## 9 Importance and Determination of Par

***USGA Handicap System (pre-2020):*** Par has little significance because a Course Handicap represents the number of strokes a player receives in order to play down to the Course Rating of the tees being played – not par.

***Rule Change for 2020:*** Par will have an important role within the World Handicap System, requiring par values to be more precise. Golf courses fall within the jurisdiction of the Authorized Golf Association, who has the final determination of par based on the following guidelines:

| 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 |

- When determining Par, the Authorized Golf Association will also consider how the hole is designed to be played and effective playing length factors such as elevation, doglegs and forced lay-ups.
    - For example, if an uphill hole falls within the par 5 yardage guidelines for men from all tees except the most forward set, which is 435 yards, that hole may also be designated as a par 5 from the forward tees.

***Reasons for Change:***

- The Course Handicap calculation will include a Course Rating minus Par adjustment, which will enable a Course Handicap to represent the number of strokes a player receives to play down to the Par of the tees being played.
    - As a result, as long as players are competing from tees with the same Pars, no additional adjustment is needed.
    - If players are competing from tees with different Pars, the player(s) competing from the tees with higher Par must add the difference in Par to their Course Handicap.
- The maximum hole score for handicap purposes will be a "Net Double Bogey," equal to Par + 2 + any handicap strokes the player receives. For this adjustment to be accurate, Par values must be correct.
- When a player does not play a hole, "Net Par" must be recorded as their score for the hole. Net Par is equal to Par + any handicap strokes the player receives.