

WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM



Rules of Handicapping Study Guide

As presented by:



WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM

Structure of the WHS

The R&A and USGA

Are joint governing authorities and are responsible for authorizing the use.

Multinational/
National
Associations

Has the exclusive rights to implement and administer the World Handicap System within its jurisdiction, including the issuance of a Handicap Index.

Allied/Regional
Golf Association

Are affiliated to its National Association and comprised of golf clubs and/or golfers within a defined area.

Golf Club/
Handicap
Committee

Is affiliated to its Authorized Association and is responsible for ensuring the handicaps of those members who have designated it to be their home club are administered in accordance with the requirements of the Rules of Handicapping.

Player

Attempts to make the best score possible at each hole and submits scores for handicap purposes as soon as possible after the round is completed.

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Acceptable Scores

A score is acceptable for handicap purposes if the round has been played:

- By the *Rules of Golf* and the 'Modified Rules of Golf for Players with Disabilities.'
- When accompanied by at least one other person.
- On a *golf course* during its *active season*.
- When a player follows a Model Local Rule even if the Committee has not adopted it (e.g., alternative option to stroke and distance relief or preferred lies).



Timeframe for Submitting Scores

A player should submit their score as soon as possible on the day of play, after completion of their round 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* for the day should be applied to the player's *score differential* calculation.

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Changes to Handicap Calculation

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

- 1) The **minimum number of scores** to establish a *Handicap Index* will be three 18-hole rounds made up of any combination of 9 or 18-hole scores. There will be no time limit on when these scores are submitted.

It will be strongly recommended that a player's initial 3 scores are submitted **hole-by-hole** to enable clubs to better assess the player's potential.



A new player establishing a *Handicap Index* will use **PAR + 5** as their maximum score per hole.

An overarching theme of the *World Handicap System* is to become more inclusive-- and this feature should encourage golfers who play sporadically to establish and maintain a *Handicap Index*.

2) The following table will be used to determine the **number of score differentials** that will be factored into 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 <i>Handicap Index</i>	Adjustment to column 2 result
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

An 8 of 20 system will be more responsive to good scores and eliminate the need for a bonus for excellence.

The third column in the above table calls for an additional adjustment when certain numbers of scores exist in a player's scoring record. When limited scoring information is available, a downward adjustment is used to project the player's potential ability.

A player typically plays to their handicap one out of every five rounds, so when only three scores exist, for example, it's possible that the player hasn't yet played to their potential. This column also acts as a safeguard to protect the field.

3) When abnormal playing conditions cause scores to be unusually high or low on a given day, a **Playing Conditions Calculation**, or **PCC**, will adjust *score differentials* to better reflect the player's actual performance.

The **PCC** will be simple and conservative in nature and will be applied in integer values. -1, +2, etc.

- ❖ There must be eight scores submitted on a given day for **PCC** to be considered.
- ❖ The calculation will only consider players at or below a *Handicap Index* of 36.0.
- ❖ The calculation will consider 9 and 18-hole scores.

The **PCC** can also be used to indicate when the *Course Rating* of a golf course may need to be reviewed. If the **PCC** adjustment (which is conservative) is being applied 4-5 days a week, the ratings may not be accurately reflecting the difficulty of the golf course, often due to issues with course setup.

"I see somebody's upset the greenskeeper again!"



4) **Exceptional Score Reduction, or ESR** is a procedure for dealing with exceptional scores which may indicate the player's true ability. The procedure considers **all scores**, not just Tournament scores.

How does it work?

If a player posts a score that produces a *Score Differential* 7.0 strokes or better than their *Handicap Index* at the time the score was submitted, an automatic adjustment is made using the following table:

Score Differential relative to Index	7.0 - 9.9 strokes lower	10.0 or more strokes lower
ESR Adjustment	-1.0	-2.0

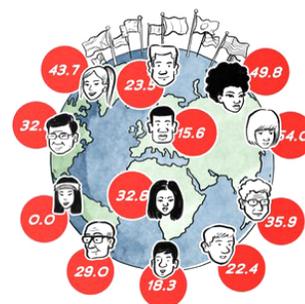
When an Exceptional Score is posted, a -1.0 or -2.0 adjustment will be applied to each of the previous 20 *score differentials* in a player's *scoring record*. The net result will be a 1.0 or 2.0 stroke reduction in their *Handicap Index*.

Subsequent scores posted will not contain the -1.0 or -2.0 adjustment, which allows the impact of the **ESR** to slowly diminish as new scores are posted.

Maximum Handicap Index

The **Maximum Handicap Index** for men and women will be **54.0**.

Although the current number of golfers in the U.S. that are at or above the current maximums of 36.4 and 40.4 is relatively small, many golfers who currently play but don't have a handicap would be at or above those numbers.



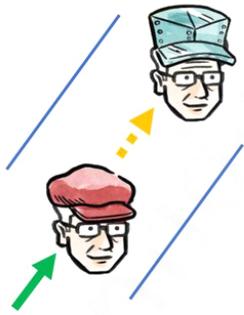
By encouraging more novice golfers to get a *Handicap Index* and learn about the **Rules of Handicapping**, we can incentivize golfers to improve their games and utilize pace of play provisions such as picking up at their *Net Double Bogey* maximum score.

Clubs will still have the discretion to implement a lower maximum limit for competitions as a term of the competition. Committee's will also be able to restrict *Course/Playing Handicaps* to 54 or a lower number.

5) A **Soft Cap** and **Hard Cap** will be applied to limit the upward movement of a player's **Handicap Index** within a 12-month period.

The **Soft Cap** will **suppress** upward movement by 50% after a 3.0 increase over a player's 12-month **Low Handicap Index** has been reached.

The **Hard Cap** will **restrict** upward movement to 5.0 over the **Low H.I.** from past 12 months.



The **caps** will ensure that a temporary loss of form does not cause a player's **Handicap Index** to move too far from a level consistent with their demonstrated ability.

The **caps** also serve as anti-abuse safeguards and will aid in minimizing the potential for handicap manipulation.

The **Handicap Committee** at the club will have the ability to allow a player's **Handicap Index** to exceed the **hard cap** if special circumstances such as injuries exist.

Soft Cap Example:



Player A has a **Low H.I. of 10.0.**
His current **8 of 20 average is 15.2.**

Step 1: Subtract the **Low H.I.** from current **8 of 20 average:**

$$15.2 - 10.0 = 5.2$$

Step 2: Determine how much greater than 3.0 the result is:

$$5.2 - 3.0 = 2.2$$

Step 3: Subtract 50% of the resulting value from **8 of 20 avg:**

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Current 8 of 20 average: } & 15.2 - \\ 50\% \text{ of } 2.2: & 1.1 \\ = & \end{aligned}$$

Handicap Index of: 14.1

Hard Cap Example:



Player B has a **Low H.I. of 10.0.**
His current **8 of 20 average is 17.4**

Step 1: Subtract the **Low H.I.** from current **8 of 20 average:**

$$17.4 - 10.0 = 7.4$$

Step 2: Determine how much greater than 3.0 the result is:

$$7.4 - 3.0 = 4.4$$

Step 3: Subtract 50% of the resulting value from **8 of 20 avg:**

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Current 8 of 20 average: } & 17.4 - \\ 50\% \text{ of } 4.4: & 2.2 \\ = & 15.2 \end{aligned}$$

Step 4: If result is more than 5.0 above **Low H.I.**, reduce to **Low HI + 5.0 value.**

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Low H.I.: } & 10.0 \\ + & 5.0 \\ = & \end{aligned}$$

Handicap Index of: 15.0

Updating a Handicap Index

Under the World Handicap System, a **Handicap Index** will update daily.



If a player does not post a score, their **Handicap Index** will not update that day-- as there will be no need for it to update.

This feature should encourage golfers to post their scores immediately following their round-- which will also allow them to contribute towards the **PCC** data pool. **Handicap Committees** should expect golfers to post promptly.

When it comes to multi-day competitions, it's recommended that the **Committee** in charge chooses to use the **Handicap Index** at the start of the competition for all rounds.

Course Handicap Calculation

Under the USGA Handicap System, a *Course Handicap* is the number of strokes a player receives to play down to the *Course Rating* of the tees being played. The current formula is:

$$\text{Course Handicap} = \text{Handicap Index} \times \text{Slope Rating} / 113$$

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 will be:

$$\text{Course Handicap} = \text{Handicap Index} \times (\text{Slope Rating} / 113) + (\text{CR} - \text{PAR})$$



This will simplify the process for setting up multi-tee competitions and eliminate the Section 3-5 adjustment.

There will, however, need to be an additional adjustment when players compete from tees where *par* is different-- as they will be playing to different benchmarks.

It will be important that *par* values are accurate-- and this will be emphasized to clubs by *Allied Golf Associations*.

Playing Handicap Calculation

A new defined term, *Playing Handicap*, will be introduced within the *Rules of Handicapping*.

When *handicap allowances* are used in various formats of play, *Course Handicaps* are adjusted to make the competition equitable.

Within the *Rules of Handicapping*, the adjusted *Course Handicap* will be referred to as a *Playing Handicap*.



Playing Handicap

=

(*Course Handicap* x *handicap allowance*) + *difference in pars*

Under the USGA Handicap System, when *Course Handicaps* are adjusted based on *handicap allowances*, we still refer to the resulting values as *Course Handicaps*. The introduction of the new term will allow for a clearer distinction between the two.

A *Playing Handicap* is the number of strokes you actually play with during the round.

Net Double Bogey

Net Double Bogey will be used when a player's actual score or *most likely score* exceeds a maximum number derived using the following formula:

$$\text{Net Double Bogey} =$$

Par + 2 +/- Handicap strokes received or given on a hole.

Example:

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* maximum score is calculated as follows:

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

Net Double Bogey is the primary method used around the world and provides for a more consistent adjustment.

Net Double Bogey is equal to zero points in Stableford, which is why many parts of the world use this method.

Another way to remember this term is "*Double Bogey Plus*" (or *Double Bogey Minus* for *Plus Handicap Players*).

Treatment of Scores Based on Number of Holes Played

Note: A hole is considered played if it has been started.

For a 9-Hole Score

A player must play **at least 7 holes** for an acceptable nine-hole score to be posted.

If a player plays **seven or eight holes**, a 9-hole score will be produced by adding a score of *Net Par* for the remaining hole(s).



A 9-hole *score differential* is calculated as follows using 50% of the *playing conditions calculation (PCC)* adjustment for the day:

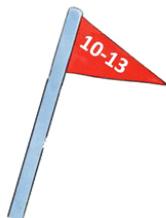
$$((113 \div 9\text{-hole Slope Rating}) \times (\text{Adjusted Gross Score} - 9\text{-hole Course Rating} - (0.5 \times \text{PCC adjustment})))$$

This 9-hole *score differential* must then be **combined** with another 9-hole *score differential* to produce an 18-hole *score differential*.

For an 18-Hole Score

For an 18-hole score to be acceptable, a minimum of 14 holes must be played.

When 10 through 13 holes are played, scores made on holes 10 through 13 must be discarded and only a nine-hole score may be submitted.



When 14 through 17 holes are played, an 18-hole score must be produced by adding a score of *Net Par* for the remaining unplayed holes.



An 18-hole *score differential* is calculated as follows using 100% of the *playing conditions calculation (PCC)* adjustment for the day:

$$(113 \div \text{Slope Rating}) \times (\text{Adjusted Gross Score} - \text{Course Rating} - \text{PCC adjustment})$$

Most Likely Score Guidelines

When a player starts, but does not complete a hole, the score recorded for handicap posting purposes is the *Most Likely Score*.

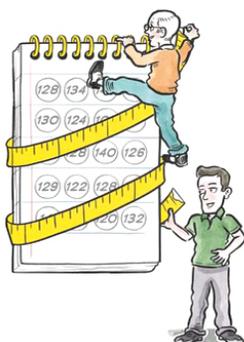
The *Rules of Handicapping* includes the following guidelines for determining a *most likely score*:

Position of the ball:	Strokes to be added:
On the putting green within 5 feet of the hole	Add 1 additional stroke
Between 5 feet and 20 yards from the hole	Add 2 or 3 additional strokes, depending on the position of the ball, the difficulty of the green and the ability of the player
Beyond 20 yards from the hole	Add 3 or 4 additional strokes, depending on the position of the ball, the difficulty of the green and the ability of the player

Handicap Review by Committee

It is strongly recommended that a *handicap review* be conducted at least annually by the home club for all members who have designated the home club to manage their *Handicap Index*.

- i. The *World Handicap System* software specifications will recommend reports and notifications to assist *Handicap Committees* to identify players' requiring *handicap reviews*. A review can be conducted annually or on-demand.
- ii. A player can request that the *Handicap Committee* reviews their current *Handicap Index*, if they believe it no longer reflects their demonstrated ability.
- iii. A player must be made aware of, and involved in, the *handicap review* process to the extent practicable and has recourse to an appeals procedure, if requested.



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 relating to the player's demonstrated ability, including:

- i. The player's scoring potential,
- ii. Any handicap(s) previously held by the player, and
- iii. Whether the player is improving, steady, or declining.



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

The adjustment, upwards or downwards, must be a minimum of 1 stroke and must have the effect of:

