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Playing Handicap Calculation and Application

USGA Handicap System (pre-2020): When a player’s Course Handicap is adjusted based on the application of a Handicap Allowance or other term(s) of a competition, the resulting value is not defined and is still referred to as a Course Handicap.

Rule Change for 2020: The term “Playing Handicap” will be introduced within the *Rules of Handicapping* and will represent the number of strokes a player receives in a competition. The following formula will be used to determine a Playing Handicap:

$$\text{Playing Handicap} = \text{Course Handicap} \times \text{Handicap Allowance}$$

If players are competing from tees with different Pars, then the player(s) competing from the tees with the higher Par will receive an additional stroke(s) based on the difference.

Reasons for Change:

- By introducing the term Playing Handicap, there will be a clear distinction between two key *Rules of Handicapping* definitions, where both serve specific purposes:
 - A Course Handicap will be used to adjust individual hole scores (Net Double Bogey and Net Par procedures).
 - Playing Handicaps will be used for net competition purposes – including determining the results and winner(s).
- Under the current system, confusion exists because there is only one defined term that often represents two different values.
 - For example – A player with a Course Handicap of 21 participating in a four-ball stroke play competition using the recommended Handicap Allowance of 85% will receive 18 strokes during the round. In 2020, the 18 strokes received will be their Playing Handicap.
- The defined term Playing Handicap will be intuitive and ensure that both terms are applied properly.

Handicap Allowance Recommendations:

MATCH PLAY	
Format:	Allowance:
Head to Head	100%
Four-ball	90%
Total Score of 2 Match Play	100%
Foursomes	50% Combined
Selected Drive (Greensomes)	60% Low + 40% High
Pinehurst/Chapman	60% Low + 40% High

STROKE PLAY	
Format:	Allowance:
Singles Stroke Play/Stableford	95%
Four-ball Stroke Play	85%
Maximum Score Form of Stroke Play	95%
Best 1 of 4 Stroke Play	75%
Best 2 of 4 Stroke Play	85%
Best 3 of 4 Stroke Play	100%
All 4 of 4 Stroke Play	100%
Total Score of 2	100%
Foursomes	50% combined
Selected Drive (Greensomes)	60% Low + 40% High
Pinehurst/Chapman	60% Low + 40% High
Scramble (4 players)	25%/20%/15%/10% from lowest to highest handicap
Scramble (2 players)	35% Low, 15% High