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Exceptional Score Reduction (ESR)

USGA Handicap System (pre-2020): When a player submits two or more Tournament Scores (T-scores) within a 12-month period that are at least 3.0 strokes better than their Handicap Index, they are eligible for an automatic Handicap Index reduction.

- The amount of the reduction is determined by the number of T-scores submitted by a player within the last 12-months, as well as the difference between the Handicap Index and the average of the two best T-score Handicap Differentials.

Rule Change for 2020: When a player submits a score that produces a Score Differential of 7.0 strokes or more below their Handicap Index, they will be subject to an *Exceptional Score Reduction*.

- When the Score Differential is between 7.0 and 9.9 strokes below their current Handicap Index, a -1.0 reduction is applied to the most recent 20 score differentials. When the Score Differential is 10.0 strokes or more below their Handicap Index, a -2.0 reduction is applied to the most recent 20 score differentials.
- Scores submitted after the exceptional score will not contain the -1.0 or -2.0 adjustment (unless they are also exceptional), which will allow reduction to gradually work itself out of a Scoring Record.

Reasons for Change:

- To simplify the automatic reduction process.
 - Section 10-3 of *"The USGA Handicap System"* is nearly five pages long. Exceptional Score Reduction will be covered in less than one page in the Rules of Handicapping.
 - This new procedure will be straightforward and intuitive. When a player submits an exceptional score, they will receive an automatic adjustment of -1.0 or -2.0.
- Handicap research shows that players who have shot 7.0 strokes below their Handicap Index are more likely to do so again in the future.
- Under the USGA Handicap System, only rounds played in events designated by the Committee as T-scores can lead to an automatic reduction.
 - There has been confusion as to which competitions should receive the T-score designation, and as a result it has been applied inconsistently.
 - By considering all scores in the Exceptional Score Reduction procedure, a player's Handicap Index will be more responsive to exceptional performances in competitive and recreational play.
- Since T-scores under the USGA Handicap System are retained for 12-months and compared to the Handicap Index at each revision, it is possible for T-scores that were not exceptional at the time they were made to become exceptional at a later date. This will no longer take place in 2020.