

USGA Handicap System (pre-2020): A Course Handicap represents the number of strokes a player receives in relation to the Course Rating of the tees being played. The formula is:

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

Rule Change for 2020: A Course Handicap will represent the number of strokes a player receives in relation to the Par of the tees being played. The formula will include a Course Rating minus Par adjustment:

$$\text{Course Handicap} = \text{Handicap Index} \times (\text{Slope Rating} \div 113) + (\text{Course Rating} - \text{Par})$$

Reasons for Change:

- Under the USGA Handicap System, when players compete from different tees, a Course Handicap adjustment based on the Course Rating difference must take place to make the game fair.
 - This adjustment is necessary because players competing from different tees are competing with different benchmarks (different Course Ratings).
 - This adjustment, identified and explained in Section 3-5, has generated confusion and there have been challenges with its implementation over the years.
- Applying Course Rating minus Par within the Course Handicap calculation will allow players to compete from different tees without any adjustment – unless a difference in Par exists.
- Under the USGA Handicap System, it is common for Course Handicap values to change very little from tee to tee.
 - Confusion exists because the Course Handicap value only accounts for the number of strokes needed to play to the respective Course Rating.
- Beginning in 2020, Course Handicap values will change more from tee to tee, as they will represent the number of strokes to play to Par.
- Par is a term that resonates with golfers, so setting Par as the benchmark for a Course Handicap adds simplicity to handicapping.
 - Players will be able to determine their Target Scores (the score they'll shoot if they play to their handicap) by simply adding their Course Handicap + Par.
- A score of Net Par will be used for holes not played, and the maximum hole score for handicap purposes will be a Net Double Bogey. Having a Course Handicap that is relative to Par will ensure that the correct number of strokes are received and applied for both procedures.