not played.

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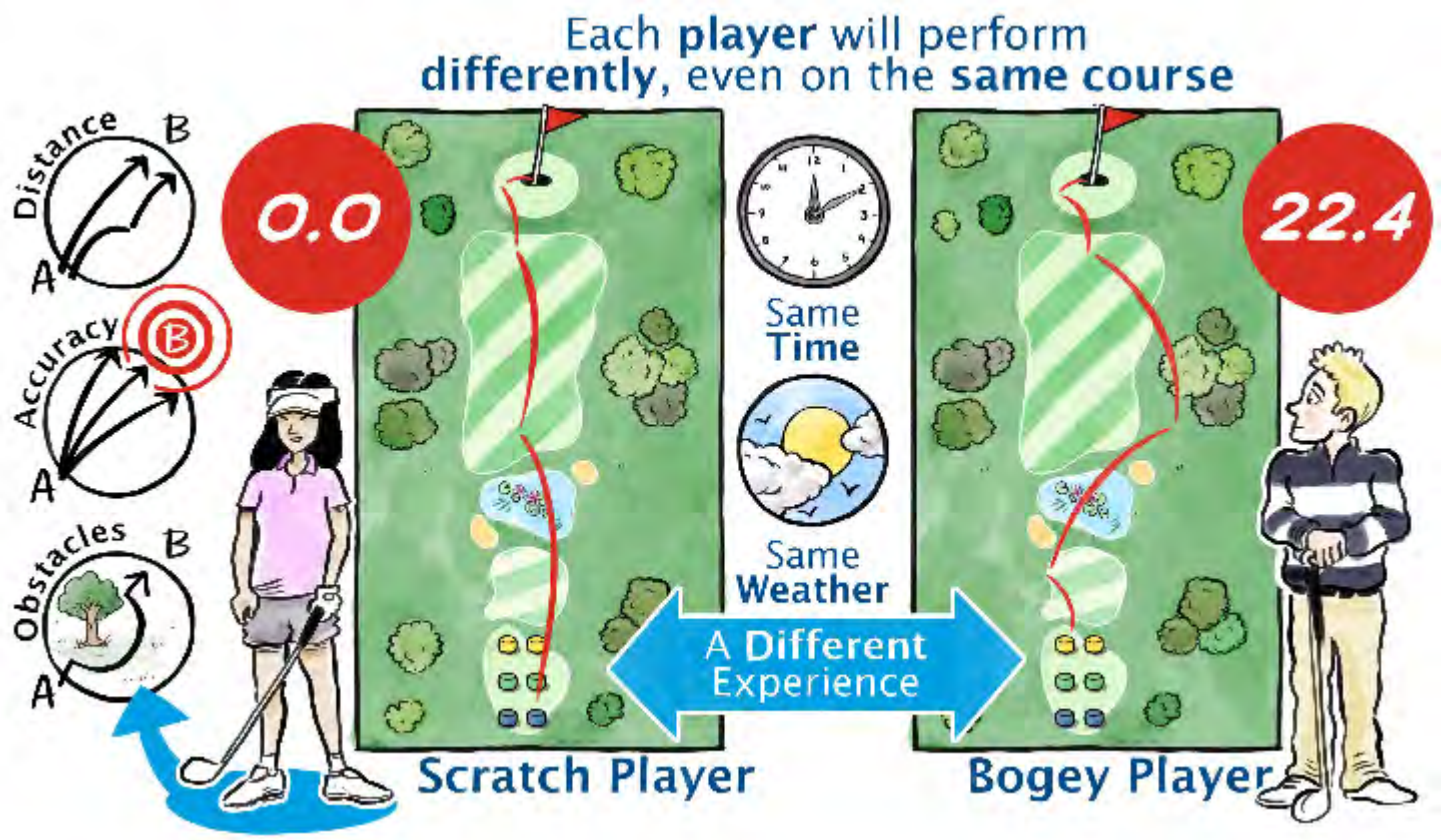
Course Rating System

The USGA Course Rating System is already in use not only in connection with the USGA Handicap System, but also with other existing Handicap systems.

The Course Rating System addresses the portability of handicaps by adjusting a player's Handicap Index according to the relative difficulty of the golf course being played.



Minimum Scores to Obtain a Handicap Index

- 54 holes made up of any combination of 9 or 18-hole rounds.
- No time limit on completing the submission of these scores.
- Strong recommendation that initial scores are submitted hole-by-hole to better assess the potential of the player.



Maximum Handicap Index

The maximum Handicap Index that can be allocated to a golfer is 54.0.

This speaks to two key principles of the World Handicap System.

- To be as inclusive and accessible as possible.
- To make it as easy as possible for golfers to obtain and maintain a Handicap Index.



Course Handicap

Under the Rules of Handicapping, a Course Handicap will be the number of strokes a player receives to play down to the **Par** of the tees being played. The formula is:



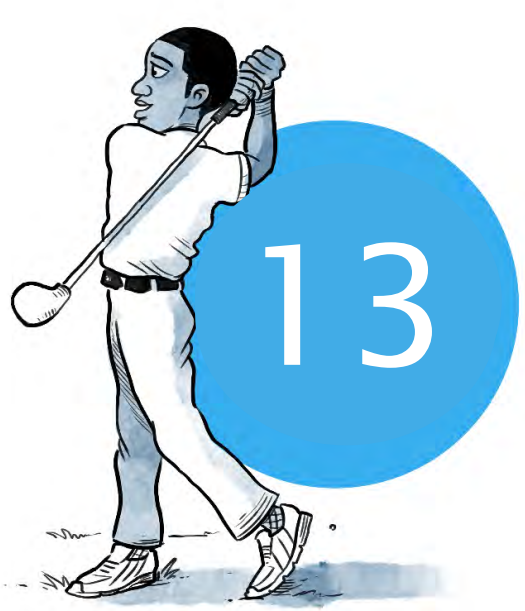
Course Handicap =
(Handicap Index x Slope Rating / 113) + (CR – PAR)

Playing Handicap

A Playing Handicap is the actual number of strokes the player gives or receives for the round being played.

The Course Handicap and Playing Handicap will typically be the same value.

However, when handicap allowances are used in various formats of play, there is an adjustment to make the competition equitable:



Playing Handicap

=

Course Handicap* x *Handicap Allowance

If different tees are in use, a player's Playing Handicap is adjusted by the difference in Par.

Playing Handicap Example

Course Info			
Tee	**Course Rating**	**Slope Rating**	**Par**
Green	72.0	128	70
White	70.0	125	70
Silver	68.0	119	70

Impact to 15.0 Handicap Index		
2019 Course Handicap	**2020 Playing Handicap**	**Target Score**
17	19	89
17	17	87
16	14	84

In this example, the 2020 Playing Handicap is not adjusted for a handicap allowance or difference in par (par is the same for all three tees). In other words, Playing Handicap is the same value as Course Handicap.

Player with a 15.0 Handicap Index – Playing Handicap will **increase** from the Green Tees (since the Course Rating is higher than Par), **decrease** from the Silver Tees (since the Course Rating is lower than Par), and **stay the same** from the White Tees (since the Course Rating and Par are the same).

Maximum Score for Handicap Purposes

Net Double Bogey	A player's maximum hole score for handicap purposes, ensuring bad holes don't impact a player's handicap too severely.



Maximum Score for Handicap Purposes

Net Double Bogey	=	Par	+	2	+/-	Handicap strokes received or given on a hole

A player with a Course Handicap of 11 receives one stroke on the first 11 allocated stroke holes.

On a par-4 hole with a ***stroke index*** of 6, the player's ***net double bogey*** score is calculated as follows:

Par		Two Strokes (Double Bogey)		Stroke(s) Received		Max
4	+	2	+	1	=	7

Hole Not Played

When a player does not play a hole, the score recorded for handicap purposes is net par.

For example:

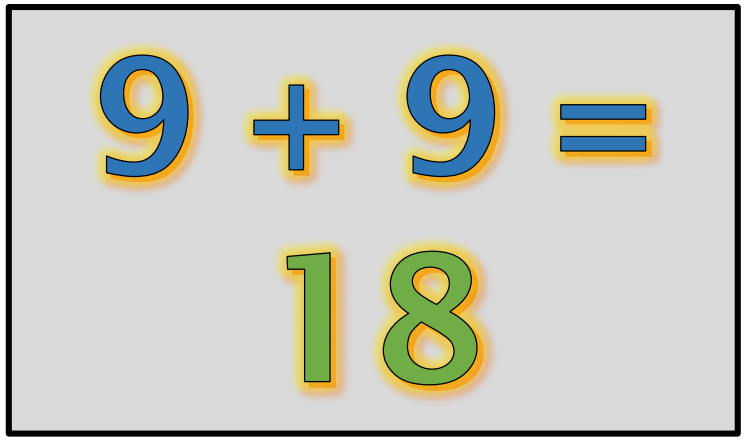
A hole being declared out of play by the Committee for maintenance or reconstruction purposes.



Treatment of 9-Hole Scores

Combine two 9-hole scores to create an 18-hole score differential.

If a player plays 7 or more holes but fewer than 14, then a 9-hole score will be posted and then combined with the previous or next 9-hole score.



Timeframe for Submitting a Score

A player should submit their score as soon as possible on the day of play and preferably before midnight (local time).

If a player does not submit their score on the day of play, their score will not be included within the daily Playing Conditions Calculation.

When the score is subsequently posted to the player's scoring record, the published Playing Conditions Calculation adjustment for the day should be applied to the player's score differential calculation.



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Handicap Formula



Handicap Index Calculation

There are **five significant changes** to the Handicap Index calculation coming in 2020:

1) The **minimum** number of scores required.

3

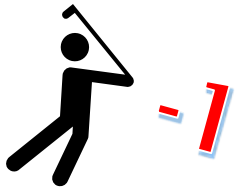
2) The **number** of **differentials** used.

8 of 20

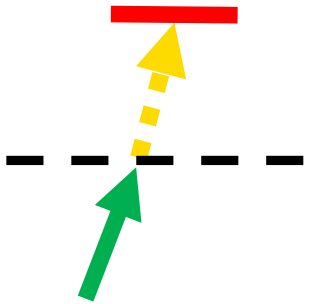
3) A Playing Conditions Calculation.



4) An Exceptional Score Reduction that considers **all scores.**



5) The **addition** of a Soft Cap and Hard Cap to limit upward movement.



Number of Differentials Used

The following table will be used to determine the number of score differentials used in the Handicap Index calculation, as well as any additional adjustment:

Number of *score differentials* in scoring record	*Score differential*(s) to be used in calculation of *Handicap Index*	Adjustment
3	Lowest 1	-2.0
4	Lowest 1	-1.0
5	Lowest 1	0
6	Average of lowest 2	-1.0
7 or 8	Average of lowest 2	0
9 to 11	Average of lowest 3	0
12 to 14	Average of lowest 4	0
15 or 16	Average of lowest 5	0
17 or 18	Average of lowest 6	0
19	Average of lowest 7	0
20	Average of lowest 8	0

Calculation of a Score Differential

For an 18-hole Score, a Score Differential is calculated as follows:

Score Differential =

(113 / Slope Rating) X (Adjusted Gross Score – Course Rating – PCC adjustment)

Calculation of a Handicap Index

For 20 Scores

Average the lowest 8 of the most recent 20 Score Differentials and round to the nearest tenth.

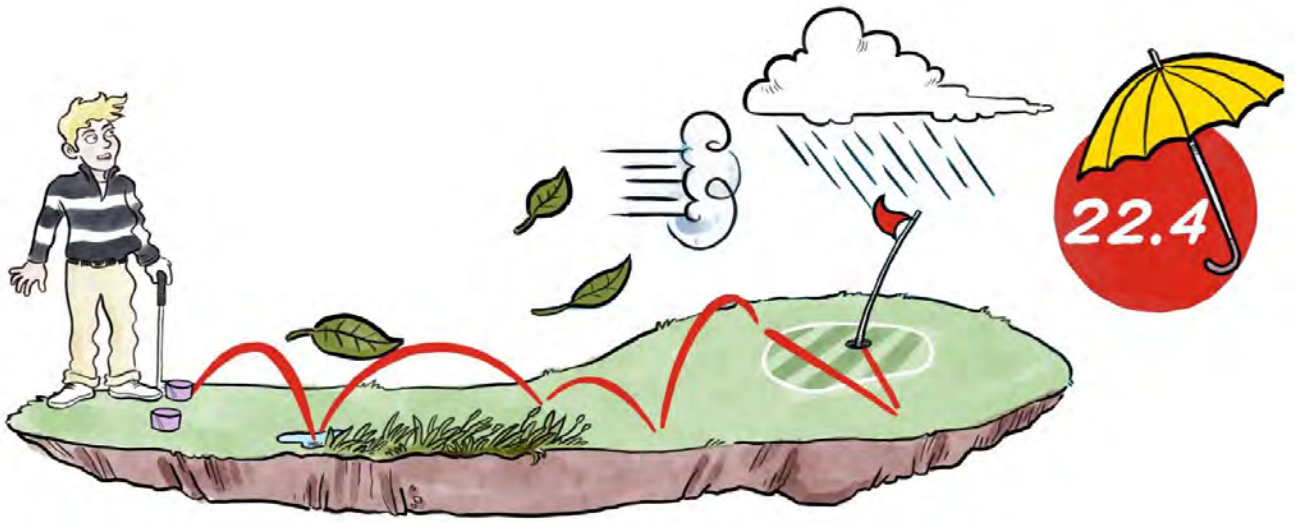


Playing Conditions Calculation

When adverse weather conditions or abnormal course set-up causes scores to be unusually high or low on a given day, a Playing Conditions Calculation will adjust Score Differentials to better reflect the player's actual performance.

The 'PCC' will be simple and conservative in nature and will be adjusted in integer values.

Range: *-1 to +3*



Exceptional Score Reduction

ESR is a procedure for dealing with exceptional scores which may indicate the player's true ability. The procedure considers all scores, rather than only Tournament scores.

How does it work?

1. Calculate Score Differential once score is posted and Playing Conditions Calculation is applied (when appropriate).

2. Calculate new Handicap Index.

3. If Score Differential is **-7.0** strokes or better than the Handicap Index *from when the round was played*, apply ESR table reduction to new Handicap Index →

Score Differential Relative to Index	**7.0 – 9.9** strokes lower	**10.0 +** strokes lower
ESR Adjustment	**-1.0**	**-2.0**

➢ This is *in addition to* any reduction caused by the score being used in the updated **8** of **20** calculation.

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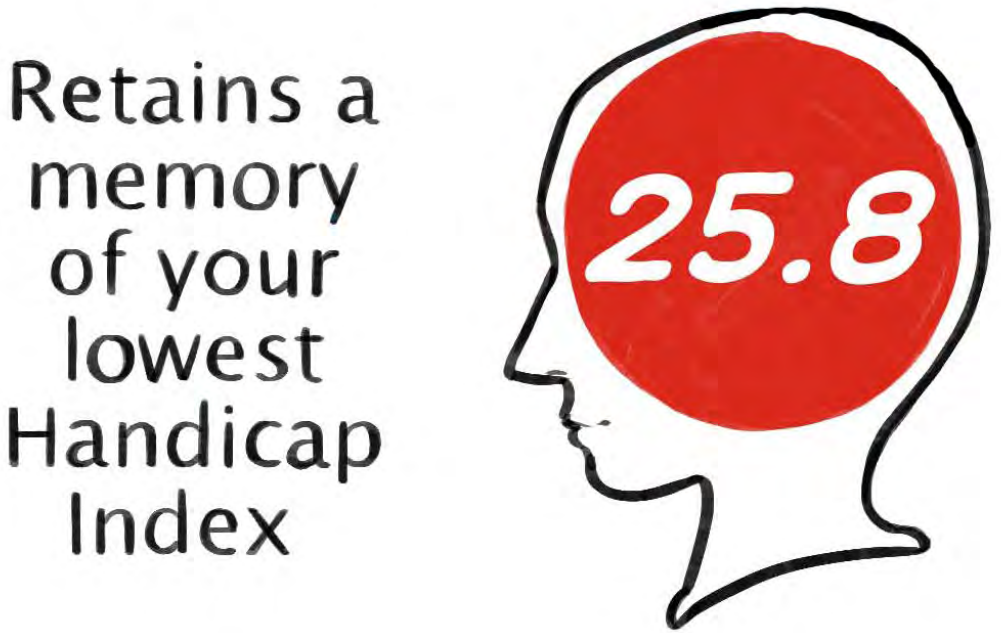
Memory of Low Handicap Index

The Low Handicap Index represents the demonstrated ability of a player over the 365-day period preceding the most recent score in the player's scoring record and provides a reference point against which the current Handicap Index can be compared.



Cap Procedure

A Soft Cap and Hard Cap will be implemented to limit the extreme upward movement of a player's Handicap Index within a 365-day (one year) period.

The *Soft Cap* will *suppress* upward movement by 50% after a 3.0 stroke increase over the Low Handicap Index has been reached.

The Hard Cap will *restrict* upward movement to 5.0 strokes over the Low Handicap Index.



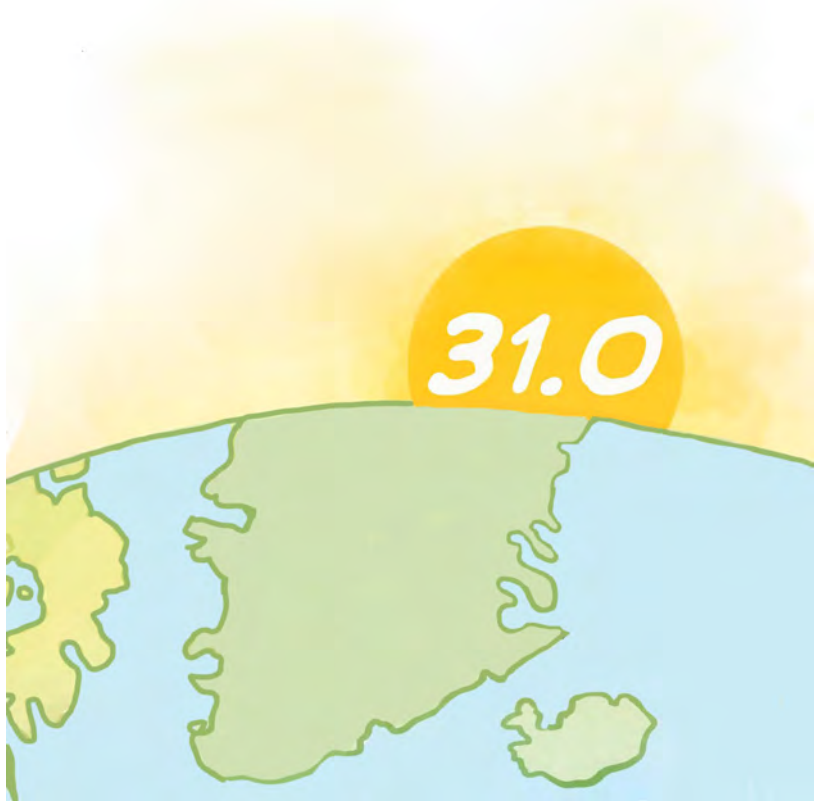


The soft cap and hard cap procedures only start to take effect once a player has at least 20 acceptable scores in their scoring record.

Daily Revisions

Under the Rules of Handicapping, a Handicap Index will update the day after a score(s) is posted.

- Players should submit their scores as soon as possible after the round is completed, and before midnight.
- This is to ensure the score will be used in the Playing Conditions Calculation.
- A player's Handicap Index can also be revised by a Committee adjustment.



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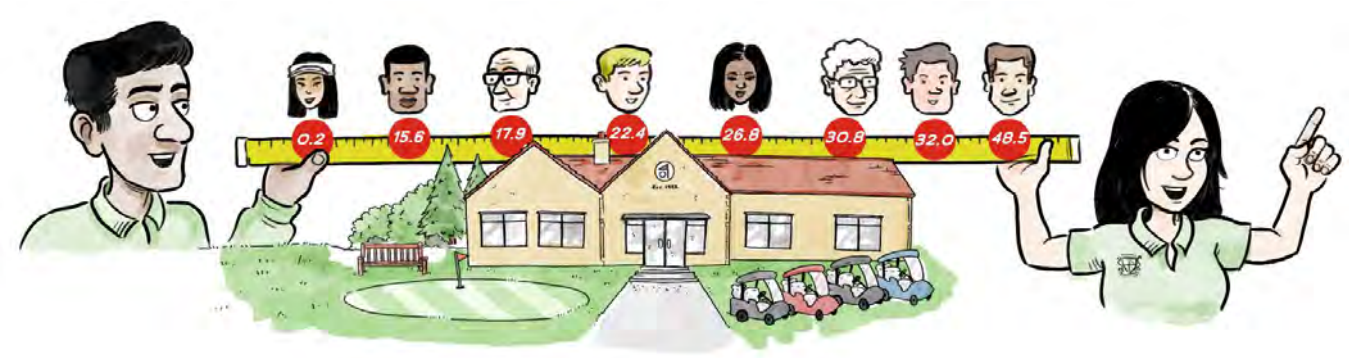
Handicap Committee Responsibilities



Handicap Review

- It is strongly recommended that the Handicap Committee conducts a handicap review at least once a year, for all players for which it is responsible.
- WHS compliant technology should provide reports to assist Handicap Committees identify those players requiring a handicap review.
- A player can request a handicap review if they believe their Handicap Index no longer reflects their demonstrated ability.
- A player must be made aware of, and be involved in, the handicap review process and be able to appeal a decision.



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Adjusting a Handicap Index

The Handicap Committee can adjust a player's Handicap Index to ensure that it reflects their demonstrated ability. In doing so, the Handicap Committee should consider all available information, including:

- The player's scoring potential,
- Any handicap(s) previously held by the player, and
- Whether the player is an improver, a steady player or a declining player.

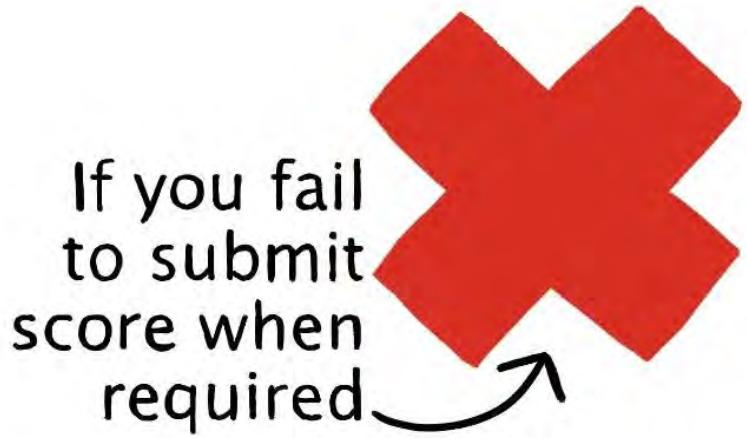
The Handicap Committee should consult with, or have ratified, any player's handicap adjustment by the **Authorized Golf Association.**



Applying a Penalty Score

If a player fails to submit a score from an authorized format of play, the Handicap Committee should investigate and take appropriate action.

- If the reason was valid and an acceptable score is still discoverable, that score will be posted.
- If there was **no valid reason** and an acceptable score is discoverable, that score will be posted.
- If the score is not discoverable, a penalty score may be posted.
- In the most serious cases, such as repeated failure to submit acceptable scores, the Committee has discretion to apply additional penalty scores as well adjust or withdraw the player's Handicap Index.



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Competition Committee Responsibilities



Competition Committee

The Committee in charge of a competition may set a maximum limit for play within their Terms of the Competition.

For example:

- A maximum Handicap Index for entry.
- A maximum Handicap Index a player is permitted to use.
- A maximum Course Handicap.
- A maximum Playing Handicap.



Terms of Competition Example

A limit of 18.0 may be set by the Committee, with higher Handicap Index players being restricted to playing from a Handicap Index of 18.0 for the purposes of that competition.

Even though higher handicap players are restricted to playing with a Handicap Index of 18.0 in this example, their full Course Handicap should be used in determining the score to post for handicap purposes.



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Authorized Golf Association Responsibilities



Adjudicating Hole Par

Because of the new Course Handicap calculation, Net Par and Net Double Bogey, it's important to have accurate pars for each hole determined for both men and women. Ideally par will be printed alongside each hole on the scorecard.

Par	Men	Women
3	Up to 260 yards	Up to 220 yards
4	240 to 490 yards	200 to 420 yards
5	450 to 710 yards	370 to 600 yards
6	670 yards and up	570 yards and up

It is recommended that par is established in accordance with the hole lengths indicated in the table. The Authorized Golf Association can also take into consideration the way the hole is designed to be played.

Stroke Index Allocation

The Rules of Handicapping will recommend using Course Rating data to rank the holes for Stroke Index allocation. The recommendation is to allocate odd strokes on the front and even strokes on the back.

Specific strokes will be allocated using three-hole clusters, with a recommendation for the #1 and #2 stroke holes in the middle clusters.

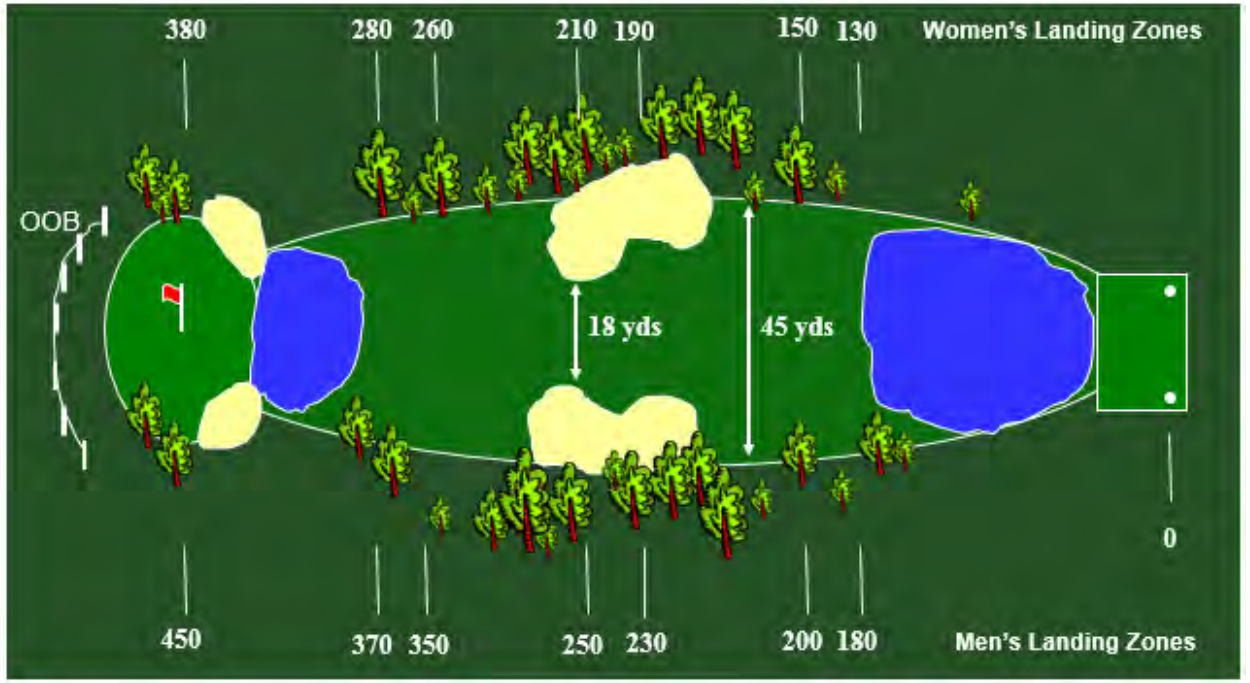
Hole Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Front 9									
Sample Table	11	15	3	7	17	1	9	13	5

Hole Number	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Back 9									
Sample Table	12	4	16	8	2	18	6	10	14

Permanent Modification of Courses

The club must notify the Authorized Golf Association when permanent changes are made to the course.

Permanent changes to the course require the AGA to review the current Course Rating and Slope Rating and to determine whether a re-rating is necessary.



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Club Certification



Handicap Certification Quiz

Golf Clubs are required to complete a certification process in order to use the World Handicap System. Participation in a certification seminar and passing a test exhibiting knowledge about the World Handicap System is required.

Handicap Quiz

Education Videos

Calculation of Course & Playing Handicap

Timely Submission of Scores

Exceptional Score Reduction

Maximum Handicap Index

Playing Conditions Calculation

Max Hole Score for Handicap Purposes

Handicap Committee Review

Responsive Handicap Index Updates

Limit of Extreme Upward Movement of a Handicap Index

Acceptable Scores for Handicap Purposes

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Thank You

