

WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM

---



# Rules of Handicapping

Effective January 2024

# WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM

---



Together, the USGA, based in Liberty Corner, New Jersey, and The R&A, based in St Andrews, Scotland govern the game worldwide, including writing and interpreting the Rules of Golf, Rules of Amateur Status and Rules of Handicapping.

In collaborating to issue the Rules of Golf and Rules of Amateur Status, the USGA and The R&A operate in separate working jurisdictions. The USGA is responsible for administering the Rules of Golf and Rules of Amateur Status in the United States, its territories and Mexico, and The R&A, operating with the consent of its affiliated golfing bodies, has the same responsibilities for all other parts of the world.

In collaborating to issue the Rules of Handicapping, as well as the other parts of the World Handicap System, the USGA and The R&A operate jointly throughout the world.

[www.RandA.org](http://www.RandA.org)

[www.USGA.org](http://www.USGA.org)

# Contents

<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PRINCIPAL CHANGES</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>DEFINITIONS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>I. FUNDAMENTALS OF HANDICAPPING (RULE 1)</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Rule 1 - Purpose and Authorization; Obtaining a Handicap Index</b>	<b>20</b>
1.1 Purpose of the World Handicap System	20
1.2 Authorization to Use the World Handicap System	21
1.3 Responsibilities of Player, Handicap Committee and Authorized Association	22
1.4 How to Obtain a Handicap Index	24
1.4a Joining a Golf Club	24
1.4b Designating a Home Club	25
<b>II. SCORES FOR HANDICAP PURPOSES (RULES 2 - 4)</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Rule 2 - Scores Acceptable for Handicap Purposes</b>	<b>28</b>
2.1 Acceptability of Scores	28
2.1a Played in an Authorized Format of Play	30
2.1b Played by The Rules of Golf	33
2.2 Minimum Number of Holes Played for Score to be Acceptable	35
2.2a For an 18-hole Score	35
2.2b For a 9-hole Score	35
<b>Rule 3 - Adjustment of Hole Scores</b>	<b>36</b>
3.1 Maximum Hole Score for Handicap Purposes	36
3.1a Before a Handicap Index Has Been Established	36
3.1b After a Handicap Index Has Been Established	36
3.2 When a Hole is Not Played	38
3.2a Reason for Not Playing One or More Holes	38
3.2b Score to Record When One or More Holes Not Played	39
3.3 When a Hole is Started But Player Does Not Hole Out	41

## Contents

<b>Rule 4 - Submitting a Score</b>	<b>45</b>
4.1 Information Required for Scoring Record	45
4.1a General	45
4.1b For Scores Prior to Establishing a Handicap Index	47
4.2 Eligibility to Submit a Score	47
4.3 Time Frame for Submitting a Score	47
4.4 Certification of a Score	48
4.5 Number of Scores Required for Initial Handicap Index	49
<b>III. HANDICAP CALCULATION AND UPDATING A HANDICAP INDEX (RULES 5 - 6)</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Rule 5 - Handicap Index Calculation</b>	<b>52</b>
5.1 Calculation of a Score Differential	52
5.1a For an 18-hole Score	52
5.1b For a 9-hole Score	53
5.1c Rounding of Minus Score Differentials	53
5.2 Calculation of a Handicap Index	54
5.2a For Fewer Than 20 Scores	54
5.2b For 20 Scores	56
5.2c For Plus Handicap Index	56
5.3 Maximum Handicap Index	57
5.4 Frequency of Revision of a Handicap Index Update	57
5.5 Ageing of Scores and Lapsing of a Handicap Index	58
5.6 Playing Conditions Calculation	59
5.7 Low Handicap Index	63
5.8 Limit on Upward Movement of a Handicap Index	65
5.9 Submission of an Exceptional Score	66
<b>Rule 6 - Course Handicap and Playing Handicap Calculation</b>	<b>68</b>
6.1 Course Handicap Calculation	68
6.1a For an 18-hole Round	68
6.1b For a 9-hole Round	69
6.2 Playing Handicap Calculation	70
6.2a Standard Calculation	70
6.2b Calculation When Multiple Tees with Different Pars Are Used in a Competition	71

<b>IV. ADMINISTRATION OF A HANDICAP INDEX (RULE 7)</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Rule 7 - Committee Actions</b>	<b>74</b>
7.1 Handicap Committee	74
7.1a Conducting a Handicap Review and Adjusting a Handicap Index	74
7.1b Posting a Missing Score or Penalty Score	78
7.1c Withdrawing a Handicap Index	80
7.1d Reinstating a Handicap Index	81
7.2 Committee in Charge of a Competition	81
7.2a Terms of the Competition	81
7.2b Other Actions	82
<b>V. APPENDICES</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Appendix A: Rights &amp; Responsibilities</b>	84
<b>Appendix B: Player's Scoring Record</b>	90
<b>Appendix C: Handicap Allowances</b>	96
<b>Appendix D: Handicap Review</b>	103
<b>Appendix E: Stroke Index Allocation</b>	106
<b>Appendix F: Establishing Par</b>	108
<b>Appendix G: The Golf Course, Course Rating and Slope Rating</b>	110
<b>VI. LOCAL GUIDANCE FOR GOLF CLUB COMMITTEES</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>INDEX</b>	<b>166</b>



# Foreword to the 2024 Edition of the Rules of Handicapping

Welcome to the first revision to the Rules of Handicapping™; an update to the single set of Rules that was first introduced in 2020 to enhance the enjoyment of golfers worldwide.

The Rules of Handicapping are part of the World Handicap System™ (WHS™), which also includes the Course Rating System™, and they are jointly governed by the USGA and The R&A on a unified basis throughout the world. The administration and oversight of handicapping in each country is the responsibility of National Associations or other authorized bodies, which ensures the system operates effectively and responsively at the local level.

Recent years have seen a significant increase in participation in the game of golf and, with that, an increase in the number of scores submitted for handicap purposes. Since its launch in January 2020, the WHS has been adopted by over 125 countries and is being actively used by millions of golfers. We are delighted at the part the WHS is playing to promote and support the growth of the sport.

This first revision to the Rules of Handicapping continues to build on the original three objectives, which have each guided the development of WHS since its inception and formed a strong foundation: (i) to encourage as many golfers as possible to obtain and maintain a handicap; (ii) to enable golfers of differing abilities, genders and nationalities to take their handicap to any course in the world and compete on a fair basis, and (iii) to indicate with sufficient accuracy the score a golfer is reasonably capable of achieving on any course around the world, playing under normal conditions.

In particular, the revisions aim to enhance the inclusivity, accessibility and integrity of the system and examples include (i) a lower minimum length requirement for a Course Rating™ to be issued, a change that will accommodate many shorter and par 3 courses, and (ii) more robust and meaningful safeguards, including increased guidance on the Handicap Review procedure and eligibility criteria for elite level events.

A summary of the principal changes can be found on Page 10. Most of these changes will be implemented by the handicap software used by National Associations and golf clubs and, therefore, do not require any change in behaviour by golfers. However, one change that players may be asked to undertake more frequently is the submission of hole-by-hole scores to facilitate the new method of handling 'holes not played' under Rule 3.2.

Thanks must go to the Handicap Operations Committee and its sub-Committees for the invaluable insights that they continue to provide, and which have ultimately helped to produce this new edition of the Rules of Handicapping.

**Sharon Ritchey (USGA)**

Chair

World Handicap Authority

**Birgitta Ljung (The R&A)**

Chair

Handicap Operations Committee



## ONE STANDARD

A tradition of excellence comes not just from celebrating a game's great past, but in leading it into the future. Alongside the USGA and The R&A, Rolex is proud to be part of the vision of a truly timeless sport.

*#Perpetual*

**R&A**

**USGA**





  
**ROLEX**

# Principal Changes Introduced in the 2024 Rules of Handicapping

## **Rule 3.2a When a Hole is Not Played**

Rule 3.2 has been restructured as follows:

Rule 3.2a provides more clarity on what might constitute a valid or invalid reason for not playing one or more holes.

Rule 3.2b sets out a new method for calculating an 18-hole Score Differential when one or more holes have not been played for a valid reason. This new method replaces the net par procedure with an expected score (see new Definition).

Two new Clarifications set out:

- A summary of the procedure for calculating a Score Differential using an expected score, and
- Allowing for the use of net par in limited circumstances.

## **Rule 5.1b Calculation of a Score Differential – For a 9-hole Score**

The previous method of combining two 9-hole scores has been replaced with use of an expected score where the 9-hole Score Differential is combined with the expected score of a player with a given Handicap Index to produce an 18-hole Score Differential.

## **Rule 5.2c For Plus Handicap Index**

This Rule has been updated to include the Clarification issued in July 2022 providing guidance on the designation of a plus (+) Handicap Index.

## **Rule 6.2a Playing Handicap Calculation – Standard Calculation**

This Rule has been updated to include the Clarification issued in September 2021 giving some discretion on when rounding occurs.

### **Rule 7.1b Posting a Missing Score or Penalty Score**

This Rule has been restructured for clarity and to provide more guidance on what penalty score to apply, in different circumstances.

### **Rule 7.2a Committee in Charge of the Competition - Terms of the Competition**

Rule 7.2a has been updated to incorporate the Clarification issued in January 2023, providing additional guidance for Committees in charge of elite level competitions regarding entry/eligibility requirements.

### **Appendix C Handicap Allowances**

Appendix C has been amended to clarify that the recommended allowances are based on a 'normal' field size and make-up, and that a Committee can consider adjusting the allowances for other field sizes or different field make-ups.

A recommended allowance for a 3-player scramble format has been added to the table.

The application of allowances in team match play events has also been changed so that the % is applied to the difference, rather than to the individual.

### **Appendix D Handicap Review**

Appendix D has been updated to incorporate additional guidance, which will enhance the tools available to Handicap Committees to assist them with the handicap review process.

### **Appendix F Establishing Par**

Rule 6.2a has been amended to recommend the standardization of par across tee sets, where appropriate.

### **Appendix G The Golf Course, Course Rating and Slope Rating**

Appendix G has been updated to include the new minimum length of a golf course to be eligible for a Course Rating and Slope Rating. This will allow scores to be acceptable for handicap purposes over a golf course of 1500 yards [1370 metres] for 18 holes and 750 yards [685 metres] for 9 holes.

# Definitions

### **Acceptable Score**

A score from an *authorized format of play* which meets all the provisions set out within the *Rules of Handicapping* (see Rule 2).

### **Active Season**

The period of time when *acceptable scores* from a specified area should be submitted for handicap purposes, as determined by the *Authorized Association* where the round is played.

### **Adjusted Gross Score**

A player's gross score, including any penalty strokes, adjusted for when:

- The player exceeds their maximum hole score,
- A hole is not played, or
- A hole is started but the player does not hole out.

(See Rule 3.)

### **Authorized Association**

An entity that is authorized, in accordance with the structure set out by the United States Golf Association (USGA) and R&A Rules Limited (The R&A), to implement and administer the *Rules of Handicapping* within its *jurisdiction* and to carry out the responsibilities as delegated to it by the authority through which it is authorized. Such an entity must be a Multi-National, National or Regional Association, Federation or Union unless otherwise approved by the USGA and The R&A where no such entity exists.

### **Authorized Format of Play**

A format of play eligible for handicap purposes, as determined by the *Authorized Association* where the round is played (see Rule 2.1a).

### **Bogey Player**

A player with a *Handicap Index* of approximately 20.0 for men and approximately 24.0 for women.

### **Cap**

The procedure that reduces or limits the amount by which a player's *Handicap Index* can increase when measured against the player's *Low Handicap Index*. There are two trigger points within the *cap* procedure:

- *Soft cap* – the point after which there is a reduction in the rate of upward movement of a *Handicap Index*.
- *Hard cap* – the point which sets the maximum limit for the upward movement of a *Handicap Index*.

(See Rule 5.8.)

### **Certification of Score**

The verification of a player's score. This can be evidenced in two ways:

- By a marker's physical signature or electronic certification, and/or
- Through *peer review*.

(See Rule 4.4.)

### **Course Handicap**

The number of handicap strokes a player receives, before *handicap allowances*, from a specific set of tees as determined by the *Slope Rating* and the difference between *Course Rating* and *par* (see Rule 6.1).

### **Course Rating**

An indication of the difficulty of a *golf course* for the *scratch player* under normal course and weather conditions (see Appendix G).

### **Exceptional Score**

A *Score Differential* which is at least 7.0 strokes better than the player's *Handicap Index* at the time the round was played (see Rule 5.9).

### **Expected Score**

The score a player is expected to achieve over a specified number of holes on a course of standard difficulty. It is calculated using the player's *Handicap Index* and attributes a numerical value against any hole or holes not played during a round.

## Definitions

### **General Play**

When an organized competition is not being contested and golfers are playing:

- A casual round; or
- Competitively, but not in an event organized by a Committee.

### **Golf Club**

An organization that is permitted, through affiliation to its *Authorized Association*, to administer and manage the *Handicap Index* of those players who have designated it as their *home club*, in accordance with the requirements of the *Rules of Handicapping*. To qualify for affiliation, a *golf club* may be required to satisfy certain requirements as determined by its *Authorized Association*.

### **Golf Course**

An area of land where golf is played, made up of the following five areas as defined in the *Rules of Golf*:

1. The general area,
2. The teeing area a player must play from in starting the hole being played,
3. All penalty areas,
4. All bunkers, and
5. The putting green of the hole being played.

Each hole may have multiple teeing areas and, for handicap purposes, a *golf course* is made up of a designated set of tees on each hole. As such, each set of tees (or *golf course*) should have a separate *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating*, including one for each gender where appropriate.

### **Handicap Allowance**

The percentage of a *Course Handicap* recommended to create equity for all players participating in a specific format of play (see Appendix C).

### **Handicap Committee**

The entity established by a *golf club* or an *Authorized Association* which is responsible for ensuring compliance with the obligations of the *golf club* or *Authorized Association* under the *Rules of Handicapping* (see Rule 1.3 and Appendix A).

### ***Handicap Index***

The measure of a player's demonstrated ability calculated against the *Slope Rating* of a *golf course* of standard playing difficulty (that is, a course with a *Slope Rating* of 113) (see Rule 5.2).

### ***Handicap Review***

A procedure carried out by the *Handicap Committee* to determine if the *Handicap Index* of any *member* who has designated that *golf club* as their *home club* needs to be adjusted (see Rule 7.1a and Appendix D).

### ***Hard Cap (see Cap)***

### ***Home Club***

A player's primary *golf club* designated by the player to ensure their *Handicap Index* is managed in accordance with the *Rules of Handicapping*.

### ***Inactive Season***

The period of time when scores in a specified area cannot be submitted for handicap purposes, as determined by the *Authorized Association* where the round is played.

### ***Jurisdiction***

The geographic territory in which an *Authorized Association* administers the *Rules of Handicapping*.

### ***Low Handicap Index***

The lowest *Handicap Index* calculated for the player during the 365-day period (one year) preceding the day on which the most recent score on their *scoring record* was played (see Rule 5.7).

### ***Member***

An individual who joins a *golf club* in a manner determined by club policy, which allows the player to obtain a *Handicap Index*.

### ***Most Likely Score***

The score a player records for handicap purposes for a hole that is started but where the player does not hole out (see Rule 3.3).

## Definitions

### ***Net Double Bogey***

A score equal to the *par* of a hole plus two strokes and adjusted for any handicap strokes applied on that hole. A *net double bogey* is a player's maximum hole score for handicap purposes (see Rule 3.1).

### ***Net Par***

A score equal to the *par* of a hole adjusted for any handicap strokes applied on that hole (see Rule 3.2).

### ***Par***

The score that a *scratch player* would generally be expected to achieve on a hole under normal course and weather conditions, allowing for two strokes on the putting green (see Appendix F). The *Authorized Association*, or at the discretion of the National Association the *golf club*, is responsible for adjudicating *par* (see Appendix A).

### ***Peer Review***

The process by which a score or *Handicap Index* can be confirmed or challenged (see Rule 4.4).

### ***Penalty Score***

A score posted at the discretion of the *Handicap Committee* for a player who:

- Fails to submit an *acceptable score*, and/or
- Does not complete their round, or does not play one or more holes, for an invalid reason (see Rule 7.1b(ii)).

### ***Playing Conditions Calculation (PCC)***

The statistical calculation that determines if conditions on a day of play differed from normal playing conditions to the extent that they significantly impacted players' performance. Examples of conditions that could impact players' performance include:

- Course conditions,
- Weather conditions, and
- Course set-up.

(See Rule 5.6.)



### ***Playing Handicap***

The *Course Handicap* adjusted for any *handicap allowances* or Terms of the Competition. It represents the actual number of strokes the player gives or receives for the round being played (see Rule 6.2).

### ***Rules of Golf***

The *Rules of Golf* as approved by the United States Golf Association (“USGA”) and R&A Rules Limited (“The R&A”), including any Local Rules the Committee adopts for the competition or the *golf course*.

### ***Rules of Handicapping***

The *Rules of Handicapping* as approved by the United States Golf Association (“USGA”) and R&A Rules Limited (“The R&A”) and administered by the *Authorized Association* within its *jurisdiction*.

### ***Score Differential***

The difference between a player’s *adjusted gross score* and the *Course Rating*, reflecting the *Slope Rating* and the *playing conditions calculation*. It is the numerical value attributed to a score achieved on a *golf course* on a specific day that is posted into the player’s *scoring record*. A *Score Differential* must be an 18-hole value or its calculated equivalent.

(See Rule 5.1).

### ***Scoring Record***

A history of a player’s *acceptable scores* along with:

- The player’s current *Handicap Index*,
- The player’s *Low Handicap Index*,
- Other details about each round (such as, the date the round was played), and
- Any applicable adjustments (for example, an *exceptional score*).

(See Appendix B.)

### ***Score Type***

A designation that identifies the type of *acceptable score* that appears within a player’s *scoring record* (see Appendix B).

### ***Scratch Player***

A player with a *Handicap Index* of 0.0.

## Definitions

### ***Slope Rating***

An indication of the relative difficulty of a *golf course* for players who are not *scratch players* compared to players who are *scratch players* (see Appendix G).

### ***Soft Cap (see Cap)***

### ***Stroke Index***

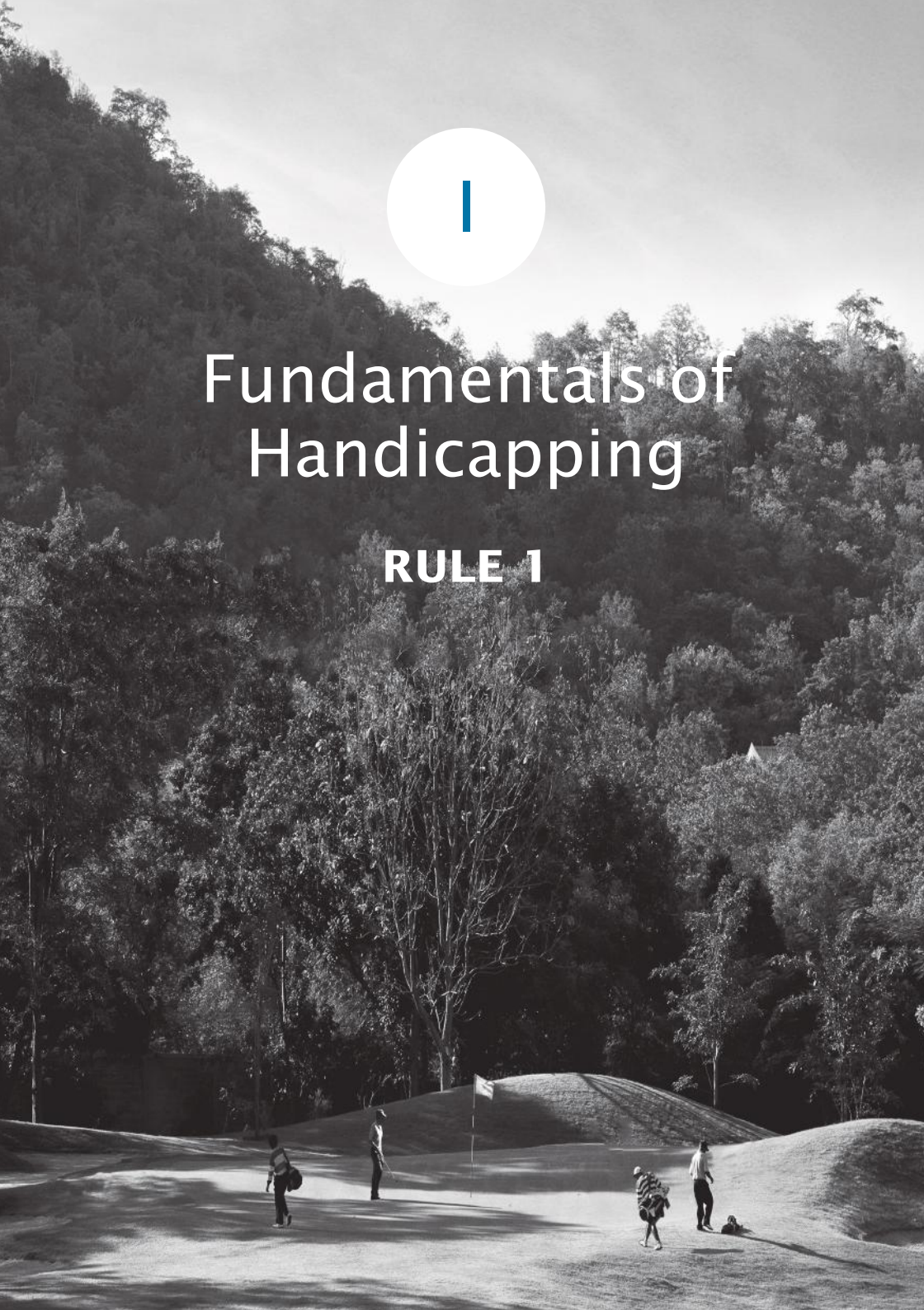
The value assigned to each hole on a *golf course* to indicate where handicap strokes are given or received (see Appendix E).



1

# Fundamentals of Handicapping

## RULE 1



# RULE 1

## Purpose and Authorization; Obtaining a Handicap Index

### 1.1 Purpose of the World Handicap System

The World Handicap System includes the *Rules of Handicapping* and the Course Rating System. Its purpose is to enhance the enjoyment of the game of golf and to give as many golfers as possible the opportunity to:

- Obtain and maintain a *Handicap Index*,
- Use their *Handicap Index* on any *golf course* around the world, and
- Compete, or play a casual round, with anyone else on a fair and equitable basis.

This is achieved by:

- Establishing *Course Ratings* and *Slope Ratings* for each set of tees, based on length and playing difficulty (see Diagram 1.1).
- Applying adjustments to a *Handicap Index* to reflect the *golf course* being played and the format of play.
- Assessing the impact of playing conditions, using players' scores on a specific day and applying adjustments when necessary.
- Limiting the maximum hole score for handicap purposes to ensure a *Handicap Index* continues to reflect a player's demonstrated ability.
- Applying a uniform calculation for updating a *Handicap Index* for all *acceptable scores* submitted.
- Updating a *Handicap Index* on a daily basis, or soon thereafter.
- Reviewing a player's *Handicap Index* on a regular basis to ensure it continues to reflect the player's demonstrated ability.

**DIAGRAM 1.1: A SEPARATE COURSE RATING AND SLOPE RATING FOR EACH SET OF TEES**



TEE	LENGTH	MEN		WOMEN	
		COURSE RATING	SLOPE RATING	COURSE RATING	SLOPE RATING
1	6,371 yds (5,826m)	70.9	129	76.5	135
2	5,906 yds (5,400m)	68.5	126	73.7	130
3	5,433 yds (4,968m)	66.2	118	71.2	122
4	4,862 yds (4,446m)	63.4	107	67.2	111

**Note:** While this table includes a separate Course Rating and Slope Rating for both men and women from each set of tees, Authorized Associations should always assess the need for providing a Course Rating and Slope Rating for men and/or women based on use.

## 1.2 Authorization to Use the World Handicap System

In order to use the World Handicap System, an Association must be authorized by the USGA and The R&A. Within its area of *jurisdiction*, an *Authorized Association* may:

- Use the *Rules of Handicapping* and the Course Rating System.
- Use the registered marks of the World Handicap System.

## Rule 1

- Issue a *Handicap Index* either directly or, where delegated, through a *golf club*.
- Issue a *Course Rating* and a *Slope Rating*.

The following trademarks and service marks are owned or licensed by the USGA and The R&A; all rights reserved:

World Handicap System™, WHS™, Handicap Index®, Score Differential™, Low Handicap Index™, Course Handicap™, Playing Handicap™, Course Rating System™, Course Rating™, Bogey Rating™ and Slope Rating™.

Any organization that is not authorized to use the World Handicap System is prohibited from using these marks or any part of the World Handicap System. This includes the Course Rating System and the handicap calculation formula, except when the organization provides handicapping products or services to a golf club through an Authorized Association.

### 1.3 Responsibilities of Player, Handicap Committee and Authorized Association

Players, *Handicap Committees* and *Authorized Associations* all play an important role in ensuring the *Rules of Handicapping* are being implemented and administered appropriately.

The main areas of responsibility for each key stakeholder are:

(i) Player

A player is expected to:

- Act with integrity by following the *Rules of Handicapping* and to refrain from using, or circumventing, the *Rules of Handicapping* for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage,
- Attempt to make the best score possible at each hole,
- Submit all *acceptable scores* to provide reasonable evidence of their demonstrated ability,
- Submit *acceptable scores* for handicap purposes as soon as possible after the round is completed and before midnight local time,
- Play by the *Rules of Golf*, and
- Certify the scores of other players.

(ii) Golf Club/Handicap Committee

- A *golf club* is affiliated to its *Authorized Association* and is responsible for ensuring the *Handicap Index* of those *members* who have designated it to be their *home club* is administered in accordance with the requirements of the *Rules of Handicapping*.
- A *Handicap Committee* is established by a *golf club* and is responsible for ensuring compliance with the *golf club's* specified obligations and responsibilities under the *Rules of Handicapping*.
- Where a National Association administers and manages a player's *Handicap Index* directly, the National Association assumes the responsibilities of a *golf club*.

(iii) Regional Golf Association

- A Regional Golf Association is affiliated to its National Association and comprised of *golf clubs* and/or golfers within a defined area.
- A Regional Golf Association has specific responsibilities within the World Handicap System and may be delegated additional obligations by its National Association.

(iv) National Association

- An authorized National Association has the exclusive rights to implement and administer the World Handicap System within its *jurisdiction*, including the issuance of a *Handicap Index*.
- A National Association has specific responsibilities within the World Handicap System and may be delegated additional obligations by a Multi-National Association.
- An authorized National Association may delegate some of its responsibilities to a Regional Golf Association or a *golf club*.

## Rule 1

### (v) Multi-National Association

- Where a Multi-National Association is the Authorized Handicapping Body, the Multi-National Association has the exclusive rights to implement and administer the World Handicap System within its *jurisdiction* on behalf of all member National Associations.
- An authorized Multi-National Association may delegate certain rights or responsibilities to a National Association within its *jurisdiction* to implement and fulfil the obligations of the World Handicap System on behalf of the Multi-National Association.

### (vi) The USGA and The R&A

- Together, the USGA and The R&A are responsible for writing and interpreting the *Rules of Handicapping* and the Course Rating System.
- The USGA and The R&A are the joint governing authorities of the World Handicap System and are responsible for authorizing the use of the World Handicap System.

The full rights and responsibilities of each key stakeholder are outlined in Appendix A.

## 1.4 How to Obtain a Handicap Index

### 1.4a Joining a Golf Club

In order to obtain a *Handicap Index* that can be administered in accordance with the *Rules of Handicapping*, a player must be:

- A *member* of a *golf club* that is affiliated with an *Authorized Association*, or
- A *direct member* of an *Authorized Association* which has assumed the responsibility of a *golf club* (see Rule 1.3(ii)).

By returning a score for the purpose of obtaining or maintaining a *Handicap Index*, the player acknowledges that the use of their *scoring record* will be available for:

- *Peer review* purposes (See Rule 4.4),
- Issuance of a *Handicap Index*, and
- Administration and research purposes.



**Rule 1.4a Clarifications:****1.4a/1 – Whether a Professional Golfer Can Obtain a Handicap Index**

A professional golfer may obtain a *Handicap Index*, provided they meet all of the player responsibilities within the *Rules of Handicapping*.

**1.4b Designating a Home Club**

A player must designate one *golf club* as their *home club*, to be responsible for maintaining their *Handicap Index*.

When a player is a *member* of more than one *golf club*, the player must ensure each *golf club* knows the details of:

- All other *golf clubs* of which they are a *member*, and
- Which *golf club* they have designated as their *home club*.

All *golf clubs* of which a player is a *member* should share information with the player's *home club* and/or the *Authorized Association* and may:

- Request that the *home club* or *Authorized Association* makes an adjustment to the player's *Handicap Index*, or
- Make their own adjustment to the player's *Handicap Index*.

Any actions must comply with the *Authorized Association's* local procedures.

**Rule 1.4b Clarifications:****1.4b/1 – Criteria to be Used When Designating a Home Club**

Rule 1.4b requires a player to designate one *golf club* as their *home club*.

Where a player is a *member* of more than one *golf club*, the decision as to which *golf club* to designate as their *home club* should be based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Proximity of *golf club* to primary residence (which is in the same country),
- Frequency of play at a *golf club*, and/or
- The *golf club* where they submit most of their *acceptable scores*.

A *golf club* must not permit players who do not satisfy one or more of the above criteria to designate it as their *home club*.

## Rule 1

Should a player's primary residence change on a regular basis such that different *golf clubs* satisfy the above criteria at different times of the year, the player should consider changing their *home club* accordingly.

Players must not designate a *home club* for the purpose of obtaining a *Handicap Index* that could give them an unfair advantage.

### **1.4b/2 – Player Changes Designation of Home Club**

When a player changes the designation of their *home club* for any reason, they must inform all *golf clubs* of which they are a *member* and provide the new *home club* with their *scoring record*.

### **1.4b/3 – Player Who Belongs to Multiple Golf Clubs Within Different Jurisdictions Resulting in More Than One Handicap Index**

Appendix A, 1 states that "a player is expected to ... (ii) Have only one *Handicap Index* from a single *scoring record*, which is managed by the player's *home club* in accordance with the *Rules of Handicapping*." It goes on to state that "This *Handicap Index* will apply elsewhere, including at all other *golf clubs* of which the player is a *member*."

Where a player is a *member* of a *golf club* located in a different *jurisdiction* from the location of their *home club*, the player may be required to hold a separate *Handicap Index* issued by the *Authorized Association* responsible for handicapping within the different *jurisdiction*. In order to ensure the same *Handicap Index* is issued by both *Authorized Associations*, it is the player's responsibility to return all *acceptable scores* to both their *home club* and the *golf club* that is located in the different *jurisdiction*.

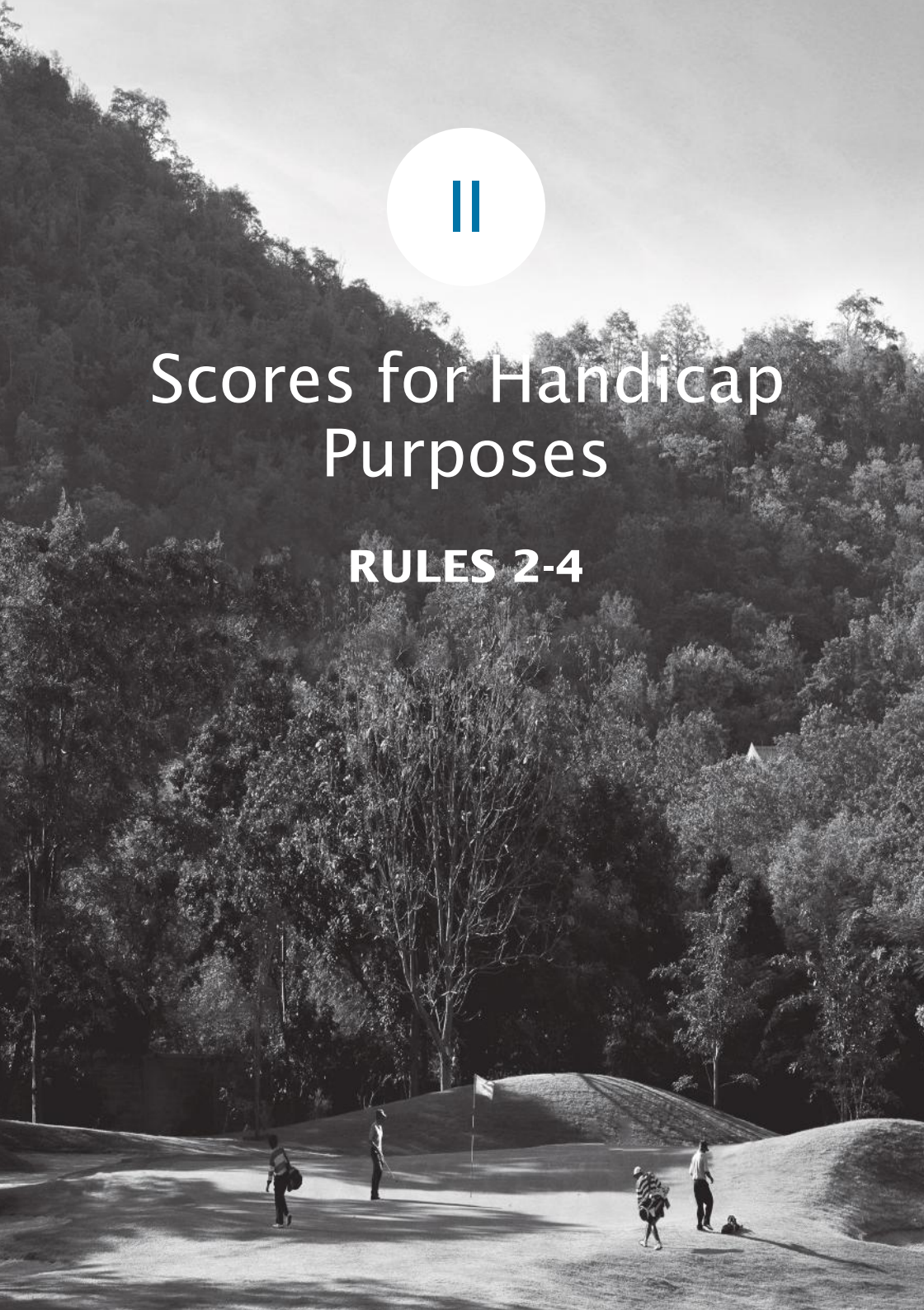
Should there ever be a discrepancy between a player's *Handicap Index* as issued by different *Authorized Associations*, the *Handicap Index* within the *jurisdiction* where the round is being played should be updated to include missing scores from all *authorized formats of play* and/or any Committee-applied adjustments as appropriate. When playing outside of either *jurisdiction*, the lowest *Handicap Index* should be used or the *Handicap Index* that includes the most recent 20 scores.



II

# Scores for Handicap Purposes

**RULES 2-4**



**RULE**  
**2**

## Scores Acceptable for Handicap Purposes

### Principle of the Rule:

The scores a player submits for handicap purposes are at the core of the calculation of their Handicap Index.

Rule 2 covers the conditions a score must satisfy for it to be acceptable for handicap purposes, providing confidence that it will produce reasonable evidence of the player's ability and, ultimately, a Handicap Index that is reflective of demonstrated ability.

### 2.1 Acceptability of Scores

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

- In an *authorized format of play* (see Rule 2.1a) over at least the minimum number of holes required for either a 9-hole or an 18-hole score to be acceptable (see Rule 2.2),
- In the company of at least one other person, who may also act as a marker (subject to satisfying any other requirements of the *Rules of Golf*),
- By the *Rules of Golf* (see Rule 2.1b),
- On a *golf course* with a current *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating*, where length and normal playing difficulty is maintained at a consistent level (see Appendix G),
- On a *golf course* during its *active season*.

In addition, the player's score must always be certified in accordance with the *Rules of Handicapping* (see Rule 4.4).

If one or more of the requirements set out above is not met, the score is not acceptable for handicap purposes.

**Rule 2.1 Clarifications:****2.1/1 – Score is Acceptable for Handicap Purposes Even if Holes Have Not Been Played in the Order Set by the Committee**

Rule 5.1 of the *Rules of Golf* requires holes in a round to be played in the order set by either the Committee in charge of the competition or the Committee in charge of the *golf course*. However, provided the player has not been disqualified, a score is acceptable for handicap purposes even if the holes in a round have not been played in the order set by the Committee.

For example:

- When the *golf course* is busy and starting at an alternative hole will allow a quicker pace of play.
- When playing holes in a different order will allow more players to complete their rounds, particularly during periods when daylight is limited.

If the player has been disqualified, see Rule 2.1b.

**2.1/2 – Status of Scores Made When Match Play and Stroke Play Formats are Played Concurrently**

When a player competes in a match while also playing in a stroke-play round and both are *authorized formats of play*, the stroke-play score is the score that should be submitted for handicap purposes. The match-play score should not be submitted.

**2.1/3 – Returning Scores for Handicap Purposes While Playing on Temporary Greens or Tees**

The *Authorized Association* should determine whether scores made under temporary course conditions are acceptable for handicap purposes. The *Authorized Association* should also determine whether a temporary modification to the *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* is required to reflect the temporary changes (see Appendix G).

## Rule 2

### 2.1a Played in an Authorized Format of Play

Authorized formats of play are:

Format of Play	Type of Round	Number of Holes	
		9	18
Individual stroke play	Organized competition	9	18
	<i>General play</i>	9	18
	Stableford — organized competition	9	18
	Stableford — <i>general play</i>	9	18
	Par/Bogey — organized competition	9	18
	Par/Bogey — <i>general play</i>	9	18
	Maximum Score — organized competition	9	18
	Maximum Score — <i>general play</i>	9	18
Four-Ball stroke play	Organized competition	9	18
	<i>General play</i>	9	18
	Stableford — organized competition	9	18
	Stableford — <i>general play</i>	9	18
	Par/Bogey — organized competition	9	18
	Par/Bogey — <i>general play</i>	9	18
	Maximum Score — organized competition	9	18
	Maximum Score — <i>general play</i>	9	18
Individual match play	Organized competition	9	18
	<i>General play</i>	9	18
Four-Ball match play	Organized competition	9	18
	<i>General play</i>	9	18

- (i) Round Played Within a Player's Jurisdiction. Subject to other provisions set out within the *Rules of Handicapping*, an *acceptable score* from an *authorized format of play* within a player's home *jurisdiction* must be submitted for handicap purposes (see Diagram 2.1a).
- (ii) Round Played Outside a Player's Jurisdiction. Subject to other provisions set out within the *Rules of Handicapping*:

- A score from an *authorized format of play* within the *jurisdiction* where the round was played is acceptable for handicap purposes and must be submitted, even if the format of play is not authorized in a player's home *jurisdiction*.
- A score from a format of play that is unauthorized within the *jurisdiction* where the round was played, but is an *authorized format of play* within the player's home *jurisdiction*, is acceptable for handicap purposes and must be submitted.
- A score from a format of play that is unauthorized within both the *jurisdiction* where the round was played and within the player's home *jurisdiction* is not acceptable for handicap purposes and must not be posted to the player's *scoring record*.

(See Diagram 2.1a.)

### DIAGRAM 2.1a: WHEN TO SUBMIT A SCORE FOR HANDICAP PURPOSES



	Format Authorized at Home	Format Unauthorized at Home
Round Played Away in Authorized Format	✓	✓
Round Played Away in Unauthorized Format	✓	✗

✓ Submit score    ✗ Not acceptable

#### Rule 2.1a Clarifications:

##### 2.1a/1 – Scores Not Acceptable for Handicap Purposes

Some formats of play and scores played under certain restricted Terms of the Competition are not acceptable for handicap purposes.

The following illustrative list is not exhaustive and if a player is in doubt as to the acceptability of a score, it is recommended that they check with the *golf club* where they are playing or the *Authorized Association*.

## Rule 2



While being coached on the course



When using non-conforming equipment



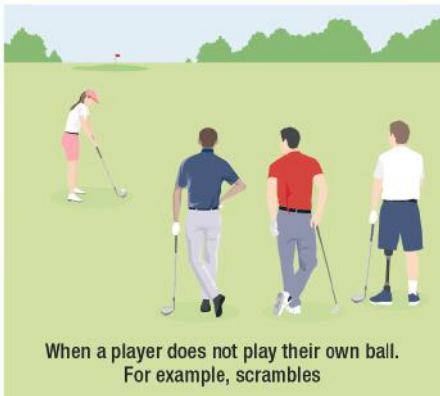
When the number or type of golf clubs to be used is restricted



When score cannot be verified by another person



Not playing the required number of holes



When a player does not play their own ball.  
For example, scrambles



**2.1a/2 – Scores From Competitions Not Organized By An Affiliated Golf Club**

Rule 1.3(i) states that a player is expected to “submit all *acceptable scores* to provide reasonable evidence of their demonstrated ability”. Subject to other provisions set out within the *Rules of Handicapping*, an *acceptable score* from an *authorized format of play* must be submitted for handicap purposes, even if it was from a competition organized by an entity that is not affiliated to the *Authorized Association*, for example a Society or League.

When such scores are not submitted automatically by the entity organizing the competition, the player is required to submit the score using the procedures set out by the *Authorized Association*.

Where a player fails to submit an *acceptable score* or fails to comply with the procedures set out by the *Authorized Association*, the *Handicap Committee* should act in accordance with Rule 7.1b.

**2.1b Played by the Rules of Golf**

A round must be played by the *Rules of Golf* to be acceptable for handicap purposes, subject to the following:

- (i) Organized Competitions. In a situation where a player is disqualified from a competition for a breach of the *Rules of Golf*, but no significant scoring advantage has been gained, the score should remain acceptable for handicap purposes.

If a player is disqualified from a competition for any other breach of the *Rules of Golf*, the score is not acceptable for handicap purposes.

The final determination is at the discretion of the Committee, based on the circumstances.

- (ii) General Play. When an organized competition is not being contested, a score is not generally acceptable for handicap purposes if the player:

- Breaches the *Rules of Golf*, and the correct penalty is not applied under the *Rules of Golf*, or
- Deliberately ignores a *Rule of Golf*.

Where a player follows the provisions set down in a Model Local Rule, even when the Committee in charge of the course has not adopted that Model Local Rule, the score may still be acceptable for handicap purposes. The same situation applies where a player is in breach of a Model Local Rule that has been adopted by the Committee.

## Rule 2

Examples of situations relating to Model Local Rules where a score might be acceptable for handicap purposes include:

- A player has proceeded under the alternative option to the stroke and distance relief procedure, despite this Model Local Rule not being in effect, or
- The player has used a distance-measuring device despite the Model Local Rule prohibiting their use being in effect.

The final determination is at the discretion of the Committee, based on the circumstances.

### Rule 2.1b Clarifications:

#### **2.1b/1 – Examples of When Player Has Been Disqualified From a Competition, But Gained No Significant Scoring Advantage**

The Committee has the discretion to accept a score for handicap purposes if a player is disqualified from a competition, but no significant scoring advantage has been gained.

Examples of situations where a Committee may consider that no significant scoring advantage has been gained include:

<b>Rule of Golf</b>	<b>Nature of Disqualification</b>	<b>Recommended Action for Handicap Purposes</b>
3.3b(2)	Scorecard not signed and no Model Local Rule in place to modify penalty	Accept score
3.3b(2)	Scorecard not returned promptly	Accept score
3.3b(3)	Hole score entered on scorecard is lower than actual score	Accept corrected score

#### **2.1b/2 – Examples of When Player Has Been Disqualified From a Competition for an Action That Would Have Provided a Significant Scoring Advantage**

Examples of situations where a Committee may determine that a player has gained a significant scoring advantage include:

<b>Rule of Golf</b>	<b>Nature of Disqualification</b>	<b>Recommended Action for Handicap Purposes</b>
1.3b	Players deliberately agree to ignore a Rule or penalty they know applies	Score not acceptable
4.1a	Making a stroke with a non-conforming club	Score not acceptable
4.3a(1)	Using a distance-measuring device to measure elevation changes	Score not acceptable

**2.1b/3 – Hole Not Played by The Rules of Golf in General Play**

Where a player has breached the *Rules of Golf* in *general play* and knowingly failed to apply the correct penalty, the score should not generally be accepted for handicap purposes. However, depending on the circumstances, the Committee has the discretion to produce an *acceptable score* by:

- Recording the actual score for the hole, or
- Adjusting the hole score using *net double bogey*, or
- Applying a score of *net par*.

**2.2 Minimum Number of Holes Played for Score to be Acceptable**

**2.2a For an 18-hole Score**

For an 18-hole score to be acceptable for handicap purposes, a minimum of 10 holes must be played.

**2.2b For a 9-hole Score**

For a 9-hole score to be acceptable for handicap purposes, all 9 holes must be played. If a player has not played at least 9 holes, the score is not acceptable for handicap purposes.

Note:

An acceptable 9-hole score must be played over 9-holes with a current *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* (see Rule 2.1).

# RULE 3

## Adjustment of Hole Scores

### Principle of the Rule:

A score for handicap purposes should not be overly influenced by one or two bad hole scores that are not reflective of a player's demonstrated ability. In addition, incomplete scores and/or scores where a player did not hole out on every hole can provide reasonable evidence of the player's ability and can be used for handicap purposes.

Rule 3 covers the circumstances where scores may be acceptable and how these hole scores should be adjusted.

### 3.1 Maximum Hole Score for Handicap Purposes

#### 3.1a Before a Handicap Index Has Been Established

For a player submitting their first scores to obtain an initial *Handicap Index*, the maximum score for each hole played is limited to *par* + 5 strokes (see Diagram 3.1a).

**DIAGRAM 3.1a: APPLYING MAXIMUM HOLE SCORE WHEN HANDICAP INDEX NOT ESTABLISHED**

**Name:** JOHN SMITH      **Handicap:** NOT ESTABLISHED      **Date:** 01/07/24

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Par	4	3	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	35
Score	6	7	6	5	7	12	6	7	7	63

← Gross score

← Adjusted gross score for handicap purposes

Maximum Hole Score = Par + 5

### 3.1b After a Handicap Index Has Been Established

For a player with an established *Handicap Index*, the maximum score for each hole played is limited to a *net double bogey*, calculated as follows:

$$\text{Par of the hole} + 2 \text{ strokes} + \text{Any handicap stroke(s) that the player receives on that hole}^*$$

(\*or minus any handicap stroke(s) that a plus handicap player gives back on that hole.)

(See Diagram 3.1b.)

- A *net double bogey* is equal to the lowest score on a hole for which the player would achieve zero Stableford points.
- There is no limit to the number of holes in a round where a *net double bogey* adjustment may be applied.
- If, in the Terms of the Competition (see Rule 7.2a) or the *handicap allowances*, there are any restrictions on the number of strokes received, this restricted *Playing Handicap* should only be used for the purpose of the competition, for example to determine the:
  - Finishing positions and prize winners, and
  - Number of strokes given or received for different formats of play.

The player's full, unrestricted *Course Handicap* should be used for all applications of *net double bogey* adjustments. For this procedure the *Course Handicap* is rounded to the nearest whole number (see Rule 6.1a/b).

- Where a *Course Handicap* is calculated at more than 54 and a player receives 4 or more strokes on a hole, the maximum hole score is *par* + 5 for handicap purposes.
- Adjusting a hole score to a *net double bogey* can be done either:
  - Automatically, when hole-by-hole score entry is used, or
  - By the player, when submitting an *adjusted gross score* for the round.

## Rule 3

**DIAGRAM 3.1b: CALCULATION AND APPLICATION OF NET DOUBLE BOGEY ADJUSTMENT FOR MAXIMUM HOLE SCORE**

Name: JOHN SMITH

Handicap: 16

Date: 12/09/24

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out
Par	4	4	4	3	4	5	3	4	4	35
Stroke Index	7 ✓	13 ✓	3 ✓	15 ✓	11 ✓	1 ✓	17	5 ✓	9 ✓	
Score	5	5	6	4	5	5	3	5	5	43

✓ = Stroke received

Hole	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	TOTAL
Par	3	4	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	35	70
Stroke Index	18	12 ✓	4 ✓	14 ✓	8 ✓	2 ✓	16 ✓	6 ✓	10 ✓		
Score	3	4	6	4	5	5	3	9	6	45	88

Gross score

Gross hole score

Net double bogey

Adjusted gross score for handicap purposes

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

## 3.2 When a Hole is Not Played

### 3.2a Reason for Not Playing One or More Holes

There are various reasons why a round is not completed or one or more holes are not played during the round. Valid reasons might include:

- Fading light or weather preventing the continuation of play,
- Player injury or illness,
- A match finishing before the final hole,

- The course being played has fewer than 9 or 18-holes because:
  - A hole (or holes) has been declared out of play by the Committee for maintenance or reconstruction purposes, or
  - The Committee has organized a competition over a non-standard number of holes, for example during the winter months.
- Any other situations considered reasonable by the Committee.

If it is determined that the player does not complete a round or does not play one or more holes for an invalid reason, the score is not acceptable for handicap purposes. Invalid reasons might include:

- Weather that does not prevent the continuation of play.
- Not playing a particular hole on a *golf course* because the player knows it usually causes them difficulty and they are likely to return a high hole score.
- Not playing the final holes on a *golf course* in order to avoid submitting a high score (if playing badly) or a low score (if playing well).
- Any other situations considered unreasonable by the Committee.

If the *Handicap Committee* determines that the player's actions were for the purpose of gaining an unfair scoring advantage, it may consider posting a *penalty score* to the player's *scoring record* (see Rule 7.1b(ii)).

### **3.2b Score to Record When One or More Holes Not Played**

A score from an incomplete round or when one or more holes have not been played may only be used for handicap purposes if, among other things:

- The round has been played over at least the minimum number of holes required for either a 9-hole or an 18-hole score to be acceptable (see Rule 2.2), and
- The reason for not completing the round was valid (see Rule 3.2a).

Where the *Handicap Committee* determines that one or more holes has not been played for a valid reason, a 9-hole or 18-hole *Score Differential* will be created using their *expected score* for the hole or holes not played.

## Rule 3

### Notes:

1. If the player's reason for not playing one hole or more holes is considered invalid, the score is not acceptable for handicap purposes, but the *Handicap Committee* may consider posting a *penalty score* to the player's *scoring record* (see Rule 7.1b(ii)).
2. If the outcome of a competition has been decided before all holes have been completed and the player decides to play any of the remaining holes, the actual scores for those remaining holes should be recorded.
3. A hole is considered to have been played if it has been started.

### Rule 3.2b Clarifications:

#### **3.2b/1 – Procedure for Calculating a Score Differential using an Expected Score**

The calculation of an *expected score* is automated and is used to attribute a statistical value against any hole or holes not played within an acceptable 9-hole or 18-hole round so that a 9-hole or 18-hole *Score Differential* can be calculated, subject to other provisions set out within the *Rules of Handicapping*.

The procedure for calculating a *Score Differential* using an *expected score* can be summarized as follows:

1. An *expected Score Differential* for the hole or holes not played is calculated, based on a given *Handicap Index* and a course of standard difficulty.
2. A *Score Differential* for the holes played is calculated using the player's actual scores and the rating value of the holes played.
3. The *Score Differential* from the holes played is combined with the *expected Score Differential* to produce either a 9-hole or 18-hole *Score Differential*.

#### **3.2b/2 – Use of Net Par for a Hole Not Played**

In certain circumstances, and only when approved by the *Authorized Association*, a score of *net par* can be used for a hole or holes not played, in place of the *expected score*. Examples of situations where a score of *net par* would be acceptable include:

- When the player is required to submit an *adjusted gross score*, including scores for any holes not played, or
- When one or more holes are out of play due to construction or maintenance, which affects all players over a period of time.



### 3.2b/3 – Designation of Holes Not Played

Where one or more holes have not been played during the round and the player is not required to submit an *adjusted gross score*, the player must submit hole-by-hole scores and designate which holes were not played as prescribed by the *Authorized Association*. This is to ensure that all of the procedures set out within the *Rules of Handicapping* can be carried out accurately, including the calculation of the *expected score* for the hole or holes not played.

## 3.3 When a Hole is Started But Player Does Not Hole Out

There are various circumstances that might result in a player starting a hole but not holing out. For example, when:

- The result of the hole has already been decided,
- A hole has been conceded in match play,
- A player's partner has already posted a better score in a Four-Ball format and the player picks up, or
- A player has already reached their *net double bogey* limit on a specific hole.

When a player starts a hole but does not hole out for a valid reason, subject to other provisions set out within the *Rules of Handicapping*, the player must record their *most likely score* or *net double bogey*, whichever is lower, as appropriate for the situation and depending on the format of play.

The *most likely score* is:

- The number of strokes already taken to reach a position on a hole, plus
- The number of strokes the player would most likely require to complete the hole from that position, plus
- Any penalty strokes incurred during play of the hole.

## Rule 3

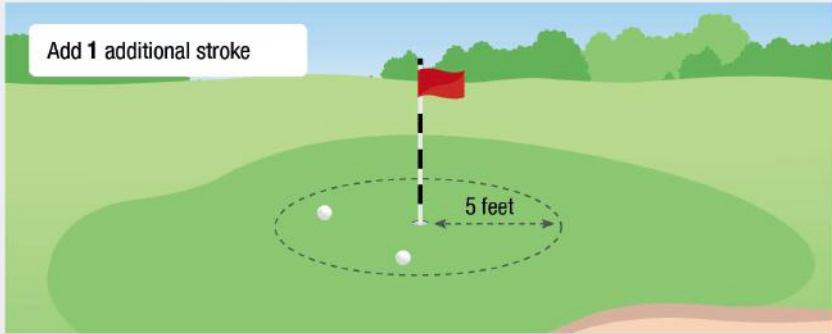
*Most likely scores* should be determined on any hole in accordance with the following guidelines:

<b>Position of the Ball</b>	<b>Strokes to be Added</b>
If the ball lies on the putting green, and is no more than 5 feet (1.5 metres) from the hole:	Add one additional stroke.
If the ball lies between 5 feet (1.5 metres) and 20 yards (20 metres) 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.
If the ball lies more than 20 yards (20 metres) 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.

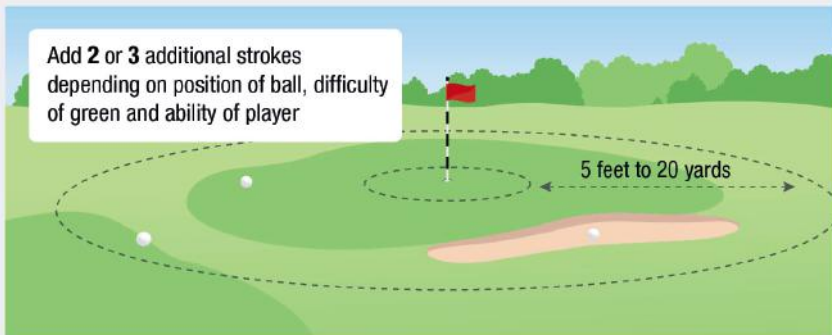
(See Diagram 3.3.)

**DIAGRAM 3.3: MOST LIKELY SCORE WHEN A HOLE IS STARTED BUT PLAYER DOES NOT HOLE OUT**

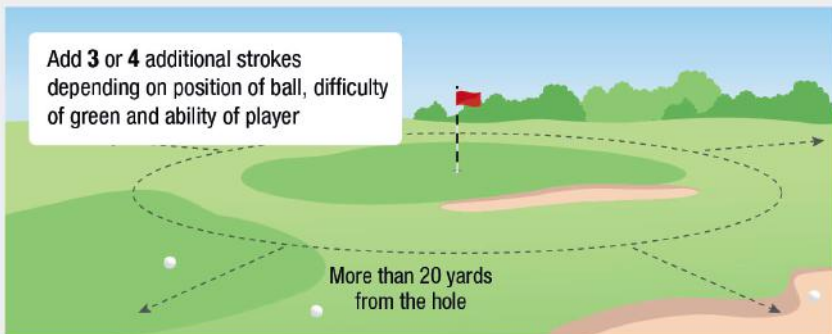
- ▼ If the ball lies on the putting green, no more than 5 feet (1.5 metres) from the hole.



- ▼ If the ball lies between 5 feet (1.5 metres) and 20 yards (20 metres) from the hole.



- ▼ If the ball lies more than 20 yards (20 metres) from the hole.



## Rule 3

### Notes:

1. There is no limit to the number of *most likely scores* that can be recorded within a player's *adjusted gross score*, provided that the failure to hole out is for a valid reason and not for the purpose of gaining an unfair scoring advantage.
2. For players with an established *Handicap Index*, the *most likely score* on any hole cannot exceed *net double bogey* for handicap purposes.
3. When a player is submitting scores for an initial *Handicap Index*, the *most likely score* on any hole cannot exceed *par plus 5 strokes*.
4. If the format of play does not allow a player to pick up their ball before holing out, for example an individual gross score or net score stroke–play competition, the player will be disqualified from the competition (see Rule 2.1b).
5. In a Maximum Score format of stroke play, there may be situations where a player has not reached their *net double bogey* score before reaching the maximum score as determined by the Terms of the Competition. In such cases, the player should record either a *most likely score* or *net double bogey*, whichever is the lower score (see *Rules of Golf*, Rule 21.2).

### Rule 3.3 Clarifications:

#### **3.3/1 – Clarification of the Meaning of Most Likely Score for Handicap Posting and When It Should Be Used**

A *most likely score* is used to record a player's probable score on a hole, when the hole has been started but the player did not hole out their ball. It should be a reasonable assessment of the number of strokes needed to complete the hole.

For example, in a Four-Ball match–play competition, a player's partner holes their ball from off the putting green for three. The player's ball lies 15 yards (14 metres) away from the hole in four strokes and the score for the side cannot be improved. To save time, the player may pick up and record a *most likely score* for handicap purposes.

Based on the *most likely score* guidelines, the player would record a score of six or seven for handicap purposes (four strokes taken plus two or three additional strokes).

**RULE**  
**4**

## Submitting a Score

### Principle of the Rule:

Rule 4 covers the process for the submission of acceptable scores for handicap purposes, both to obtain an initial Handicap Index and to maintain an established Handicap Index.

Timely submission of scores by a player, or anyone else responsible or authorized to submit scores on their behalf, allows for responsive updates and provides a real-time measure of the player's golfing ability.

This Rule also outlines the information that players are required to submit for acceptable scores and how these scores can be verified.

## 4.1 Information Required for Scoring Record

### 4.1a General

- (i) A score posted into the player's *scoring record* must be:
  - An *acceptable score* (see Rule 2.1), and
  - Recorded in the correct chronological order, even if the score is submitted on a day later than the date the round was played.
- (ii) A score must be posted to the player's *scoring record* in the form prescribed by the *Authorized Association*. This may be in the form of:
  - Hole-by-hole scores (strongly recommended; (see Clarification 3.2b/1 for Designation of Holes Not Played)),
  - An *adjusted gross score* or
  - Stableford points.

## Rule 4

- (iii) Upon submission of a score, a player must ensure that the following information is provided for inclusion in their *scoring record*:
- Date of the round played,
  - *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* for the set of tees played, and
  - Where applicable, the *par* and *stroke index* of each hole.
- This information is generally contained on the scorecard.
- (iv) The *Handicap Committee* should ensure a submitted score is posted to a player's *scoring record* as soon as possible.
- (v) A score submitted on any day after the round was played should also include the *playing conditions calculation* (see Rule 5.6), in addition to the information required under (iii) above.

(See Appendix B for sample *scoring records*.)

### Rule 4.1a Clarifications:

#### 4.1a/1 – When Par on Scorecard Differs From Par Recorded in Golf Club Terminal or Other Device Used For Submitting Scores

The *Authorized Association*, or at the discretion of the National Association the *golf club*, is responsible for adjudicating *par*. Therefore, in situations where a player is required to submit adjusted hole scores for handicap purposes and the correct *par* values for the *golf course* played are unclear, the player should confirm the correct *par* values before submitting their hole scores for handicap purposes.

#### 4.1a/2 – Other Information Relating to Score

The *Authorized Association* may require players to submit other information relating to the score, including but not restricted to the following:

- Name of marker.
- Reason why a hole or holes were not played.
- Score type designation, to assist with the *handicap review* procedure (see Rule 7.1a and Appendix B, Note 5).

### 4.1b For Scores Prior to Establishing a Handicap Index

Scores submitted by a player to obtain an initial *Handicap Index* must be submitted as either:

- Hole-by-hole scores (strongly recommended), or
- 9-hole or 18-hole *adjusted gross scores*.

For full details of a player's *scoring record*, refer to Appendix B.

### 4.2 Eligibility to Submit a Score

An *acceptable score* must be submitted by the player, the *Handicap Committee*, the Committee in charge of the competition or by anyone else authorized by the player.

### 4.3 Time Frame for Submitting a Score

A player should submit their score as soon as possible on the day of play, after completion of their round, and before midnight (local time).

If a player does not submit their score on the day of play:

- Their *Handicap Index* will not be updated in time for the next day (see Rule 5.4), and
- Their score will not be included in the daily *playing conditions calculation (PCC)* (see Rule 5.6).

When a score is posted to the player's *scoring record* after the day of play and the *PCC* for the day the round was played has already been performed, the *PCC* adjustment should still be applied to the player's *Score Differential* calculation even though the player's score was not included in the *PCC*.

If a score is submitted out of sequence:

- The score should be added to the player's *scoring record* in the correct chronological order.
- The published *PCC* adjustment for the *golf course* played, on the day the round was played, should be applied to the *Score Differential* calculation.
- The player's *Handicap Index* should be recalculated.

Note: The *Handicap Committee* should investigate any repeated occurrence of a player failing to submit a score in a timely manner (see Rule 7.1b).

## Rule 4

If there is no evidence that the player has acted for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage, all scores submitted in the intervening period should stand for handicap purposes.

### 4.4 Certification of a Score

A score submitted for handicap purposes must be made available for *peer review* as soon as possible after completion of the round. To facilitate the process of *peer review*:

- (i) A player, or someone authorized by the player, must submit their score as soon as possible after completion of the round, and
- (ii) The *Handicap Committee* should ensure a submitted score is posted to the player's *scoring record* as soon as possible.

#### Rule 4.4 Clarifications:

##### 4.4/1 – Clarification of Meaning of Peer Review as a Method of Certification of Scores

*Peer review* is normally conducted by someone:

- Playing in the same group or who was present during the round, and/or
- Who is a *member* of the same *golf club* as the player.

In all cases, it must be someone who:

- Has formed a reasonable basis from which to provide support for a score that has been posted or challenge the player on any anomalies in the posted score, or
- Has knowledge of the player's demonstrated ability and can reasonably verify or challenge the *Handicap Index* issued to the player.

Challenges or disputes should be raised with the player and/or reported to the *Handicap Committee* for consideration.

To facilitate the process of *peer review*, player *scoring records* must be accessible to all other *members* of the *golf club* (see Appendix B).



## **4.5 Number of Scores Required for Initial Handicap Index**

To obtain an initial *Handicap Index*, a player must submit *acceptable scores* from a minimum of 54 holes.





III

# Handicap Calculation and Updating a Handicap Index

**RULES 5-6**

# RULE 5

## Handicap Index Calculation

### Principle of the Rule:

A player's Handicap Index should represent their demonstrated ability and, where appropriate, be responsive to scores that are inconsistent with their demonstrated ability.

Rule 5 covers the process of calculating a Handicap Index and incorporates the safeguards needed to help ensure that a player's Handicap Index remains reflective of their ability and that equity is retained for all golfers. It includes mechanisms that:

- Take into consideration the conditions in which a round was played.
- Remember previously demonstrated ability within a defined period of time.
- Cap the upward movement of a player's Handicap Index within a defined period of time.
- Apply additional adjustments to a player's Handicap Index when an exceptional score is submitted.

## 5.1 Calculation of a Score Differential

### 5.1a For an 18-hole Score

An 18-hole *Score Differential* is calculated as follows and rounded to the nearest tenth, with .5 rounded upwards:

$$\text{Score Differential} = \left( 113 \div \text{Slope Rating} \right) \times (\text{adjusted gross score} - \text{Course Rating} - \text{PCC adjustment})$$

Note: The *PCC* adjustment ranges from -1.0 to +3.0 (see Rule 5.6).

#### Incomplete 18-hole Round

If fewer than 18 holes have been played but more than 9 holes, an 18-hole score is only acceptable for handicap purposes if the reason for not completing the

round was considered valid (see Rule 3.2a).

- If the reason was considered valid, an 18-hole *Score Differential* is created using the player’s *expected score* for the hole or holes not played (see Rule 3.2b).
- If the reason was considered invalid, the score is not acceptable for handicap purposes. However, depending on the circumstances, the *Handicap Committee* may consider applying a *penalty score* (see Rule 7.1b).

For an 18-hole score to be acceptable for handicap purposes over a course which consists of fewer than 18 holes, a *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* must be issued over 18 designated holes. The calculation of an 18-hole *Score Differential* is carried out using the normal procedures as set out within the *Rules of Handicapping*.

**5.1 b For a 9-hole Score**

A 9-hole *Score Differential* is calculated as follows:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{9-hole} \\ \text{Score} \\ \text{Differential} \end{array} = \begin{array}{c} (113 \div \\ \text{9-hole } \textit{Slope Rating}) \end{array} \times \begin{array}{c} (\text{9-hole } \textit{adjusted gross score} - \\ \text{9-hole } \textit{Course Rating} - (0.5 \times \textit{PCC} \\ \text{adjustment})) \end{array}$$

An 18-hole *Score Differential* is created by combining the 9-hole *Score Differential* for the 9 holes played with the player’s *expected score* over 9 holes.

The 9-hole *Score Differential* remains unrounded until after it has been combined with the player’s *expected score*. The 18-hole *Score Differential* is then rounded to the nearest tenth, with .5 rounded upwards.

If fewer than 9 holes have been played, the score is not acceptable for handicap purposes.

For a 9-hole score to be acceptable for handicap purposes over a course which consists of fewer than 9 holes, a *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* must be issued over 9 designated holes. The calculation of a 9-hole *Score Differential* is carried out using the normal procedures as set out within the *Rules of Handicapping*.

**5.1 c Rounding of Minus Score Differentials**

When an *adjusted gross score* calculates lower than the *Course Rating*, this results in the *Score Differential* being a negative number. Where this occurs, rounding is made upward towards 0.

## Rule 5

For example:

- When a *Score Differential* is calculated as  $-1.54$ , it is rounded to  $-1.5$
- When a *Score Differential* is calculated as  $-1.55$ , it is rounded to  $-1.5$
- When a *Score Differential* is calculated as  $-1.56$ , it is rounded to  $-1.6$

## 5.2 Calculation of a Handicap Index

### 5.2a For Fewer Than 20 Scores

A *Handicap Index* is calculated from the lowest *Score Differentials* in the *scoring record*. If a *scoring record* contains fewer than 20 *Score Differentials*, the table below is used to determine the number of *Score Differentials* to be included in the calculation and any adjustment that may apply. The result of the calculation is rounded to the nearest tenth.

<b>Number of Score Differentials in scoring record</b>	<b>Score Differential(s) to be used in calculation of Handicap Index</b>	<b>Adjustment</b>
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

#### Allocation of an Initial Handicap Index

- If a player's initial *Handicap Index* is calculated to be greater than the maximum *Handicap Index* of 54.0 (see Rule 5.3), the player is allocated a *Handicap Index* of 54.0.
- Based on any additional evidence available about a player's demonstrated ability, a *Handicap Committee* may modify a player's initial *Handicap Index* upward or downward, up to a maximum of 54.0 (see Rule 7.1a).

**Rule 5.2a Clarifications:**

**5.2a/1 – Modification of a Player’s Initial Handicap Index Due to Evidence of Previous Ability**

A player submits three scores to obtain an initial *Handicap Index*, which result in calculated *Score Differentials* of 15.3, 15.2 and 16.6.

This would result in an initial *Handicap Index* of:

<b>Lowest Score Differential</b>	—	<b>Adjustment</b>	=	<b>Initial Handicap Index</b>
15.2		2		13.2

The *Handicap Committee* is aware that the player, who is rejoining a *golf club* after many years out of the game, had played well as a junior golfer and maintained a *Handicap Index* of around 8.0.

Based on the evidence available, the *Handicap Committee* may adjust the player’s calculated initial *Handicap Index* to better reflect their previously demonstrated ability.

**5.2a/2 – Modification of a Player’s Initial Handicap Index When Subsequent Scores Are Significantly Different Than Expected**

A player submits three scores to obtain an initial *Handicap Index*, which result in calculated *Score Differentials* of 40.7, 42.4 and 36.1.

This would result in an initial *Handicap Index* of:

<b>Lowest Score Differential</b>	—	<b>Adjustment</b>	=	<b>Initial Handicap Index</b>
36.1		2		34.1

The player then goes on to submit three more scores which result in calculated *Score Differentials* of 45.9, 43.6 and 45.0.

After these six scores, the player’s *Handicap Index* would be:

<b>Average of Lowest Two Score Differentials</b>	—	<b>Adjustment</b>	=	<b>Initial Handicap Index</b>
38.4		1		37.4

## Rule 5

In reviewing the player's calculated *Handicap Index* against their scores, the *Handicap Committee* may conclude in this case that the -1 adjustment should be removed to ensure the calculated *Handicap Index* better reflects the player's ability.

### 5.2b For 20 Scores

A *Handicap Index* is calculated from the lowest *Score Differentials* in the *scoring record*. If a *scoring record* contains at least 20 *Score Differentials*, the procedure for calculating a *Handicap Index* is:

- Average the lowest 8 of the most recent 20 *Score Differentials* (which include any adjustments for *exceptional scores* and/or a *Committee review*) and round to the nearest tenth.
- Compute the difference between the average of the lowest 8 *Score Differentials* and the *Low Handicap Index*.
  - If the difference is greater than 3, the *soft cap* calculation is applied.
  - If the difference is greater than 5 after application of the *soft cap*, then the *hard cap* is applied.

(See Rule 5.8.)

### 5.2c For Plus Handicap Index

When there are 20 *Score Differentials* in a player's *scoring record* and the *Handicap Index* calculates as a negative figure, this represents a plus *Handicap Index*.

When a player's initial *Handicap Index* calculates at the lower end of the handicap range for both men and women, the *Handicap Committee* must follow any procedures established by the *Authorized Association* before issuing a *Handicap Index* below a specified level (see Rule 5.2a).



**Rule 5.2c Clarifications:****5.2c/1 – Designation of a Plus (+) Handicap Index**

The *Rules of Handicapping* contain a number of references to a ‘Plus Handicap’, which is the terminology traditionally used for a golfer who has achieved a *Handicap Index* better than Scratch (0.0).

However, when calculating a net score, the correct denotation of a ‘plus’ handicap is a negative, and this mathematical contradiction can lead to a lack of consistency in the way players denote their *Handicap Index* on entry forms and how software providers code their calculators.

In an effort to achieve consistency across all *jurisdictions*, the following guidance is provided:

- Players with a ‘Plus Handicap’ should be encouraged to always prefix their *Handicap Index* with a ‘Plus’ sign (+).
- All other players should be encouraged to refrain from using any prefix.
- The default assumption for competition organizers should be that a *Handicap Index* pre-fixed with a Plus (+) sign is a Plus Handicap. Any *Handicap Index* pre-fixed with a negative (–) sign should be queried.

**5.3 Maximum Handicap Index**

The maximum *Handicap Index* that can be issued to a player is 54.0.

Note: The Committee in charge of a competition may set a maximum limit for entry (see Rule 7.2).

**5.4 Frequency of Revision of a Handicap Index Update**

A player’s *Handicap Index* should be updated no later than the day after a score was submitted, or as soon as possible thereafter.

In a situation when a new round is played before the player’s *Handicap Index* has been updated, including when multiple rounds are played on the same day, it is recommended that the player uses their existing *Handicap Index*. However, in certain circumstances, the Committee in charge of the competition (or the *Handicap Committee*) has the discretion to decide what *Playing Handicap* the player should use (see Rule 7.2).

## Rule 5

### Rule 5.4 Clarifications:

#### 5.4/1 – Example Situation When Committee in Charge of a Competition May Adjust a Player’s Playing Handicap

In a situation where a player has performed exceptionally well in an *authorized format of play* during a morning round and is playing a competition round later the same day, as the player’s *Handicap Index* will not be updated until the next day, the Committee in charge of the competition may decide to adjust the player’s *Playing Handicap*.

The Committee should consider all of the information available before deciding whether to adjust the player’s *Playing Handicap*, including what impact the score may have had on the player’s *Handicap Index* and whether the player would obtain any unfair advantage because their *Handicap Index* has not been updated.

#### 5.4/2 – Golf Club Responsibility to Post Scores As Soon As Possible

Where it is the responsibility of a *golf club* to post scores at the end of each day, this must be done as soon as possible and preferably before midnight to support the *Rules of Handicapping*. This is important because it:

- Ensures that a player’s *Handicap Index* is updated as soon as possible after the round was played (see Rule 5.4).
- Allows for the *playing conditions calculation* to be carried out (see Rule 5.6).
- Ensures that, where appropriate, scores are available for verification by peers.
- Enables the *Handicap Committee* to carry out its other responsibilities (see Rule 7.1b).

Failure to carry out this responsibility may compromise the integrity of the *Rules of Handicapping*.

## 5.5 Ageing of Scores and Lapsing of a Handicap Index

A score continues to be part of the *Handicap Index* calculation as long as it remains within the player’s most recent 20 scores recorded, regardless of the age of the score.

Where applicable, a 9-hole score waiting to be combined with another 9-hole score will be retained until it becomes older than the twentieth oldest 18-hole score in the *scoring record*, after which it is discarded.

A *Handicap Index* only lapses if a player is no longer a *member* of at least one *golf club*.

Note: A player's *scoring record* should be retained wherever possible. This will assist a *Handicap Committee* if the player obtains a *Handicap Index* again in the future.

## 5.6 Playing Conditions Calculation

### Principle of the Rule:

Course Ratings are based on normal playing conditions, but the difficulty of a golf course can vary substantially from day to day, due to:

- Course conditions,
- Weather conditions, and/or
- Course set-up.

The playing conditions calculation (PCC) determines whether playing conditions on the day differed from normal conditions to the extent that an adjustment is needed to compensate. It is a daily statistical procedure that compares the scores submitted by players on the day against expected scoring patterns.

The purpose of this feature within the handicap calculation is to recognize that an average score submitted in harder playing conditions may be better than a good score submitted in easier playing conditions. Unadjusted, such a score may be omitted from the Handicap Index calculation.

If the PCC determines that acceptable scores submitted are in line with expected scoring patterns, then no adjustment is made.

The calculated adjustment is dependent upon:

- Whether significantly fewer players than anticipated attained their expected score and, consequently, conditions are determined to be harder than normal.
- Whether significantly more players than anticipated attained their expected score and, consequently, conditions are determined to be easier than normal.

## Rule 5

The *playing conditions calculation (PCC)*:

- Is generally performed only once for a day.
- Considers *acceptable scores* submitted on a *golf course* each day and requires at least eight *acceptable scores* to determine if an adjustment is required.
- Includes only *acceptable scores* submitted by players with a *Handicap Index* of 36.0 or below.
- Equals zero if fewer than eight *acceptable scores* are submitted.
- Where applicable, does not include scores that are scaled up to 9-hole or 18-hole scores.
- Can determine an adjustment of -1.0, 0.0, +1.0, +2.0 or +3.0 and is applied in the calculation of *Score Differentials* for all players.

### Rule 5.6 Clarifications:

#### 5.6/1 – Procedure for Performing Playing Conditions Calculation

The *playing conditions calculation (PCC)* is an automatic calculation and can be summarized as follows:

1. The *expected score* is calculated for each eligible player.
2. The expected standard deviation of *Score Differentials* at the *golf course* is calculated, incorporating all applicable *Slope Ratings*.
3. The number of players who scored better or worse than expected on the day is established.
4. The proportion of players who submitted a score equal to, better than or worse than their expected scoring range is used to determine whether a *PCC* adjustment is required.
5. If an adjustment is required, a determination is made about how much harder or easier the *golf course* played that day.
6. Based on these calculations, the final *PCC* adjustment required for play on that day is determined.
7. A *PCC* adjustment is applied as a whole number.

Notes:

- For the application of a *PCC* adjustment in the calculation of a *Score Differential*, see Rule 5.1a (for an 18-hole score) and Rule 5.1b (for a 9-hole score).
- 9-hole *acceptable scores* are doubled for inclusion in the *PCC* along with a doubled 9-hole *Course Rating* and the 9-hole *Slope Rating*.

- The *PCC* is applied to all *acceptable scores* that are submitted on a day of play and retrospectively for scores played on that day but submitted at a later date.

### **5.6/2 – Circumstances That May Warrant More Than One Playing Conditions Calculation on a Single Day**

Rule 5.6 recommends that only one *playing conditions calculation (PCC)* is performed for the day.

However, there may be circumstances that warrant a separate *PCC* to be performed for part of the day or for a certain competition. For example, when:

- There is extreme variation in weather during two distinct parts of the day.
- The make-up of the field in a competition being played on the day is significantly different from the make-up of the players participating in *general play* rounds on the same day.

### **5.6/3 – How to Perform a Separate Playing Conditions Calculation for a Certain Competition and What Adjustment to Apply to General Play Rounds Played on the Same Day**

In circumstances when a separate *playing conditions calculation (PCC)* is performed for a certain competition:

- Only scores from those players who have participated in the competition are considered in the separate *PCC*.
- Any calculated adjustment from the separate *PCC* will be applied only to the calculation of the *Score Differentials* of players who have participated in the competition.
- For all other players who have played at the same *golf course* on the day, the *PCC* for the day is applied, which uses all eligible scores for the day (including the scores of the players who have participated in the competition).

### **5.6/4 – Player Plays Multiple Rounds on the Same Course on the Same Day and a Separate Playing Conditions Calculation is Performed**

When playing two or more rounds on the same *golf course* on the same day and a separate *PCC* is performed for one or more of the rounds, a different *PCC* adjustment may be applied to each of a player's calculated *Score Differentials*.

### **5.6/5 – Round Played Away and Score Returned to Home Club**

When a player returns a score back to their *home club* after playing a round at an away *golf course*, the *playing conditions calculation (PCC)* for that *golf course*

## Rule 5

on the day the round was played should be retrieved and used to calculate the player's *Score Differential* before their *Handicap Index* is revised.

### **5.6/6 – Performing the Playing Conditions Calculation at a Golf Club With 27 Holes**

A *golf club* has three 9-hole *golf courses* known as the South, East and West courses. The design and layout of the three courses allows golfers to play (a) only 9 holes on any *golf course*, or (b) 18 holes in any combination of 9 holes (South/South, South/East, South/West, East/East, East/West and West/West).

The *playing conditions calculation (PCC)* is performed for any 18-hole *golf course* that has been issued a *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating*.

Provided all of the criteria set out in Rule 5.6 are satisfied, a *PCC* is performed every day, for each 18-hole combination.

### **5.6/7 – Application of Playing Conditions Calculation When Playing only 9 Holes at a Golf Club with 27 Holes**

A *golf club* has three 9-hole *golf courses* known as the South, East and West courses. The design and layout of the three courses allows golfers to play (a) only 9 holes on any *golf course*, or (b) 18 holes in any combination of 9 holes (South/South, South/East, South/West, East/East, East/West and West/West).

For a player who plays only 9 holes on the South *golf course*:

- Their score will be entered into the *playing conditions calculation (PCC)* for each of the South/South, South/East and South/West 18-hole combinations.
- Their score will be doubled, using the same 9-hole *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* as the 9 holes played.
- Provided all of the criteria set out in Rule 5.6 are satisfied, a *PCC* will be performed for each 18-hole combination.
- 50% of the *PCC* adjustment for the South/South *golf course* is applied to the calculation of the player's *Score Differential*.
- If no *PCC* is performed for the South/South *golf course*, no *PCC* adjustment will be applied to the calculation of the player's *Score Differential*. This is even if a *PCC* adjustment is performed for other 18-hole combinations involving the South *golf course*.

## 5.7 Low Handicap Index

The *Low Handicap Index* represents the demonstrated ability of a player over the 365-day period preceding the day on which the most recent score in their *scoring record* was played and provides a reference point against which the current *Handicap Index* can be compared.

- A *Low Handicap Index* is established once a player has at least 20 *acceptable scores* in their *scoring record*.
- Once a player has established a *Low Handicap Index*, it is re-evaluated every time a new *acceptable score* is submitted and must be displayed in the player's *scoring record*.
- A newly-determined *Low Handicap Index* is considered in the processing of the player's next *acceptable score* whenever the next round is submitted. A player's *Low Handicap Index* may become more than 365 days old in the period between two rounds being played.
- Where a *Handicap Committee*-applied adjustment reduces a player's *Handicap Index*, the adjusted *Handicap Index* resets the *Low Handicap Index* to the adjusted *Handicap Index*, unless a lower *Handicap Index* is still eligible (See Rule 7.1a).
- Where a *Handicap Committee*-applied adjustment increases a player's *Handicap Index*, the Committee should consider resetting the player's *Low Handicap Index* to the same value as the adjusted *Handicap Index*.

## Rule 5

### Rule 5.7 Clarifications:

#### **5.7/1 – Circumstances When a Player’s Low Handicap Index Becomes More Than 365 Days Old**

Rule 5.7 states that a player’s *Low Handicap Index* may become more than 365 days old in the period between two rounds being played. As a result, a *Low Handicap Index* that is more than 365 days old may still be considered in the calculation of a player’s *Handicap Index*.

For example:

After submitting a score on 1 March 2025, a player’s *Handicap Index* calculates at 12.3. Their *Low Handicap Index* at the time is 10.6, established on 1 May 2024.

When the player submits their next score on 1 June 2025, the *Low Handicap Index* of 10.6 will still be considered in the calculation of their updated *Handicap Index* even though it is more than 365 days old. This is because the 365-day timeframe precedes the date on which the most recent score on the player’s *scoring record* was played, which in this case is the period between 1 March 2025 and 1 March 2024. Once their updated *Handicap Index* is calculated, the new *Low Handicap Index* will be found within the 365-day period preceding 1 June 2025.

#### **5.7/2 – Circumstance When the Low Handicap Index is the Current Handicap Index**

After submitting a score on 1 April 2024, a player takes a break from golf and does not submit another score until 1 July 2025. In calculating the player’s updated *Handicap Index*, the player’s *Low Handicap Index* in the 365 days preceding 1 April 2024 is used as a reference point.

The player then plays another round on 1 August 2025, and the 365-day period preceding 1 July 2025 is used to locate the player’s *Low Handicap Index*, but no other scores have been submitted during that timeframe. Therefore, in this situation, the player’s current *Handicap Index* is their *Low Handicap Index*.



## 5.8 Limit on Upward Movement of a Handicap Index

There are two trigger points within the *cap* procedure:

- (i) The soft cap. The *soft cap* is triggered when the difference between a player's newly calculated *Handicap Index* and their *Low Handicap Index* is greater than 3.0 strokes.

When a calculated *Handicap Index* increase is greater than 3.0 strokes, the value above 3.0 strokes is restricted to 50% of the increase.

- (ii) The hard cap. The *hard cap* triggers to restrict the amount by which a player's *Handicap Index* can increase, after application of the *soft cap*, to no more than 5.0 strokes above their *Low Handicap Index*.

There is no limit on the amount by which a player's *Handicap Index* can decrease.

The *soft cap* and *hard cap* procedures start to take effect only after the *Low Handicap Index* has been established.

(See Diagram 5.8.)

**DIAGRAM 5.8: THE SOFT CAP AND HARD CAP**



## 5.9 Submission of an Exceptional Score

When an *exceptional score* is posted to a player's *scoring record*, the *Handicap Index* will be reduced in accordance with the following adjustment table:

<b>Number of strokes the <i>Score Differential</i> is lower than a player's <i>Handicap Index</i> in effect when the round was played</b>	<b><i>Exceptional score</i> reduction</b>
7.0 – 9.9	-1.0
10.0 or more	-2.0

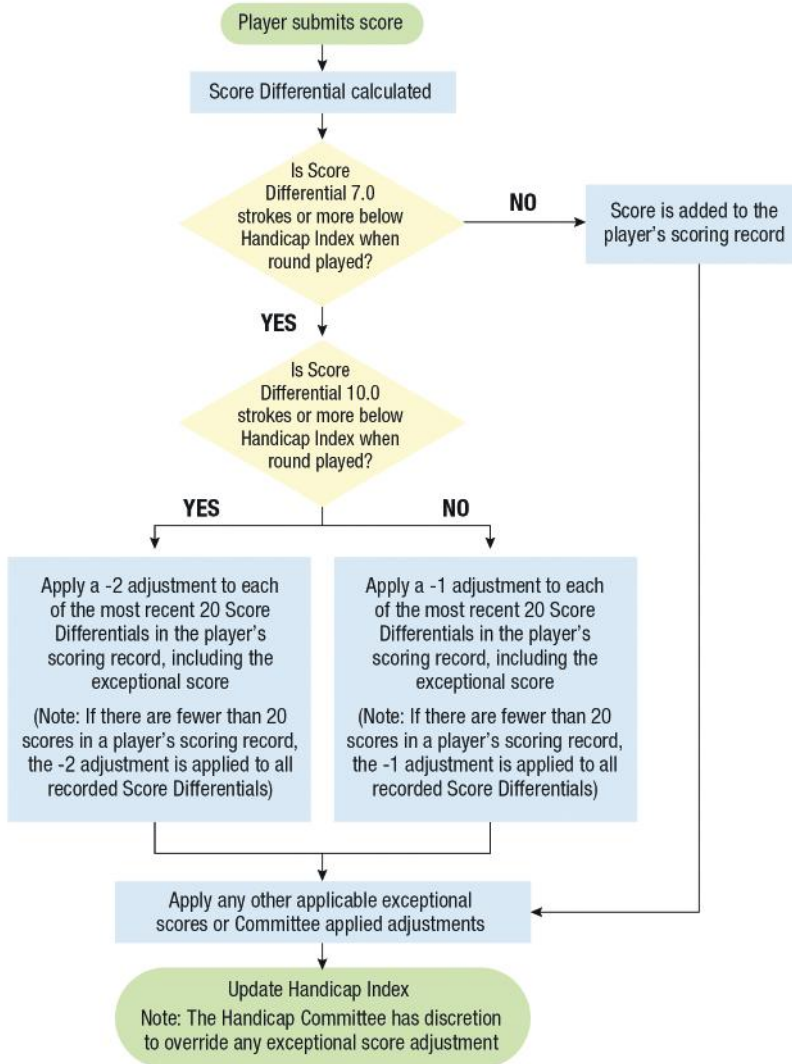
- Any reduction is based on the difference between the *Score Differential* (unrounded) and the player's *Handicap Index*.
- Reductions for multiple *exceptional scores* are applied cumulatively.
- A reduction is automatically applied within the calculation of a player's updated *Handicap Index* following the submission of an *exceptional score*.
- A reduction for an *exceptional score* is applied by adjusting each of the most recent 20 *Score Differentials* recorded in the player's *scoring record*, which includes the *exceptional score*. As a result, the impact of the reduction will remain after the next score is submitted but will dilute over time as new scores are submitted.

Where there are fewer than 20 *Score Differentials* in a player's *scoring record* at the time an *exceptional score* is submitted, the reduction is applied by adjusting all of the *Score Differentials* recorded in the player's *scoring record*, which includes the *exceptional score*.

- Additional *handicap review* notifications will be generated for the *Handicap Committee's* consideration, when:
  - Multiple *exceptional score* reductions are applied to a player's *Handicap Index*.
  - A *Score Differential* is 10.0 strokes or more below a player's *Handicap Index* in effect when that round was played and an *exceptional score* reduction of -2.0 is triggered.
- The *Handicap Committee* is permitted to override any adjustment for an *exceptional score* if it considers that the adjustment would result in a player's *Handicap Index* not being a fair reflection of their demonstrated ability (see Rule 7.1a).

(See Diagram 5.9.)

**DIAGRAM 5.9: APPLICATION OF AN ADJUSTMENT FOR AN EXCEPTIONAL SCORE**



# RULE 6

## Course Handicap and Playing Handicap Calculation

### Principle of the Rule:

The Course Handicap calculation converts a Handicap Index to the number of strokes a player requires to play any golf course with a Course Rating and Slope Rating. This allows portability of a player's Handicap Index wherever they play. The Playing Handicap calculation enables equity amongst players of all handicap levels within different formats of the game. A Playing Handicap is calculated by applying the appropriate handicap allowance to a player's Course Handicap. For formats of play where a handicap allowance of 100% is adopted, the Playing Handicap will be the same as the Course Handicap.

Course Handicap – For handicap purposes, a Course Handicap is used to determine the number of strokes that a player receives (or gives) on any golf course and for the correct application of net double bogey and net par adjustments.

Playing Handicap – For equity purposes, the Playing Handicap calculation determines the number of strokes each player gives or receives, to ensure that all players can enjoy a fair and equal game when playing with or competing against one another.

### 6.1 Course Handicap Calculation

#### 6.1a For an 18-hole Round

An 18-hole *Course Handicap* is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Course Handicap} = \text{Handicap Index} \times \left( \frac{\text{Slope Rating}}{113} \right) + (\text{Course Rating} - \text{par})$$

Notes:

1. If an 18-hole round is being played over the same 9 holes from the same tees and there is no 18-hole *Course Rating*, the 18-hole *Course Handicap* is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Course Handicap} = \text{Handicap Index} \times (\text{9-hole Slope Rating} \div 113) + (2 \times \text{9-hole Course Rating} - 2 \times \text{9-hole par})$$

2. Rounding to the nearest whole number is the final step of the calculation.

### 6.1b For a 9-hole Round

A 9-hole *Course Handicap* is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Course Handicap} = (\text{Handicap Index} \div 2 \text{ (rounded to the nearest tenth)}) \times (\text{9-hole Slope Rating} \div 113) + (\text{9-hole Course Rating} - \text{9-hole par})$$

Rounding to the nearest whole number is the final step of the calculation.

(See Appendix E for guidance on *stroke index* allocation for 9-hole rounds.)

#### Rule 6.1b Clarifications:

##### 6.1b/1 – Use of 9-Hole Course and Slope Ratings in the Calculation of a 9-hole Course Handicap

When an *Authorized Association* issues *Course Ratings* and *Slope Ratings* to *golf clubs*, the 18-hole ratings should also be presented with front nine and back nine *Course Ratings* and *Slope Ratings*. For example:

	White Tees (Men)		White Tees (Women)	
	<i>Course Rating</i>	<i>Slope Rating</i>	<i>Course Rating</i>	<i>Slope Rating</i>
<b>18-Holes</b>	73.1	132	75.5	138
<b>Holes 1-9</b>	36.1	132	37.3	135
<b>Holes 10-18</b>	37.0	131	38.2	141

The calculation of a 9-hole *Course Handicap* must use the correct *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* for the 9-hole *golf course* being played.

## Rule 6

Note: The calculated 18-hole and 9-hole *Course Handicap* is rounded to the nearest whole number, with .5 rounded upwards, for the purpose of:

- Applying adjustments for maximum hole score (see Rule 3.1) and when a hole is not played (see Rule 3.2).
- Where applicable, calculating a *Score Differential*.

Otherwise, the full calculated value is retained and rounding occurs only after the *Playing Handicap* calculation.

## 6.2 Playing Handicap Calculation

### 6.2a Standard Calculation

A *Playing Handicap* is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Playing Handicap} = \text{Course Handicap (unrounded)} \times \text{handicap allowance}$$

The calculated *Playing Handicap* is rounded to the nearest whole number, with .5 rounded upwards.

For recommended *handicap allowances*, see Appendix C.

#### Rule 6.2a Clarifications:

##### 6.2a/1 – Use of Full Calculated Value of Course Handicap

*Handicap allowances* are designed to provide equity for players of all levels of ability in each format of play (see Appendix C) and are applied to a player's *Course Handicap* as the final step in the calculation of their *Playing Handicap*. To avoid any undue effect of double rounding, *handicap allowances* should be applied to the unrounded *Course Handicap*.

Approximately 25% of the time, double rounding can produce *Playing Handicaps* that are significantly different and counter intuitive to players. For example, two players with a *Handicap Index* up to 2 strokes apart could both receive the same calculated *Playing Handicap*, see below:

*Course Rating* = 71.0

*Slope Rating* = 125

*Par* = 71

Format = Four-Ball stroke play (*Handicap Allowance* 85%)

<b>Playing Handicap Calculation (using rounded Course Handicap)</b>		
	Player A	Player B
<i>Handicap Index</i>	8.6	10.3
<i>Course Handicap (Rounded)</i>	10	11
<i>Playing Handicap (85%)</i>	9	9

This does not occur when the *handicap allowances* are applied to the unrounded *Course Handicap* (see below):

<b>Playing Handicap Calculation (using unrounded Course Handicap)</b>		
	Player A	Player B
<i>Handicap Index</i>	8.6	10.3
<i>Course Handicap (Unrounded)</i>	9.5132...	11.3938...
<i>Playing Handicap (85%)</i>	8	10

For the other 75% of the time, there would be no difference in the result.

In limited circumstances, for example when a player is required to calculate their own *Playing Handicap* and they do not have easy access to their unrounded *Course Handicap*, for practical purposes, the *handicap allowance* may be applied to the rounded *Course Handicap*.

Note: Where no *handicap allowance* is applied or it is set at 100%, the *Playing Handicap* is the same as the rounded *Course Handicap* unless an adjustment for multiple tees is required.

## **6.2b Calculation When Multiple Tees Are Used in a Competition**

For the purposes of this Rule:

- Stroke play refers to gross score, net score or Maximum Score formats of play.
- Stableford and Par/Bogey formats of play are considered separately.

When a competition is played from two or more sets of tees (such as mixed gender or mixed ability events), depending on the format of play and any difference in *par* between tees, additional strokes may need to be added to the standard calculation of the *Playing Handicap* for equity purposes and to determine finishing positions, results and prizes.

## Rule 6

- (i) Stroke Play and Match Play formats (where results are recorded as gross or net scores). A player competing from a set of tees with a higher *par* must receive additional strokes for the round, equal to the difference between the *par* of the tees they are playing and the tees with the lowest *par*.

These additional strokes are added to the player's *Playing Handicap* as follows:

$$\text{Playing Handicap} = (\text{Course Handicap} \times \text{handicap allowance}) + \text{difference in pars}$$

Notes:

1. As an alternative, when the majority of the field are playing from the tees with the highest *par*, players competing from a set of tees with a lower *par* may be allocated fewer strokes for the round, equal to the difference between the *pars*.
  2. For the avoidance of doubt, when there is no difference in *par*, no additional strokes are needed.
- (ii) Stroke Play and Match Play formats (where results are recorded relative to *par*). As a player's net (or gross) status versus *par* for the round is compared directly against that of every other player, no additional strokes are added to the standard calculation of the *Playing Handicap* when the *par* is different between tees.

This means that when two players are competing from different tees with a different *par*, the hole is considered halved or the score remains even if both players record a *par* on that hole. This is because the score on the hole is recorded relative to *par* rather than as the number of gross or net scores.

- (iii) Stableford formats. As a player's total number of Stableford points for the round is compared directly against that of every other player, no additional strokes are applied to the standard calculation of the *Playing Handicap* when the *par* is different between tees.
- (iv) Par/Bogey formats. As a player's Par/Bogey result for the round is compared directly against that of every other player, no additional strokes are applied to the standard calculation of the *Playing Handicap* when the *par* is different between tees.





IV

# Administration of a Handicap Index

## RULE 7

# RULE 7

## Committee Actions

### Principle of the Rule:

The Handicap Committee plays a vital role in the successful administration of a player's Handicap Index and is equipped with tools to intervene when the calculated Handicap Index is no longer reflective of the player's demonstrated ability.

Used appropriately, these tools are designed to ensure that players are treated fairly and consistently from golf club to golf club.

The Committee in charge of the competition also plays an important role in setting appropriate Terms of the Competition for all participating players.

### 7.1 Handicap Committee

#### 7.1a Conducting a Handicap Review and Adjusting a Handicap Index

- (i) Conducting a Handicap Review. The *Handicap Committee* should conduct a review of a player's *Handicap Index* using the process set out in Appendix D.
- The *Handicap Committee* has discretion to conduct a *handicap review* at any time. However, it is strongly recommended that the *Handicap Committee* conducts a review at least annually, for all *members* who have designated that *golf club* as their *home club*.
  - A *handicap review* may also be conducted at the request of the player or another player at any time.
  - Before making any adjustment to a player's *Handicap Index*, the *Handicap Committee* should carefully consider all available evidence, including:
    - Whether the player's scoring potential has been affected by a temporary or permanent injury, illness or disability which is significant enough to impact the player's ability to play with or against all other players on a fair and equitable basis.
    - Any handicap(s) previously held by the player.

- Whether the player's ability is rapidly improving or declining.
  - Whether the player's performance is significantly different in one format of play compared to another, for example between organized competitions and *general play*; unauthorized and *authorized format of play*.
  - Where it has been determined that a player's actions are for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage.
- (ii) Adjusting a Handicap Index. In considering all of the available evidence, the *Handicap Committee* must decide the most appropriate course of action for any adjustment to a player's *Handicap Index*, which can be either:
- Resetting the *Handicap Index* by applying an adjustment to each of the most recent 20 *Score Differentials* in the *scoring record*, to achieve the chosen *Handicap Index* that is determined to better reflect the player's demonstrated ability.
    - This will allow for the *Handicap Index* to be updated as new scores are posted.
    - If fewer than 20 scores are recorded on a player's *scoring record* the adjustment is applied to all recorded *Score Differentials*.
    - The *Handicap Committee* can remove the adjustment at any time if the adjustment is determined to no longer be warranted.

Or

- Freezing the *Handicap Index* at a level selected by the *Handicap Committee* for a defined period of time.
  - During this period, a player's *Handicap Index* will not be updated as new scores are posted unless the *Handicap Committee* has determined to freeze only against upward movement.
  - The *Handicap Committee* can remove the freeze upon the *Handicap Index* at any time and the scores in the player's *scoring record* will be used to calculate the player's *Handicap Index*.

Any adjustment to a player's *Handicap Index* resulting from a *handicap review* must:

- Be applied only after the player has been informed and has had an opportunity to respond to the *Handicap Committee* or, where appropriate, the *Authorized Association*. The player must have recourse to an appeals procedure, if requested.

## Rule 7

- Be a minimum of 1 stroke, upward or downward.
- Only increase a player's *Handicap Index* by up to 5.0 strokes above the player's *Low Handicap Index*, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances could include a player who has a long-term illness or injury preventing them from playing golf at the level previously attained.

### Rule 7.1a Clarifications:

#### **7.1a/1 – Resetting a Player's Handicap Index by Adjusting the Most Recent 20 Score Differentials**

Applying an adjustment to each of the most recent 20 *Score Differentials* in the player's *scoring record* will ensure that the impact of the adjustment remains after the next score is submitted, gradually diluting the impact of the adjustment as more scores are submitted.

As an example, a player has a *Handicap Index* of 10.3 and the *Handicap Committee* decides to adjust this to 9.3 because recent scores suggest that the player is rapidly improving.

Using this example, the *Handicap Committee* would apply a -1 adjustment to each of the most recent 20 *Score Differentials* and the impact of this adjustment on the final calculation is illustrated in the tables below:

Score	Course Rating	Slope Rating	Score Diff.
83	70.0	131	11.2
86	71.8	127	12.6
82	69.0	125	11.8
79	69.8	128	8.1
87	70.1	134	14.3
90	70.0	128	17.7
89	71.8	131	14.8
88	71.5	129	14.5
81	69.4	127	10.3
92	71.7	130	17.6
86	71.8	127	12.6
87	70.1	134	14.3
79	69.8	128	8.1
83	70.7	125	11.1
88	71.5	129	14.5
92	71.7	130	17.6
80	69.1	120	10.3
86	71.8	127	12.6
82	69.4	127	11.2
90	70.0	128	17.7

### Best 8

The *Handicap Index* calculation averages the best 8 of the most recent 20 *Score Differentials* in the player's *scoring record*, as follows:

$$(11.2 + 11.8 + 8.1 + 10.3 + 8.1 + 11.1 + 10.3 + 11.2) \div 8 = \text{Handicap Index } 10.3$$

Score	Course Rating	Slope Rating	Score Diff.	Handicap Review Adj.
83	70.0	131	11.2	-1
86	71.8	127	12.6	-1
82	69.0	125	11.8	-1
79	69.8	128	8.1	-1
87	70.1	134	14.3	-1
90	70.0	128	17.7	-1
89	71.8	131	14.8	-1
88	71.5	129	14.5	-1
81	69.4	127	10.3	-1
92	71.7	130	17.6	-1
86	71.8	127	12.6	-1
87	70.1	134	14.3	-1
79	69.8	128	8.1	-1
83	70.7	125	11.1	-1
88	71.5	129	14.5	-1
92	71.7	130	17.6	-1
80	69.1	120	10.3	-1
86	71.8	127	12.6	-1
82	69.4	127	11.2	-1
90	70.0	128	17.7	-1

### Best 8

The *Handicap Index* calculation now averages the best 8 of the most recent 20 *Score Differentials* in the player's *scoring record* incorporating the Committee applied handicap adjustment of -1 for each *Score Differential*, as follows:

$$(10.2 + 10.8 + 7.1 + 9.3 + 7.1 + 10.1 + 9.3 + 10.2) \div 8 = \text{Handicap Index } 9.3$$

## Rule 7

### 7.1a/2 – Basis of Handicap Committee-Applied Adjustment For a Player Impacted by Illness or Injury

The *Handicap Committee* may consider adjusting a player's *Handicap Index* if their ability has been impacted by a prolonged period of ill health, injury or temporary disability. Such an adjustment can only be made after one or more *acceptable scores* have subsequently been submitted. In determining the level of any adjustment, the *Handicap Committee* should take into consideration the scores submitted compared to their previous *Handicap Index* and the nature and severity of the player's condition.

After a number of scores have been submitted and it becomes evident that the player's condition has caused a permanent change to their ability, it may be appropriate to disregard the player's *scoring record* and allocate a *Handicap Index* using only the scores submitted since the illness, injury or temporary disability occurred (see Rule 5.2a).

### 7.1b Posting a Missing Score or Penalty Score

#### (i) Reason for Not Submitting a Score

In a situation where a player fails to submit a score from an *authorized format of play*, the *Handicap Committee* has the authority to determine whether the player's reason for not submitting the score was justified and take appropriate action.

Failure to submit a score for reasons the *Handicap Committee* may consider to be justified include, but are not limited to, unforeseen events such as sudden injury, illness or emergency, which adversely affected the ability of the player over the remaining holes after the event occurred.

Reasons which should not be considered justified include, but are not limited to:

- Forgetfulness
- Circumstances preventing the timely submission of score, for example access to Clubhouse or power cut.
- When one or more holes have not been played for a valid reason (see Rule 3.2).
- Preventing a low score from causing a *Handicap Index* to decrease.
- Preventing a high score from causing a *Handicap Index* to increase.

When the *Handicap Committee* determines that a player's reason for failing to submit their score was justified, the score should not be posted for handicap purposes.

(ii) Score to be Posted

When the *Handicap Committee* determines that a player's reason for failing to submit their score was not justified, they must act as follows:

- When the player's actual score is discoverable:
  - Post the score, provided it meets all of the provisions set out within the *Rules of Handicapping*.
  - If the round was not completed for a valid reason and the score meets all of the other provisions set out in the *Rules of Handicapping*, post the score. The player's *expected score* will be used for the hole or holes not played (see Rule 3.2).
  - If the *Handicap Committee* concludes that the player failed to submit the score for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage (see Rule 1.3 (i)), it should consider applying an additional *penalty score* appropriate for the circumstances.
- If the player's actual score is not immediately discoverable:
  - A *penalty score* should be applied.
  - If the player's actual score is subsequently discovered, the actual score should be posted to the player's *scoring record*. The *Handicap Committee* has discretion to leave the *penalty score* on the player's *scoring record* or to remove it, depending on the circumstances.

The value of any *penalty score* applied to a player's *scoring record* should be appropriate for the circumstances and/or the player's intent. For example:

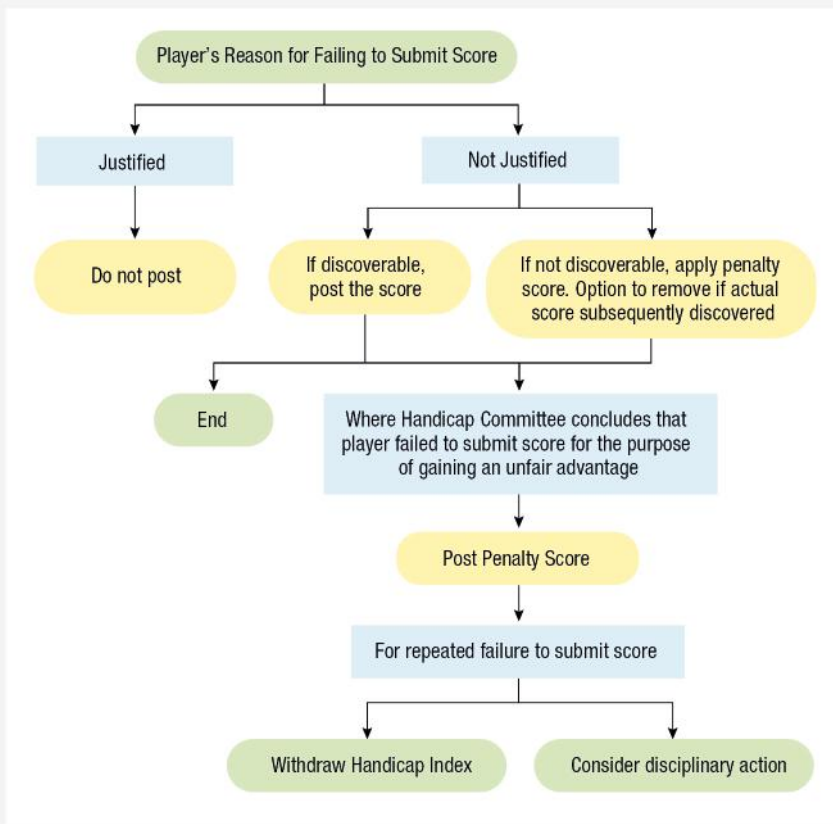
- If the player is determined to have acted for the purpose of lowering their *Handicap Index*, the *penalty score* should be equal to the highest *Score Differential* in their last 19 scores.
- If the player is determined to have acted for the purpose of raising their *Handicap Index*, the *penalty score* should be equal to the lowest *Score Differential* in their last 19 scores.
- If the player has not submitted a score for any other reason, and the score is not discoverable, the *penalty score* should be equal to their *Course Handicap* plus the *Course Rating* of the tees played, rounded to the nearest whole number.

## Rule 7

For a player who repeatedly fails to submit *acceptable scores*, the *Handicap Committee* or the *Authorized Association* should consider either withdrawing their *Handicap Index* or taking other disciplinary action (for example, prohibiting the player from entering club competitions for a defined period of time).

(See Diagram 7.1b.)

**DIAGRAM 7.1b: ACTIONS AVAILABLE TO HANDICAP COMMITTEE WHEN NO SCORE IS SUBMITTED**



### 7.1c Withdrawing a Handicap Index

The *Handicap Committee*, or *Authorized Association*, should withdraw the *Handicap Index* of a player who deliberately or repeatedly fails to comply with the player's responsibilities under the *Rules of Handicapping* (see Appendix A).



The withdrawal of a player's *Handicap Index* should be applied only after the player has been informed and has had an opportunity to respond to the *Handicap Committee, Authorized Association, or other disciplinary panel.*

A player must be notified of the length of time their *Handicap Index* will be withdrawn and any additional conditions.

### **7.1d Reinstating a Handicap Index**

Reinstatement of a player's *Handicap Index* will be required after a player's *Handicap Index* has been withdrawn for a period of time.

To determine the level of *Handicap Index* at which the player is to be reinstated, the *Handicap Committee* may wish to consider:

- Reinstating the *Handicap Index* at a level that the *Handicap Committee* feels is currently reflective of the player's demonstrated ability,
- Allocating a *Handicap Index* as if the player were new to the sport, or
- Reinstating the last recorded *Handicap Index*.

It is strongly recommended that, after a player's *Handicap Index* has been reinstated, the *Handicap Committee* should monitor the player's *Handicap Index* closely over subsequent rounds and, where required, make appropriate adjustments.

## **7.2 Committee in Charge of a Competition**

### **7.2a Terms of the Competition**

The Committee in charge of a competition may set entry/ eligibility requirements within the Terms of the Competition relevant to a player's *Handicap Index* or calculated *Playing Handicap*. For example, the Committee can:

- Set a maximum *Handicap Index* for entry or use in the competition.
- Set a maximum *Playing Handicap*.
- Reserve the right to adjust the *Playing Handicap* of an entrant where there is evidence that the player's *Handicap Index* does not reflect their demonstrated ability.

## Rule 7

A Committee in charge of an elite level competition may also consider setting more detailed entry/eligibility criteria, for example:

- The requirement for the player to submit a copy of the most recent 20 scores in their *scoring record*, allowing the Committee to determine whether the player's *Handicap Index* reflects their demonstrated ability. This could involve assessing the player's performance in:
  - *general play* rounds;
  - competition rounds;
  - 9-hole rounds;
  - *general play* rounds compared to competition rounds;
  - 9-hole rounds compared to 18-hole rounds; and
  - the number of *acceptable scores* posted on a regular basis.
- The right to consider performance in unauthorized formats of play and/or
- Use of a player ranking, or some other indicator of ability based on performances in other competitions of equal stature.

For the purpose of updating a player's *Handicap Index* after a competition where the Committee has set maximum limits, the player's full, unrestricted *Course Handicap* should be used for the calculation of their *adjusted gross score*.

For ease of competition administration purposes, the Committee in charge of a multi-round competition played during the same or consecutive days must determine within the Terms of the Competition whether a player's *Handicap Index* will remain unchanged for the duration of the competition. It is strongly recommended that the *Handicap Index* remains unchanged between such rounds.

### 7.2b Other Actions

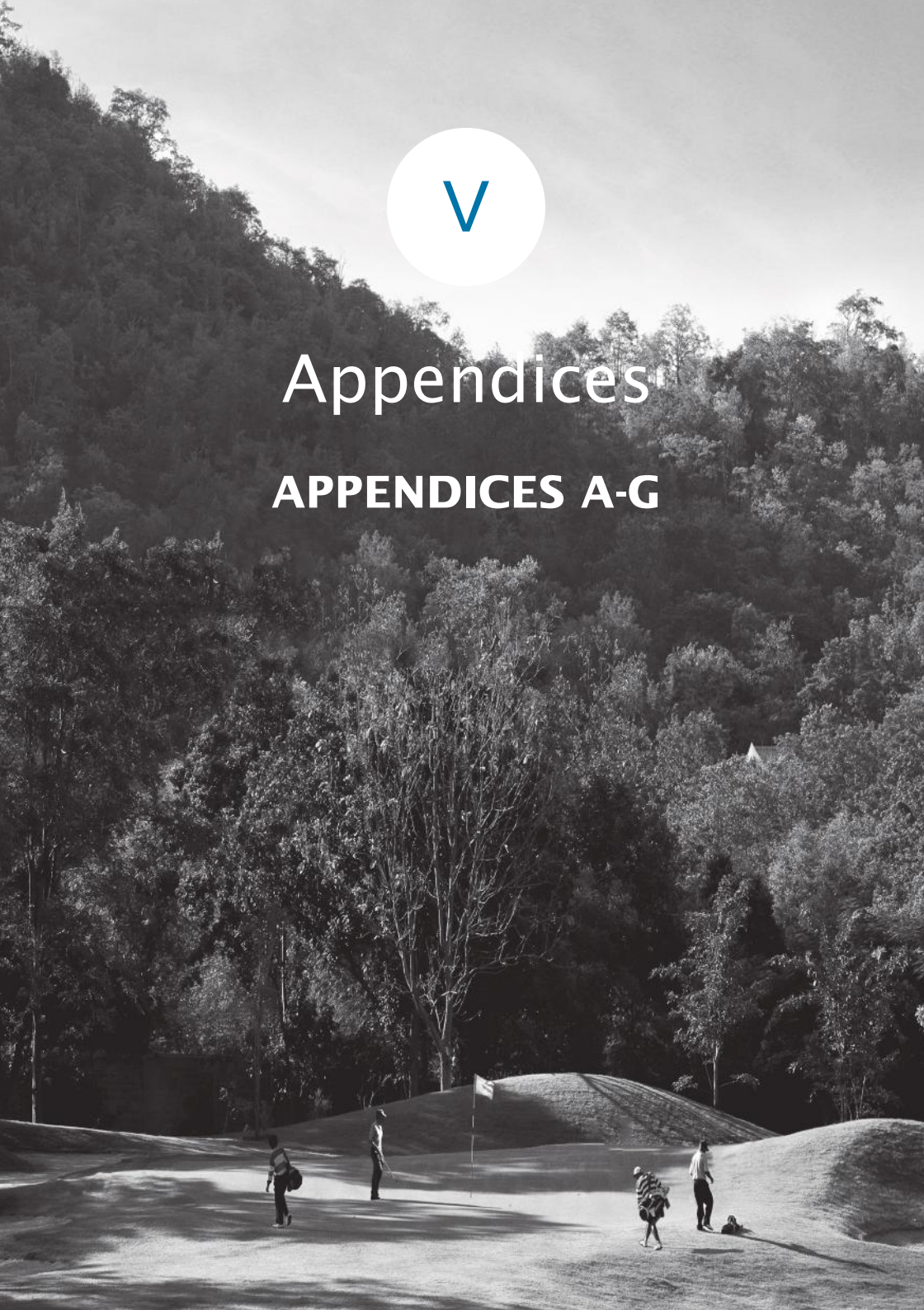
The Committee in charge of a competition may reserve the right to determine that when course conditions are exceptionally poor, the submission of scores for handicap purposes should be suspended. The Committee should obtain approval from the appropriate *Authorized Association* when implementing such a suspension.



V

# Appendices

## **APPENDICES A-G**



# Appendix A: Rights and Responsibilities

The integrity of the World Handicap System relies on all key stakeholders ensuring that the requirements set down within the *Rules of Handicapping* are satisfied and that they carry out their respective responsibilities.

The key stakeholders within the *Rules of Handicapping* are:

- The player
- The *golf club* and its *Handicap Committee*
- Regional Golf Associations\*      \* Collectively known as *Authorized Associations*
- National Associations\*
- Multi-National Associations\*
- The USGA and The R&A

The responsibilities of each key stakeholder are:

1. **Player Responsibilities.** In order to comply with the requirements of the *Rules of Handicapping*, a player is expected to:
  - (i) Act with integrity by following the *Rules of Handicapping* and to refrain from using, or circumventing, the *Rules of Handicapping* for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage.
  - (ii) Have only one *Handicap Index* from a single *scoring record*, which is managed by the player's *home club* in accordance with the *Rules of Handicapping*.

Note: This *Handicap Index* will apply elsewhere, including at all other *golf clubs* of which the player is a *member*.
  - (iii) Ensure each *golf club* of which they are a *member* knows the details of:
    - All other *golf clubs* that they are a *member* of, and
    - Which *golf club* that they have designated to be their *home club*.

- (iv) Ensure that, prior to playing a round in an *authorized format of play*, they:
  - Know their current *Handicap Index*,
  - Inform the *Handicap Committee* or the Committee in charge of the competition of any discrepancies with their *Handicap Index* and provide details of any outstanding scores yet to be submitted or posted to their *scoring record*, and
  - Know the holes where handicap strokes are to be given or received.
- (v) Attempt to make the best score possible at each hole.
- (vi) Where applicable, ensure all *acceptable scores* are submitted for handicap purposes in order to provide reasonable evidence of their demonstrated ability. This includes scores from outside the player's home *jurisdiction*. *Acceptable scores* should be submitted:
  - As soon as possible after the round is completed and before midnight on the day of play (local time), and
  - In the correct chronological order.
- (vii) Provide any new *golf club* with the full details of their previous playing history, *Handicap Index* held, memberships and any other information relevant to their golfing ability.
- (viii) Play by the *Rules of Golf*.
- (ix) Certify the scores of other players.

## Appendix A

2. **Golf Club/Handicap Committee, Regional Associations, National Associations and Multi-National Association Responsibilities.** In order to comply with the requirements of the *Rules of Handicapping*, *Handicap Committees* and *Authorized Associations* are expected to:

		Authorized Associations:			
		Golf Club/ Handicap Committee	Regional Association	National Association	Multi- National Association
(i)	Establish a Handicap Committee and support structure to ensure the World Handicap System is properly administered and the system's integrity is protected.	✓	✓	✓	✓
(ii)	Ensure delegated stakeholders are fulfilling their responsibilities.	✓	✓	✓	✓
(iii)	Establish procedures to follow when a delegated stakeholder is not fulfilling its responsibilities.	✓	✓	✓	✓
(iv)	Provide education to delegated stakeholders on the World Handicap System and the responsibilities of that stakeholder.	✓	✓	✓	✓
(v)	Establish procedures to follow for withdrawing a player's Handicap Index.	✓	✓	✓	✓
(vi)	Maintain comprehensive, up-to-date player scoring records containing enough history, ideally at least two years, to enable the accurate calculation of a player's Handicap Index.	✓	✓	✓	✓
(vii)	Communicate procedures to follow for handicap purposes when playing in an authorized format of play.	✓	✓	✓	✓
(viii)	Authorize use of the World Handicap System calculations or procedures, including any agreements with third-party vendor providers or computation services.		✓	✓	✓
(ix)	Review a player's Handicap Index at least once a year to ensure it continues to reflect the player's demonstrated ability.	✓	✓	✓	
(x)	Adjust or withdraw the Handicap Index of a player: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Whose Handicap Index no longer reflects their demonstrated ability.</li> <li>· Who fails to meet their responsibilities under the Rules of Handicapping.</li> <li>· Whose actions are determined to be for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage.</li> </ul> The player must be informed of any adjustments to, or withdrawal of, their Handicap Index and how long such adjustments or withdrawal will apply.	✓	✓	✓	

		Authorized Associations:			
		Golf Club/ Handicap Committee	Regional Association	National Association	Multi- National Association
(xi)	Settle any dispute or doubtful point referring to the <i>Rules of Handicapping</i> and establish appeal procedures.	✓	✓	✓	
(xii)	Ensure all relevant scoring and handicapping information is available to other stakeholders, where required or appropriate.	✓	✓	✓	
(xiii)	Apply and/or communicate the recommended, or stipulated, procedures for establishing <i>par</i> in accordance with the <i>Rules of Handicapping</i> . This will enable consistent application of <i>net double bogey</i> adjustments for maximum hole score.	✓	✓	✓	✓
(xiv)	Notify the <i>Authorized Association</i> and/or handicapping software or system supplier of any inaccuracies when updating player <i>scoring records</i> .	✓	✓		
(xv)	Apply any applicable <i>penalty score</i> to a player's <i>scoring record</i> and advise the player of any applied adjustment.	✓			
(xvi)	Where specified by an <i>Authorized Association</i> , seek approval for the allotment, reinstatement or adjustment of an elite level player's <i>Handicap Index</i> .	✓			
(xvii)	Communicate whether a low <i>Handicap Index</i> to be allotted or adjusted requires the approval of an <i>Authorized Association</i> and, if so, the point below which such approval would be required.			✓	✓
(xviii)	Establish recommended <i>handicap allowances</i> .	✓	✓	✓	✓
(xix)	Determine <i>stroke index</i> allocations.	✓	✓	✓	
(xx)	Calculate/publish and aggregate <i>playing conditions calculation (PCC)</i> as issued each day. This will allow the <i>PCC</i> to be used by players from outside the <i>jurisdiction</i> .			✓	✓

Notes:

1. Where a National Association administers and manages a player's *Handicap Index* directly, the National Association assumes the responsibilities of a *golf club*.
2. Where appropriate, the delegation of responsibilities is determined by either the Multi-National Association or the National Association.

### World Handicap System Responsibilities Relating to the Golf Course

An Authorized Association is expected to:	A Golf Club/Handicap Committee is expected to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that all facilities approved by the <i>Authorized Association</i> for handicap purposes have a <i>Course Rating</i> and <i>Slope Rating</i> for all applicable sets of tees, determined in accordance with the Course Rating System.  Ratings must also include all temporary or permanent course modifications advised by affiliated <i>golf clubs/course owners</i>.</li> <li>2. Use the <i>Course Rating</i> software application to calculate and issue all <i>Course Ratings</i> and <i>Slope Ratings</i>.</li> <li>3. Maintain records of all <i>Course Ratings</i> undertaken within its <i>jurisdiction</i>.</li> <li>4. Establish a <i>Course Rating Review Committee</i>.</li> <li>5. Establish access to fully trained course raters (including team leaders) to conduct all required <i>Course Ratings</i> and re-ratings.</li> <li>6. Determine the eligible period when preferred lies may be in operation for <i>acceptable scores</i> to be posted.</li> <li>7. Establish the start and end dates of any <i>inactive season</i> within relevant areas of its <i>jurisdiction</i>.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have a verifiable course measurement for each set of tees with a <i>Course Rating</i> over which <i>authorized formats</i> are to be played.</li> <li>2. Inform the <i>Authorized Association</i> of any significant course alterations, particularly changes to length or course markings, that could affect issued <i>Course Ratings</i> and <i>Slope Ratings</i>.</li> <li>3. Ensure that all <i>acceptable scores</i> are played from tees that have a <i>Course Rating</i> and <i>Slope Rating</i>, as defined within the Course Rating System.</li> <li>4. Maintain their <i>golf course(s)</i> in a manner consistent with the conditions presented when the <i>Course Rating(s)</i> were conducted.</li> <li>5. Display a <i>Course Handicap</i> and <i>Playing Handicap</i> adjustment table for each set of tees, for players' reference.</li> <li>6. Ensure that the posting of all <i>acceptable scores</i> is suspended in the event that course conditions are exceptionally poor.  Prior to implementing, the <i>golf club</i> must first obtain approval from the appropriate <i>Authorized Association</i>.</li> <li>7. Ensure the <i>golf course</i> is marked in accordance with <i>the Rules of Golf</i>.</li> </ol>





# Appendix B: Player’s Scoring Record

Three sample *scoring records* are presented to demonstrate the information that should be contained within different versions.

- (i) General Version. Accessible by the *Handicap Committee* and all players within a *golf club* in countries where *peer review* is required for the *certification of scores*. This record will display basic details of the 20 most recent scores, as well as the 5 scores most recently replaced within the 20-score set.

<b>Player’s Name:</b>	<b>Low Handicap Index:</b> xx.x	<b>Current Handicap Index:</b>
<b>Player’s Identification No.:</b>		<b>Effective Date:</b> dd/mm/yy
<b>Home Club:</b>		

	Date Played (dd/mm/yy)	Course Name	Course Rating	Slope Rating	Adjusted Gross Score	Score Differential	Adjustment
01							
02							
03							
04							
05							
06							
07							
08							
09							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							
22							
23							
24							
25							

- (ii) Condensed Version. Accessible by the *Handicap Committee* and players in countries where *peer review* is required for the *certification of scores*. This record is the same as the General Version but, given its wider availability, it omits reference to the day the round was played and the *golf course* played for data privacy reasons.

Player's Name: Player's Identification No.: Home Club:	Low Handicap Index: xx.x	Current Handicap Index: Effective Date: dd/mm/yy
--	--------------------------	---

	Date Played (mm/yy)	Course Rating	Slope Rating	Adjusted Gross Score	Score Differential	Adjustment
01						
02						
03						
04						
05						
06						
07						
08						
09						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
21						
22						
23						
24						
25						

## Appendix B

- (iii) **Full Version.** For reference by the player to whom the record belongs, the *Handicap Committee* and those involved in dispute resolution, and which can be used to support all aspects of the World Handicap System. The *scoring record* will contain full details of the most recent 20 scores, as well as the 5 scores most recently replaced within the 20–score set. It will also provide an option to link to the player’s full, backdated *scoring record* history.

**KEY:**

- Information about the score that must be entered by the player/official
- Automated entries from data extracted from the handicap computation system/software
- Optional information that may be required by the National Association, to be entered by the player/official

Player Name/Identification No:						Home Club: Auto			
Must Enter	Auto	Search function	Optional	Auto	Must Enter	Optional	Auto	Auto	Must Enter
Date Played {mm/yy}* or... {dd/mm/yy}*	Date Round played	Select Course Name	Competition Name	State/ Country	Tees Played/ Par	Approx. Starting Time	Course Rating	Slope Rating	9/18 holes
01									
02									
03									
04									
05									
06									
07									
08									
09									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									
18									
19									
20									
21									
22									
23									
24									
25									

- \* Date field flexible so that Authorized Associations can choose the required format that complies with local data protection/privacy law requirements within their jurisdiction.
- \*\* See Note 5, below;
- \*\*\* See Note 6, below;
- \*\*\*\* See Note 9, below

		Low Handicap Index:				Current Handicap Index: <i>Auto</i>				
<i>Optional</i>	<i>Optional</i>	<i>Drop down menu</i>	<i>Must Enter</i>	<i>Auto***</i>	<i>Auto</i>	<i>Auto****</i>	<i>Auto</i>	<i>Auto</i>	<i>Auto</i>	<i>Auto</i>
No. Holes Played/ Starting Hole	Name of Attester	Select Format/ Score Type**	Gross Score (or Adj. Gross Score)	Adj. Gross Score (NDB)	Course H'cap	Stableford Points Par/ Bogey Result	Playing Conditions Calculation (PCC)	Score Diff.	Exceptional Score, Handicap Review adj.	Revised HI (inc. adj.)

## Appendix B

Notes: Many data fields may be automated by the handicap computation service.

1. The *home club* (recognized for handicap management purposes) can be automatically populated from the player's identification number or name.
2. The current *Handicap Index* can be automatically populated from the last calculated *Handicap Index*.
3. Date Submitted – can default to the current day the score is being submitted and posted into the *scoring record*, with a choice to change where appropriate.
4. The course database (held either locally or centrally) may provide automatic entries for: State/Country; *Course Rating*; *Slope Rating*; *par* and *Course Rating* minus *par* calculations.
5. \*\*If required, score type designation(s) should be determined by the *Authorized Association* and can be used to help identify the format of play, where a round was played and other details about the round. This is primarily to assist with the *Handicap Committee* review process but can also ensure that the *Rules of Handicapping* are applied correctly.

Examples of how scores might be designated include:

Type of Play: Competition; General play; 9-hole round (N)

Format of Play: Stroke play; Match play

Where round was played: Home; Away

When hole not played: Not Played (X)

Other details: Incomplete round; Exceptional score; Penalty score

6. \*\*\*Where hole-by-hole score entry is in use, applicable adjustments to the gross score can be automatically applied. If hole-by-hole scoring is not in use, the *adjusted gross score* will need to be calculated and recorded manually.
7. The *Course Handicap* can be automatically calculated using the player's *Handicap Index*, the *Course Rating*, the *Slope Rating* and the *par* of the tees played.
8. *Adjusted gross score(s)* can be calculated automatically.

9. \*\*\*\*Stableford Points and Par/Bogey results can be calculated automatically where hole-by-hole score entry is in use; otherwise they will need to be manually entered as total points/result.
10. Any selected end-of-process adjustments, such as *exceptional scores* and/or adjustments applied by the *Handicap Committee*, can be automatically applied to calculate the final adjusted *Handicap Index*.

Where fields cannot be populated automatically, they need to be populated manually when entering scores into the system.

# Appendix C: Handicap Allowances

*Handicap allowances* are designed to provide equity in different formats of play, over both 9 holes and 18 holes.

*Handicap allowances* are applied to the unrounded *Course Handicap* as the final step in calculating a player's *Playing Handicap* (see Rule 6.1 and Rule 6.2).

The National Association is responsible for establishing *handicap allowances*, or it can delegate this responsibility to a Regional Golf Association or *golf club*.

The following table sets out the recommended *handicap allowances* which, for medium-sized field, individual stroke-play net events, are designed to give all players a similar chance of finishing in the top 10% when playing well. For match play and team formats, the recommended *handicap allowances* are designed to give each player or team the same chance of winning.



<b>Format of Play</b>	<b>Type of Round</b>	<b>Recommended <i>Handicap Allowance</i></b>
Stroke play	Individual	95%
	Individual Stableford	95%
	Individual Par/Bogey	95%
	Individual Maximum Score	95%
	Four-Ball	85%
	Four-Ball Stableford	85%
	Four-Ball Par/Bogey	90%
Match Play	Individual	100%
	Four-Ball	90%
Other	Foursomes	50% of combined team handicap
	Greensomes	60% low / 40% high
	Pinehurst/Chapman	60% low / 40% high
	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%
	Scramble (4 players)	25% low/20%/15%/10% high
	Scramble (3 players)	30% low/20%/10% high
	Scramble (2 players) Doubles/Better Shot	35% low/15% high
	Total score of 2 match play	100%
	Best 1 of 4 Par/Bogey	75%
	Best 2 of 4 Par/Bogey	80%
	Best 3 of 4 Par/Bogey	90%
4 of 4 Par/Bogey	100%	

Allowances may be adjusted for different field sizes and/or the make-up of the field (see Clarification C/1).

**Handicap Competitions:**

For organized competitions, the Committee should specify the *handicap allowance* within the Terms of the Competition.

## Appendix C

In general, after *handicap allowances* have been applied in stroke–play formats, a player receives their full *Playing Handicap*.

In general, after *handicap allowances* have been applied in match–play formats, the player with the lowest *Playing Handicap* plays off zero strokes relative to the other player(s). The other player(s) receive(s) the difference between their own *Playing Handicap* and that of the player with the lowest *Playing Handicap*.

Plus *Playing Handicaps*:

Unless otherwise specified by the Committee, players with a ‘plus’ *Playing Handicap* give strokes back to the course, beginning at the hole with *stroke index* 18. For example, a player with a *Playing Handicap* of +2 would give strokes back to the course at the holes with *stroke index* 18 and 17.

When *handicap allowances* are applied, a player with a plus *Playing Handicap* moves up towards zero including rounding. This is to maintain the same relative difference between *Playing Handicaps*.

Extra Holes:

*Handicap allowances* are designed to create equity over 9 or 18 holes. The Terms of the Competition should specify where handicap strokes should be applied if extra holes are required to determine the winner or other finishing positions (see Official Guide to the *Rules of Golf*, Committee Procedures Section 5A(6)).

**APPENDIX C Clarifications:****C/1 – Impact of Field on Recommended Handicap Allowance**

Field sizes and the make-up of the field have an impact on equity and may be taken into consideration when determining *handicap allowances* for a specific event, especially in individual stroke-play formats.

The recommended *handicap allowance* for all individual stroke-play formats is set at 95% for medium-sized field net events, which is a field of between 30 and 100 players. However, for a field size of fewer than 30 players, a *handicap allowance* of 100% could be considered. Likewise, if there is a significant percentage of higher handicap players in the field, a lower allowance could be considered (for example, 90% instead of 95%).

The following table indicates how the recommended *handicap allowances* in individual stroke-play formats could be modified based on the size and make-up of the field:

**Recommended Handicap Allowances relative to 95%**

Field Size	Field Make-up (Handicap Range)		
	More lower handicap players	Normal distribution	More higher handicap players
Small (<30 players)	Higher	Higher	Same
Medium (30–100 players)	Higher	Same	Lower
Large (>100 players)	Same	Same	Lower

As an alternative, Committees may consider adapting their competitions to include divisions or flights, with different handicap ranges competing for different prizes.

### C/2 – Examples of How to Allocate Strokes in Handicap Competitions When Handicap Allowances Apply

		Playing Handicap		
Player	Course Handicap	Singles Individual Stroke Play 95% Handicap Allowance	Singles Match Play 100% Handicap Allowance	Four-Ball Match Play 90% Handicap Allowance
A	10	10	10	0
B	18	17	18	7
C	27	26	27	15
D	39	37	39	26

Example 1: In singles individual stroke-play events, the 95% *handicap allowance* is applied to each player's *Course Handicap*, which means player A receives 10 strokes, player B receives 17 strokes, player C receives 26 strokes and player D receives 37 strokes.

Example 2: In singles match play between player A and player B, where the *handicap allowance* is 100%, player A plays off zero (0) strokes and player B receives 8 strokes in the match.

Example 3: In Four-Ball match play, player A would play off zero (0) strokes, player B would receive 7 strokes (90% of the difference in *Course Handicap* from player A), player C would receive 15 strokes (90% of 17) and player D would receive 26 strokes (90% of 29).

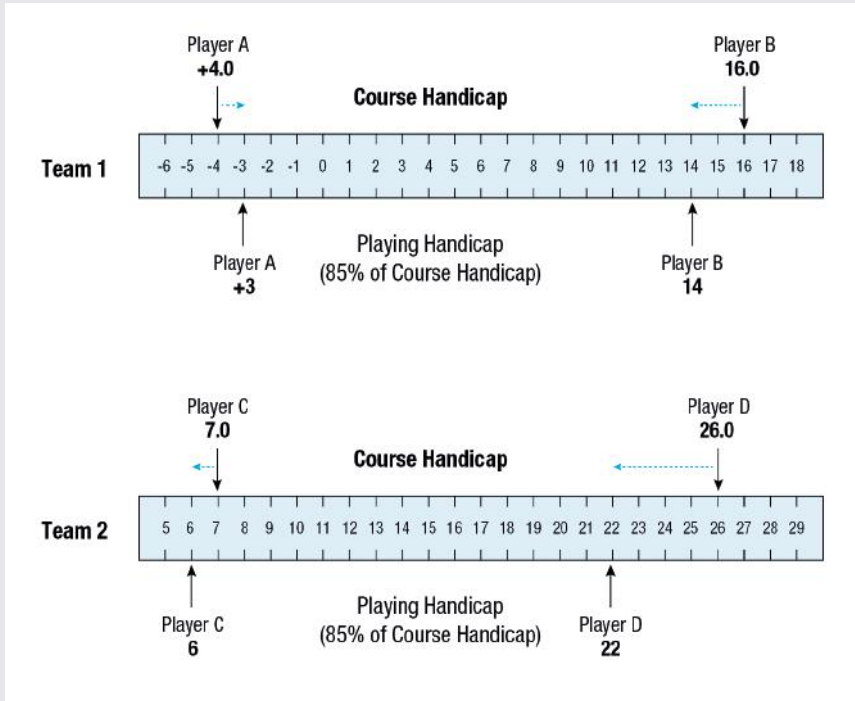
Example 4: In Foursomes match play where players A and B are Team 1 and players C and D are Team 2, Team 2 would receive 19 strokes (50% of the difference between each Team's combined *Course Handicaps*).

Notes:

1. The strokes received in Four-Ball match play remain the same even if the lowest handicap player is unable to play.
2. For ease of illustration, the *handicap allowance* has been applied to the rounded *Course Handicap* in the above examples.

### C/3 – Examples of How to Allocate Strokes in Handicap Competitions Involving Plus Handicap Players and When Handicap Allowances Apply

The following illustration indicates how an 85% *handicap allowance* is applied to two teams playing in a Four-Ball stroke-play competition with *Course Handicaps* of +4 (player A), 16 (player B), 7 (player C) and 26 (player D):



The 85% *handicap allowance* results in a 17-stroke difference between partners for Team 1 and a 16-stroke difference between partners for Team 2. This is approximately 85% of the difference between the *Course Handicaps*, and maintains relative equity.

When applying a *handicap allowance*, any reduction will always result in a *Playing Handicap* closer to zero, including for players with a plus *Handicap Index*.

## Appendix C

Examples:

<b>Player</b>	<b>Course Handicap</b>	<b>Four-Ball Stroke Play Playing Handicap 85% Handicap Allowance</b>	<b>Four-Ball Match Play Playing Handicap 90% Handicap Allowance</b>
A	+4	+3	0
B	16	14	18
C	7	6	10
D	26	22	27

1: In Four-Ball stroke play with a *handicap allowance* of 85%, player A gives 3 strokes back to the course, player B receives 14 strokes, player C receives 6 strokes and player D receives 22 strokes.

2: In Four-Ball match play, player A plays off zero (0) strokes, player B receives 18 strokes (90% of the difference in *Course Handicaps* from Player A), player C receives 10 strokes (90% of 11) and player D receives 27 strokes (90% of 30).

3: In Foursomes match play where players A and B are Team 1 and players C and D are Team 2, Team 2 would receive 11 strokes (50% of the difference between the aggregate of each Team's *Course Handicaps*).

# Appendix D: Handicap Review

The *handicap review* process gives a *Handicap Committee* the ability to ensure the *Handicap Index* of a player reflects their demonstrated ability.

To assist this process, the World Handicap System software specifications set out a range of recommended reports, analyses and notifications which can be developed within the handicapping software used by *Handicap Committees* to administer members' handicaps.

These tools will:

- Identify players who are consistently scoring above, or below, their 'expected' scoring range or where other abnormalities within a player's *scoring record* exist, and
- Make a recommended adjustment to the *Handicap Index* of each player identified, up to a maximum of 2 strokes.

A recommended adjustment will be applied only at the discretion of the *Handicap Committee*, based on any other knowledge or evidence that they have about the player and their demonstrated ability.

The *handicap review* reporting tools compare a player's *Handicap Index*, individual scores and scoring patterns against expectations using the following:

- The player's *expected score* in their next round,
- The expected standard deviation of the player's *Score Differentials*,
- The player's expected scoring range.

The number of abnormal scores in the player's *scoring record* as a percentage of the total number will also be taken into account. The larger the number of scores in a player's *scoring record*, the more scores above or below their expected scoring range are required for the player to be flagged for a *handicap review*.

Other information that may also be considered during the *handicap review* process include:

- The player's current *Low Handicap Index*.
- Length of time since a player last played to their *Handicap Index*.
- Number of scores since a player last played to their *Handicap Index*.

## Appendix D

- Number of times and the percentage of the *Score Differentials* posted during the review period when a player has played to their *Handicap Index*, or better.
- The number of *Exceptional Score* adjustments applied during the review period.
- The number of *Handicap Index* calculations in which the *Soft Cap* or *Hard Cap* were applied, during the review period.
- The frequency of a player's score submissions over the last 12-month cycle, or selected period of time, compared to the previous 12-month cycle, or comparative period(s).
- The trend of a player's *Handicap Index*, such as differences in the level of consistency of the player's *Handicap Index* over the past 12–24 months.
- Comparison of a player's average *Score Differentials* across all chosen *authorized formats of play*, the *score types* of which should be clearly identifiable and appropriately annotated (see Appendix B). For example, competition versus *general play*, stroke play versus match play, individual versus team formats etc.
- A player's indicative potential indicated by the best 40% of the player's *Score Differentials* during the review period.
- Any consecutive sequences of *Score Differentials* significantly above or below the expected *Score Differential* distribution for the player's *Handicap Index*.
- Any scores from, or performances known in, non-authorized formats of play.
- Any other knowledge that the *Handicap Committee* has relative to the player's golfing ability. For example, improving play following golf lessons, declining scoring potential due to frequency of playing, ageing, incapacitating injuries or illness, etc.
- Percentage of *acceptable scores* submitted at a player's *home club*.
- Percentage of *acceptable scores* submitted from *general play* formats.
- Percentage of *acceptable scores* from 9-hole rounds.
- Identifying relevant handicapping trends for *Handicap Committee* consideration.
- Information supplied by any other *golf club* where the player is a *member*.



**Notes:**

1. If a *Handicap Committee* considers that more than a 2-stroke adjustment to a player's *Handicap Index* is required, this should only be made under exceptional circumstances. For example, for a player who has an illness, injury or temporary disability impacting their ability to play with or against all other players on a fair and equitable basis (see Rule 7.1a).
2. The *handicap review* procedure may be used to determine an adjustment of greater than 2 strokes by continuing to run the iterative process.
3. When applying any adjustment to a player's *Handicap Index*, it is important that the Committee also considers resetting their *Low Handicap Index*, to allow for future upward movement of their *Handicap Index*.

# Appendix E: Stroke Index Allocation

The *Rules of Golf* state: “The Committee is responsible for publishing on the scorecard or somewhere else that is visible (for example, near the first tee) the order of holes at which handicap strokes are to be given or received.” (See *Rules of Golf*, Committee Procedures, Rule 5J (4).)

It is recommended that a *stroke index* allocation be applied over 18 holes, split into six triads with each hole ranked on its playing difficulty relative to *par*. *Authorized Associations* can provide a report detailing the difficulty factor that has been assigned to each hole derived from the Course Rating System.

The recommended methodology and procedures for determining a *stroke index* allocation within the six triad structure, designed to accommodate both stroke-play and match-play formats, is as follows:

- Apply odd *stroke index* allocations over the front nine and even *stroke index* allocations over the back nine. If, however, the back nine is significantly more difficult than the front nine, as determined by the *Course Rating*, the even *stroke index* allocations can be switched to the front nine and the odd *stroke index* allocations to the back nine.
- Spread *stroke index* allocations evenly over the 18 holes so that players receiving strokes will have the opportunity to use a high proportion of these strokes before a match result has been decided.
- Apply the lowest *stroke index* hole (1 or 2) on each nine in the middle triad. If no hole within the middle triad is ranked within the lowest 6 holes relative to *par*, then it can be moved into an adjacent hole at the end of the first triad or the beginning of the third triad on each nine.
- Apply the second lowest *stroke index* hole (3 or 4) on each nine in either the first or third triad, unless the lowest *stroke index* hole has been allocated in that same triad.
- If possible, avoid low *stroke indexes* (6 or less) on consecutive holes.
- When a player receives more than 18 strokes, the same allocation order is used with *stroke index* 1 repeating as *stroke index* 19, 37 and 55, with all additional strokes going up sequentially.

These recommended procedures support the guidance contained in the *Rules of Golf*, Committee Procedures, Rule 5J (4).

## Stroke Index Allocation for 9-Hole Play

The strokes received in a 9-hole format of play on an 18-hole *golf course* should be taken in ascending order from the published *stroke index* allocation for 18 holes. Alternatively, the *Handicap Committee* may consider amending the *stroke index* allocation from 1 to 9, relative to the ascending order of the published *stroke index* allocation for 18 holes.

For plus handicap players, where they are required to give strokes back to the course, this should commence on the hole with the highest published *stroke index* allocated for the 9 holes or, if the *Handicap Committee* has amended the *stroke index* allocation from 1 to 9, at the hole with *stroke index* 9.

Sample *Stroke Index* Allocations

Example 18-hole <i>stroke index</i> allocation																		
Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<i>Stroke Index</i>	7	15	5	11	1	13	3	17	9	8	16	6	12	2	14	4	18	10

When a Committee decides to amend an 18-hole *stroke index* allocation to create a 9-hole equivalent:

Example of an amended front nine 9-hole <i>stroke index</i> allocation									
Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Stroke Index</i>	4	8	3	6	1	7	2	9	5

# Appendix F: Establishing Par

The *Rules of Handicapping* feature *par* as a factor in the calculation of:

- *Course Handicap*,
- *Net double bogey*, and
- *Net par*.

It is important that an accurate *par* be established for each hole on a *golf course* for both men and women, and these values should be printed alongside each hole on the scorecard.

It is recommended that *par* be established for each hole in accordance with the following hole lengths:

<b>Par</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
3	Up to 260 yards (240 metres)	Up to 220 yards (200 metres)
4	240 to 490 yards (220 to 450 metres)	200 to 420 yards (180 to 380 metres)
5	450 to 710 yards (410 to 650 metres)	370 to 600 yards (340 to 550 metres)
6	670 yards and up (610 metres and up)	570 yards and up (520 metres and up)

Note: These guidelines assume an altitude less than 2,000 feet/610 metres above sea level.

As *par* reflects the score a *scratch player* is expected to score on a given hole, it may also be appropriate to take into consideration the following information when allocating *par*:

- The playing difficulty of the hole, including any effective length correction factors, such as elevation changes, forced lay-ups, and prevalent wind.
- Where a hole length falls within two *par* ranges, for example 470 yards (men) or 400 yards (women), the *par* may be allocated as 4 or 5 depending on the difficulty of the hole.
- The way the hole is designed to be played.

Where appropriate, the standardization of *par* across tee sets is recommended. For example, if the hole lengths from all sets of tees on a specific hole lie within the recommended *par* 5 range for men, with the exception of the forward tee at 410 yards, the forward tee should also be designated as a *par* 5 hole if it can be determined that it was designed to be played as a *par* 5 for the majority of players who will choose to play the hole from that tee. Additional consideration may also be given to the set of tees most commonly played by men and women and the most common *par*, for men and women, across all sets of tees on a hole.

The standardization of *par* helps to simplify:

- The calculation of the number of strokes given or received when players are competing from multiple sets of tees.
- The consistent application of *net double bogey* and *net par* to determine a player's *adjusted gross score* across all tee sets on a hole.

# Appendix G: The Golf Course, Course Rating and Slope Rating

## **Course Measurement, Course Rating and Slope Rating, and Modification of Courses**

### **a. General**

An *Authorized Association* is responsible for determining and issuing *Course Ratings* and *Slope Ratings* for the *golf courses* within its *jurisdiction* (see Definition of *golf course*). A *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* can be issued to *golf courses* with a minimum length of 750 yards (685 metres) for 9 holes and 1500 yards (1370 metres) for 18 holes.

*Course Ratings* must be reviewed periodically and revised and reissued as necessary. New *golf courses* can change frequently during the first years after construction and must be re-rated within five years of the initial rating date. Thereafter, *golf courses* must be re-rated at least once every 10 years.

### **b. Course Measurement**

Each hole must be measured to the nearest yard/metre, for each set of tees from a permanent distance marker, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Course Rating System and only by a qualified person or organization. *Authorized Associations* can provide a copy of the measurement procedures to those involved in the measurement process.

### **c. Tee Markers**

The tee markers used to designate each set of tees on a *golf course* should be consistent in name, colour and/or design and distinguishable from the tee markers used for other sets of tees. It is strongly recommended that the *Authorized Association* issues guidance to *golf clubs* as to how these avoid any association with gender or age.

### **d. Display of Ratings and Par**

The *Course Rating*, *Slope Rating* and *par* for each set of tees must be readily available so that it is easy for a player to convert their *Handicap Index* to a *Course Handicap* and *Playing Handicap* to submit an *acceptable score*.

### e. Course Rating and Slope Rating

The *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* is the evaluation of the playing difficulty of the course for the *scratch player* and the *bogey player* under normal playing conditions. The effective playing length is determined from the measurement of each hole, adjusted for the impact of roll, wind, elevation changes, altitude, dog-legs and forced lay ups. In addition to the effective playing length, there are 10 obstacle factors evaluated on each hole for both the *scratch player* and the *bogey player*. These are: topography; fairway; green target; recoverability and rough; bunkers; crossing obstacles; lateral obstacles; trees; green surface and psychology. The Course Rating System uses table values, adjustments and formulas to calculate ratings.

The *Course Rating* is calculated from the effective playing length and obstacle factors for 9 or 18 designated holes. The *Course Rating* is expressed in strokes to one decimal point and represents the *expected score* for a *scratch player*. The Bogey Rating represents the *expected score* for a *bogey player*. The difference between the *Course Rating* and the Bogey Rating is used in the determination of the *Slope Rating*. A *golf course* of standard relative difficulty has a *Slope Rating* of 113.

The front of a teeing area, as defined in the *Rules of Golf*, should not be placed more than 10 yards (10 metres) in front of, or behind, the relevant permanent distance marker on each hole. Over an 18-hole round, a *golf course* should not be shortened (or lengthened) by more than 100 yards (100 metres) from its measured length, to ensure accurate application of the *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* in the calculation of players' *Score Differentials*. The equivalent value for a 9-hole round is 50 yards (50 metres).

### f. Modification of Courses

#### (i) Temporary Changes

The *Handicap Committee* must notify the *Authorized Association* when temporary changes are being made to the *golf course* that may affect the *Course Rating*. The *Authorized Association* will determine whether scores made under such conditions are acceptable for handicap purposes, and whether the *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* should be modified temporarily.

Where a temporary *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* has been issued, this information must be made available to players prior to the commencement of their round.

## Appendix G

### For an 18-hole golf course:

If approved by the *Authorized Association*, the issuance of a temporary *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* is determined by the *Handicap Committee* and/or the *Authorized Association* following the procedure set out below:

- Locate the nearest set of rated tees for the appropriate gender.
- Determine the measured difference between the set of tees being played and the rated set of tees.
- For differences under 100 yards (100 metres), no adjustment is necessary and scores can be submitted as usual; otherwise
- For differences between 100 and 300 yards (100 and 274 metres), the below table can be used to determine the adjustments required and issue a temporary *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating*.



Using these guidelines and the table below, find the range that includes the yardage difference:

Men's Rating Adjustment			Women's Rating Adjustment		
Yards [Metres]	Change to Course Rating	Change to Slope Rating	Yards [Metres]	Change to Course Rating	Change to Slope Rating
100 to 120 [100 to 110]	0.5	1	100 to 116 [100 to 110]	0.6	1
121 to 142 [111 to 130]	0.6	1	117 to 134 [111 to 122]	0.7	1
143 to 164 [131 to 150]	0.7	2	135 to 152 [123 to 139]	0.8	2
165 to 186 [151 to 170]	0.8	2	153 to 170 [140 to 155]	0.9	2
187 to 208 [171 to 190]	0.9	2	171 to 188 [156 to 172]	1.0	2
209 to 230 [191 to 210]	1.0	2	189 to 206 [173 to 188]	1.1	2
231 to 252 [211 to 230]	1.1	3	207 to 224 [189 to 205]	1.2	2
253 to 274 [231 to 250]	1.2	3	225 to 242 [206 to 221]	1.3	3
275 to 300 [251 to 274]	1.3	3	243 to 260 [222 to 238]	1.4	3
*Please contact your <i>Authorized Association</i> for any adjustment greater than 300 yards (274 metres)			261 to 278 [239 to 254]	1.5	3
			279 to 300 [255 to 274]	1.6	3
			*Please contact your <i>Authorized Association</i> for any adjustment greater than 300 yards (274 metres)		

## Appendix G

### Notes:

- An adjustment must not be applied that would result in a yardage shorter than the minimum length of 750 yards (685 metres) for 9 holes and 1500 yards (1370 metres) for 18 holes.
- These guidelines assume an altitude less than 2,000 feet/610 metres above sea level.
- If the unrated tees are longer than the rated tees, add the resulting table values to the ratings of the nearest set of tees rated for the appropriate gender.
- If the unrated tees are shorter than the rated tees, subtract the resulting values from the ratings of the nearest set of tees rated for the appropriate gender.
- For differences above 300 yards (274 metres), play for the day would be ineligible for handicap purposes, unless otherwise determined by the *Authorized Association* in advance of the round or competition.

### For a 9-hole golf course:

If approved by the *Authorized Association*, the issuance of a temporary *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* is determined by the *Handicap Committee* and/or *Authorized Association* following the procedure set out below:

- Locate the nearest set of rated tees for the appropriate gender.
- Determine the measured difference between the set of tees being played and the rated set of tees.
- For differences under 50 yards (50 metres), no adjustment is necessary and scores can be returned or posted as usual; otherwise
- For differences between 50 and 150 yards (50 and 137 metres), the table below can be used to determine the adjustment and issue a temporary *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating*.

Using these guidelines and the table below, find the range that includes the yardage difference:

Men's Rating Adjustment			Women's Rating Adjustment		
Yards [Metres]	Change to <i>Course Rating</i>	Change to <i>Slope Rating</i>	Yards [Metres]	Change to <i>Course Rating</i>	Change to <i>Slope Rating</i>
50 to 76 [50 to 69]	0.3	1	50 to 62 [50 to 57]	0.3	1
77 to 98 [70 to 90]	0.4	2	63 to 80 [58 to 73]	0.4	2
99 to 120 [91 to 110]	0.5	2	81 to 98 [74 to 90]	0.5	2
121 to 142 [111 to 130]	0.6	3	99 to 116 [91 to 106]	0.6	2
143 to 150 [131 to 137]	0.7	3	117 to 134 [107 to 122]	0.7	3
*Please contact your <i>Authorized Association</i> for any adjustment greater than 150 yards (137 metres)			135 to 150 [123 to 137]	0.8	3
			*Please contact your <i>Authorized Association</i> for any adjustment greater than 150 yards (137 metres)		

Note: If playing a combination of different sets of tees, a current *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* must be available to submit an *acceptable score*. If the Committee in charge of a competition has used a combination of tees for a competition course, this temporary rating procedure may be used, but this procedure is not a substitute for a formal or permanent *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating*.

(ii) **Permanent Changes**

A *golf club* must notify the *Authorized Association* when permanent changes are made to a *golf course*. Permanent changes to the *golf course* require the *Authorized Association* to review the current *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* and to determine whether a re-rating is necessary.





VI

# Local Guidance for Golf Club Committees

# USGA Handicap Committee Guide

The USGA Handicap Committee Guide is available in digital format only and is designed as a complement to the Rules of Handicapping book. The guide is meant to assist the Handicap Committee at a Golf Club in the practical application of the Rules of Handicapping, and provide guidance on how to carry out its responsibilities to ensure all players have an opportunity to play or compete on a fair and equitable basis with fellow players. In it you will find information and examples specific to a Handicap Committee and its responsibilities within the United States and its territories.

A Golf Club is an organization of individual members that operates under bylaws with Committees (Handicap Committee required) to supervise golf activities and maintain the integrity of the Rules of Handicapping. Only a player affiliated with an authorized Golf Club can establish or maintain a Handicap Index.

The club must be affiliated with and authorized by the Allied Golf Association (AGA) in its area. The AGA is the body under which a Golf Club sits and should be consulted as needed for support.

*Please Note: This Committee Guide will be revised periodically to align with various initiatives or where changes to local guidance is necessary in between revisions to the Rules of Handicapping.*

*Publish date – June 1, 2024*

## **Local Guidance for Rule 1 – Purpose and Authorization; Obtaining a Handicap Index (includes Appendix A – Rights and Responsibilities)**

### **Authorization**

The USGA has the exclusive right to implement and administer the Rules of Handicapping and the Course Rating System™ under the World Handicap System™ within the United States and its territories, including the computation and issuance of each Handicap Index®. All Handicap Index calculations are performed solely from the USGA Centralized Computation Service and distributed through Allied Golf Associations (AGA), where the USGA has delegated certain rights and obligations for handicap administration and oversight within defined territories.

### **Handicap Committee and Club Responsibilities Checklist for Authorized Golf Clubs**

For a club to be authorized, it must comply with the following items to help ensure they are properly following the Rules of Handicapping. Clubs that have not completed the authorization requirements will not be permitted to use the Rules of Handicapping and the Handicap Index of its members will be set to NH (No Handicap).

If a club is called into question regarding any policies not in compliance with the Rules of Handicapping, the AGA with administration and oversight responsibilities will contact the club directly. The USGA will aid the AGA as needed during the discovery phase. If the AGA is not able to persuade the club to change its policies in order to obtain compliance or meet other conditions, the AGA will advise the club in writing that, without authorization, the club may not use any part of the World Handicap System (including the Course Rating System) and its marks, including the handicap calculation formula or use of the Course Rating™ and/or Slope Rating™ in an alternative handicap calculation for its members.

### **Authorized Golf Club Requirements**

A golf club, which may or may not be associated with a golf course or facility, is a group of at least ten active individual members on the handicap roster. A golf club is required to have a Handicap Committee to supervise golf activities, provide peer review, as well as apply and maintain the integrity of the Rules of Handicapping.

## Rule 1 Guidance

Members of a golf club should have a reasonable and regular opportunity to play golf with each other and reside in a geographic proximity to facilitate this, with members generally within a 100-mile radius of the principal location of the golf club.

Authorization for a club to use the WHS is overseen by the local AGA. To ensure proper handicap administration and oversight, as well as practical knowledge of the Rules of Handicapping, exists at the local level, each authorized golf club must complete an education requirement within six months of the beginning of every revision of the WHS or upon onboarding, an annual assessment, and have at least 10 active members at each quarterly checkpoint. Failure to meet these requirements will result in the Handicap Index of the members of the golf club to be displayed as NH (No Handicap).

### **Educate and Communicate the Rules of Handicapping to Members**

How well players comply with the Rules of Handicapping depends, to a large extent, on how well their responsibilities are communicated to them and their understanding of the potential consequences of not fulfilling those responsibilities. An effective Handicap Committee will continually provide the education and information the players need.

The Handicap Committee should concentrate its education efforts on the key features of the Rules of Handicapping that are most relevant to players, so that they understand:

- which scores are acceptable.
- the timeframe for submitting scores for handicap purposes.
- how to calculate a maximum hole score for handicap purposes.
- how to post scores when fewer than 18 holes are played.
- how to convert the Handicap Index into a Course Handicap.
- the concept of handicap allowances for different formats of play.
- where to find the scoring record.
- how the Handicap Index is calculated.
- the Handicap Committee's ability to post penalty scores.
- the process of a handicap review.

This can be achieved through the golf club's website, newsletters or policies and procedures document. The Handicap Committee might also consider holding a member's information meeting as part of the overall communication and awareness process.



AGAs should be able to supply clubs with a range of materials to support this effort, including PowerPoint slides, videos, posters and/or pamphlets.

The Handicap Committee should be accessible to answer members' questions and should contact their AGA if they are unsure about how to proceed.

### **Establish a Handicap Committee**

In addition to the definition of the Handicap Committee within the Rules of Handicapping, it is recommended the Handicap Committee be comprised of at least three members with an odd number of members to aid when voting occurs. The Handicap Committee should be chaired by a member of the golf club. An employee is encouraged to serve on the Handicap Committee or participate in an advisory role; however, it is preferable not to have the employee serve as chair.

The Handicap Committee should develop a policies and procedures document for members of the club wishing to establish and maintain a Handicap Index (see Sample Letters).

### **Home Club Designation**

Each player must have a home club designation. The purpose of the designation is to define which club and AGA have oversight responsibilities of the player's scoring record. The Handicap Index of a player will be updated at 12:00 midnight local time based on the location of the AGA that the home club is affiliated. If a player is a multi-member (member of more than one club, regardless of AGA affiliation) each club's Handicap Committee has access to the scoring record to correct any errors or omissions. Additionally, each club's Handicap Committee can adjust the player's Handicap Index. It is strongly encouraged that all clubs are notified and consulted before any adjustment is made. If there is a disagreement in the administration of a player's Handicap Index, the player's home club and AGA on record will have final authority on such matters.

The player can work with their club and/or AGA to designate the home club. The player must be an active member of the club for it to be designated as the home club. A player must not designate a home club for the purpose of obtaining a Handicap Index based on whether the club may give them an unfair advantage.

### **Handicap Index Based on Dominant Hand**

A player must establish a Handicap Index playing from the player's preferential side of play, known as the dominant hand. For example, if the Handicap Index is established playing left-handed, the player must continue to play left-handed and post all acceptable scores.

## Rule 1 Guidance

A player may not have a Handicap Index while playing both left-handed and right-handed concurrently. A basic premise of the Rules of Handicapping is that a player is trying to make their best score and to post every acceptable score. This includes selecting the best play for each stroke, so unless a ball is positioned requiring a deviation from the dominant side of play, the player must attempt to make the best shot for each stroke using the dominant side of play.

If a player is forced to discontinue play from the dominant hand in which the Handicap Index was established due to an injury or switches the dominant hand when learning the game, and begins play from the opposite side, the original Handicap Index must be archived, and a new scoring record must be established. The Handicap Committee should work with the AGA to remove the original Handicap Index and scoring record from further access.

### Inactive Season

The Handicap Committee must confirm the club is observing the active/inactive season as determined by the AGA having jurisdiction in its area (Active and Inactive Season Schedule). Scores made at any golf course observing an inactive season are not acceptable for handicap purposes. The inactive season dates exist to address how seasonal weather can impact the conditions of a golf course. A Course Rating and Slope Rating is issued for each set of tees at a golf course, both are based on effective playing length and difficulty under “normal” conditions. In many parts of the country, there are certain months when facilities remain open but are unable to maintain regular course conditions because of weather or staffing. If scores were acceptable for handicap purposes during these times, the Handicap Index of players could be unfairly distorted.

### **Local Guidance for Rule 2 – Scores Acceptable for Handicap Purposes**

#### **Rules of Golf Must be Followed for Score Posting**

The Handicap Committee must ensure the members play by the Rules of Golf. The Committee should confirm the golf course is marked in accordance with the Rules of Golf.

The AGA can provide guidance on properly marking the golf course.

### Local Guidance for Rule 3 – Adjustment of Hole Scores

#### Score to Record When One or More Holes Not Played

The expected score is addressed in 3.2 When a Hole is Not Played . The expected score is based on the average Score Differential™ of a player with a given Handicap Index and a normal distribution of scores – so it is not specific to each player.

#### 10 - 17 Holes Played

When a player posts a 10–17–hole round (9 of the holes played must be from a Rated 9), an 18–hole Score Differential will be calculated based on the 10–17 holes played combined with an expected Score Differential for any holes not played based on the player’s Handicap Index.

Scores posted when 10–17 holes played must be posted hole–by–hole to allow for the expected Score Differential to be calculated (see expected score within scoring record below).

Important note: The Rules of Handicapping mention use of expected score to produce either a 9–hole or 18–hole Score Differential (see Clarification 3.2b/1). However, in the U.S., when fewer than 9 holes are played, the score would be unacceptable for handicap purposes and not eligible for expected score to be applied.

## **Local Guidance for Rule 4 – Submitting a Score (includes Appendix B – Player’s Scoring Record)**

### **Facilitate the Timely Submission of Scores**

The Rules of Handicapping rely on the accurate and timely submission of all acceptable scores. Scores should be posted by the player or the Competition Committee immediately following play to ensure that:

- they are included in the playing conditions calculation.
- they are available for peer review.
- the Handicap Index can be updated for the next day.

The Handicap Committee should ensure the submission of scores under the Rules of Handicapping for all authorized formats of play which includes both competition and general play.

It is the responsibility of the player to post their score unless otherwise directed by the Handicap Committee or the Competition Committee.

The process of posting a score should be made as easy as possible for the player – especially when they are playing away from their home club. This may include use of:

- a mobile app,
- a terminal or kiosk at the golf club, or
- an AGA or golf club’s web site.

As above, it is important that the Course Rating and Slope Rating information is easily accessible for all players to allow them to properly record their scores.

### **Maintain Accurate Player Scoring Records**

The Handicap Index will be updated by the USGA the day after a score is posted. This will generally be an automated procedure within the handicap computation service. However, where appropriate, the Handicap Committee may perform a special update to the scoring record which will recalculate the Handicap Index immediately.

Members should be made aware of where they can access their Handicap Index and scoring record information. This may be via:

## Rule 4 Guidance

- a mobile app,
- handicap software installed on a terminal or kiosk at the golf club or accessible online, or
- reports displayed in the clubhouse or provided by the club upon request.

Any errors or omissions in a player's scoring record reported to the Handicap Committee must be handled appropriately, according to the situation.

A Handicap Index lapses if a player is no longer an active member of at least one authorized golf club. The player's scoring record will be retained wherever possible in the USGA Centralized Computation Service. This will provide the Handicap Committee with valuable information should the player seek to activate their scoring record in the future.

The full version of a scoring record is accessible to the Handicap Committee and fellow members of the player's golf club. The scoring record will contain full details of the most recent 20 scores. The condensed version of a scoring record is available to all players and club administrators utilizing the USGA Centralized Computation Service. For privacy reasons, the condensed scoring record will omit reference to the day the round was played, and the golf course played. Reporting availability will depend on the technology services used by the club.

### Expected Score Within Scoring Record

When 10–17 holes are played, the players scoring record will display the adjusted gross score for the holes played, the number of holes played, and the 18–hole Course Rating and Slope Rating. When 9 holes are played, the 9–hole adjusted gross score, score type of N, and the 9–hole Course Rating and Slope Rating will be shown. In both cases an 18–hole Score Differential will be displayed.

Used	Type	Date	Score	C.R./Slope	PCC	Diff	ESR	Adj.
*	H	04/01/24	82	71.7/130	–	9.0	–	–
	N	03/28/24	45	35.5/128	–	16.1	–	–
	A	03/21/24	88	71.5/133	–	14.0	–	–
	A	03/17/24	88	72.2/135	–	13.2	–	–
*	H	03/14/24	71 (15)	71.7/130	–	9.8	–	–

*This is a partial scoring record for illustrative purposes only.*

### Score Posting

Where hole–by–hole score entry is in use through the handicap software, applicable adjustments to the gross score (adjusted gross score) can be automatically applied. If hole–by–hole scoring is not in use, the gross score adjusted for net double bogey will need to be determined and recorded manually.

Where applicable, the player will be responsible for determining their most likely score when a hole has been started but not completed; most likely score must not exceed the player's net double bogey value for a hole.

In cases where a match is decided before the conclusion of 18 holes and the players continue to play the remaining holes, they must post their actual adjusted gross scores for handicap purposes. If they do not play the remaining holes, the score will receive an 18-hole Score Differential, using expected score for holes not played, provided at least 9 holes with a corresponding 9-hole Course Rating and Slope Rating were played.

### **Multiple 9-Hole Casual Rounds**

In casual play, when multiple individual nines are played on the same day, the Handicap Committee has discretion to instruct players on how to post scores for handicap purposes. For instance, when two individual 9-hole rounds are played, the Handicap Committee can advise players to post two 9-hole scores or treat the two nines played as an 18-hole score and post as such. In these instances, the Handicap Committee should consider intent. If there was intent to play 9 holes, such as 9 holes played in the morning with friends and another 9 holes played in the late afternoon with a spouse, then these 9-hole scores should be posted separately. In addition, the same principle of intent applies when 27 holes are played in one day. For example, if there was intent to play 18 holes in the morning, and a subsequent 9-hole round was played in the afternoon, it would be advisable for players to post an 18-hole score for the first two nines and a 9-hole score for the final nine.

### **Same Nine Played Twice**

For 9-hole courses, the USGA recommends the AGA provide an 18-hole Course Rating and Slope Rating to accommodate players who play the 9 holes twice. Similarly, on an 18-hole course, if the same 9 holes are frequently played back-to-back, then the club should contact their AGA to publish an appropriate 18-hole Course Rating and Slope Rating.

If one nine is closed for maintenance, depending on the length of time the 9 holes are to be closed, the club should contact their AGA to publish an appropriate temporary 18-hole Course Rating and Slope Rating based on playing the same 9 holes twice as well as unpublish the previous Ratings. When the 9 holes reopen, the AGA may re-publish/publish new Ratings for the 18 holes and unpublish the temporary Ratings if playing the same 9 holes twice is no longer being done.

Note: If the AGA has not issued an 18-hole Course Rating and Slope Rating, then the following score posting guidance should be used.

## Rule 4 Guidance

If the same nine is played back-to-back on a course for other/infrequent reasons, it is acceptable to post two separate 9-hole scores resulting in two 18-hole Score Differentials. It is also acceptable to use manual entry, as long as the course played is first selected within the score posting product. As an example, if the Front 9 with a Course Rating and Slope Rating of 35.1/124 is played twice, then Ratings of 70.2/124 may be used to post an 18-hole score.

### Score Types

Within the United States, scores will be identified with the letter designations below. These can be used to help identify the format of play, where a round was played and other details about the round.

H	=	Home (should be used when the course is associated with any golf club where the player is a member).
A	=	Away
C	=	Competition (will be an attribute of score type)
N	=	9-hole score combined with an expected score to produce an 18-hole Score Differential or (prior to January 2024) two 9-hole scores combined
P	=	Penalty
L	=	League (Coming Soon)
E	=	Exceptional (will be an attribute of score type)

Note:

- For the purposes of handicap review, clubs are encouraged to post certain scores as competition scores. Although a competition score does not have a direct impact on a player's Handicap Index calculation, it may be used as part of handicap review to indicate the player's demonstrated ability in competition rounds versus general play.



- A competition score is a score made in a competition organized and conducted by a Competition Committee. The competition must identify a winner(s) based on a stipulated round(s) and must be played under the Rules of Golf. The competition can be match play or stroke play. Examples of scores made at the club level that should be designated as competition scores include club championships (stroke or match play) and member–guest competitions.

### **Peer Review**

The player and the Handicap Committee have joint responsibility for adhering to the two basic premises: each player will try to make the best score at every hole in every round, regardless of where the round is played, and that the player will post every acceptable score for peer review.

As a part of peer review, the Handicap Committee must make the scoring record of members accessible to all other members for the certification of scores. This may be accomplished through handicap software provided by the club (e.g., mobile app or online application).

Scorecards may be requested periodically if the Handicap Committee wishes to sample the accuracy with which players are adjusting scores, however, the club must not take punitive action regarding the scoring record or the Handicap Index if an acceptable score is returned without a scorecard. The club Handicap Committee may require the return of scorecards for a probational period from a player who has had a Handicap Index withdrawn or adjusted.

### Local Guidance for Rule 5 – Handicap Index Calculation

#### 9-Hole Scores

When a player posts a 9-hole score played on a rated nine, a 9-hole Score Differential will be calculated for the 9 holes played, and that value will be combined with an expected score based on the player's Handicap Index to create an 18-hole Score Differential. The expected score is based on the average Score Differential of a player with a given Handicap Index and a normal distribution of scores – so it is not specific to each player.

For players who are posting initial scores to establish a Handicap Index, expected score will not apply until they play and post scores from 54 holes. Once the player has posted scores from 54 holes and an expected score can be determined for the player, an 18-hole Score Differential will be calculated for each 9-hole score and displayed within their scoring record. At this time the player will have established their initial Handicap Index.

#### Cap Examples (Soft Cap and Hard Cap)

The soft cap and hard cap 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 aid in minimizing the potential for handicap manipulation. The cap is part of the Handicap Index calculation after each score is posted.

The upward movement of a Handicap Index is unrestricted up to 3.0 strokes above the Low Handicap Index™ at which time a soft cap evaluation occurs. If a soft cap is applied, the Handicap Index will then be evaluated for a hard cap.

**Note:** The player must have a Low Handicap Index (established once 20 scores are in their scoring record) before a cap can be considered.

Soft Cap Example

The soft cap suppresses upward movement of the Handicap Index by 50% after a 3.0 stroke increase over the Low Handicap Index has been reached.

Avg. Low 8 Score Differentials - 11.6; Low Handicap Index - 6.5

Step 1: Subtract the Low Handicap Index from the Average Low 8 Score Differentials

Avg. Low 8 Score Differentials	-	Low Handicap Index	=	
11.6	-	6.5	=	5.1

Step 2: Determine how much greater this value is than 3.0 by subtracting 3.0 from the resulting value from Step 1

(Avg. Low 8 Score Differentials - Low Handicap Index)	-	3.0	=	
5.1	-	3.0	=	2.1

Step 3: Subtract 50% of the resulting value from Step 2 from the Average Low 8 Score Differentials

50%	of	2.1	=	1.05
Avg. Low 8 Score Differentials	-	(50% * 2.1)	=	
11.6	-	1.05	=	10.55, rounded to 10.6
			=	Handicap Index with soft cap applied = 10.6



## Local Guidance for Rule 6 – Course Handicap and Playing Handicap Calculation

### Make the Process of Converting a Handicap Index to a Course Handicap as Easy as Possible

The Course Rating, Slope Rating, and par for a set of tees are used to convert a Handicap Index into a Course Handicap based on the difficulty of the tee selected for play.

The calculation of the Course Handicap is used to determine the appropriate score to submit for handicap purposes, including any adjustments for net double bogey or application of net par, with the latter reserved for limited and practical scenarios and approved by the Handicap Committee.

It is important that this conversion process is made as easy as possible for all players and options may include use of:

- a mobile app,
- a Course Handicap table, or
- the Course Handicap Calculator located on the USGA website.

If Course Handicap tables are used, they should be posted in a place which is accessible for use by all players; for example, close to the first tee, scoring kiosk or in the clubhouse locker rooms.

### 9-Hole Course Handicap

To calculate a 9-hole Course Handicap, the first step is to divide the player's Handicap Index by two, and round this value to the nearest tenth using traditional rounding methods. It is necessary to round the value to the nearest tenth to convert to a 9-hole Course Handicap. The formula for calculating the Course Handicap is then used, using the 9-hole Course Rating, Slope Rating, and par for the tees being played.

#### 9-Hole Course Handicap Example

Handicap Index – 8.7; Course Rating – 35.3; Slope Rating – 121; Par – 36

$8.7 \div 2 = 4.35$ ; rounded to 4.4

9-Hole CH =  $4.4 \times (121 \div 113) + (35.3 - 36)$

9-Hole CH = 4.011...

9-Hole CH = 4

### Target Score

The target score is the benchmark the player can use to know if they have played to their handicap. Generally, a player should expect to play to their handicap about 15–20% of the time and, on average, expect to shoot about generally 2–5 strokes higher.

Target Score = Course Handicap + par

## **Local Guidance for Rule 7 – Committee Actions (includes remaining Appendices)**

### **Perform Handicap Reviews**

Recommendations for Handicap Index adjustments based on statistical data contained in the scoring record is available through the club's administrative tool. These recommendations are provided using the probability for the scores posted and can be used by the Handicap Committee as part of their review. Whether to apply any adjustments remains solely at the discretion of the Handicap Committee after taking into consideration any other knowledge the Committee has relating to the player's demonstrated ability.

It is strongly recommended that the Handicap Committee perform a handicap review on a monthly basis, or otherwise as needed, on any members who have been identified due to certain scoring anomalies. This should be facilitated via use of a USGA Handicap Review tool that will automatically identify players with certain scoring anomalies and provide supporting data as well as recommended actions to the Handicap Committee such as recommended Handicap Index adjustments. Handicap reviews can also be conducted for individual players at any time upon request. The purpose of the review is for the Handicap Committee to make certain the Handicap Index of the player is representative of their demonstrated ability.

The Committee should pay particular attention to any scores on a player's scoring record that have been brought to the Handicap Committee's attention by other members or players. This can be accomplished via peer review or through reporting tools available in the handicap software. The Handicap Review process should consider the data provided by the USGA, its recommended Handicap Index adjustment, and any other evidence the Handicap Committee may have to support or dispute any recommended actions.

Additional information the Handicap Committee may want to consider during a handicap review includes, but is not limited to:

- How did the player perform in competitions?
- Did the player have an illness or injury during the year?
- Are scores being posted in a timely manner?
- Have there been significant changes to the course most frequently played which may have impacted the fluctuation in the player's scoring record?

## Rule 7 Guidance

- Is the player applying the Rules of Handicapping procedure for net double bogey appropriately?
- Did the player's home Score Differentials vary drastically from their away Score Differentials?
- Did the player have any of the WHS safeguards applied during the year (e.g., ESR or cap)?
  - The Handicap Committee should review a player who has multiple exceptional score reductions (ESR) or if a single score produces a -2.0 ESR. A single ESR of -2.0 may indicate the player posted an incorrect score.

### **Adjust or Withdraw the Handicap Index of any Member Whose Handicap Index Does Not Reflect their Demonstrated Ability**

The Rules of Handicapping include safeguards to ensure a player's Handicap Index accurately reflects their demonstrated ability. However, under some circumstances it will be necessary for the Handicap Committee to consider taking action.

When considering any adjustment to, or withdrawal of, a player's Handicap Index, the Handicap Committee must ensure that the player is:

- involved in the process,
- fully informed of the level of any adjustment or withdrawal, and
- made aware of how long it applies.

Rule 7 of the Rules of Handicapping provides details on the process for each of these steps. These procedures are designed to both assist the Handicap Committee and ensure that each player is treated fairly and consistently from golf club to golf club.

If it is determined an adjustment to the Handicap Index or Low Handicap Index is appropriate, as a courtesy, the golf club performing the adjustment is strongly encouraged to notify all other golf clubs where the player is an active member.

Clubs are strongly encouraged to consult with their AGA if considering a Handicap Index adjustment of 5.0 strokes or greater. This may be in comparison to the Low Handicap Index or Handicap Index. If a Handicap Index adjustment at or beyond 5.0 strokes is applied, then the AGA will be notified for their review.

### **Player Appeal Process**

Prior to making an adjustment or withdrawal of a player's Handicap Index, the player must be given the opportunity to respond either in writing or in person to the Handicap Committee.



The player should be provided the information available as to why the Handicap Index is being adjusted or withdrawn, as well as the duration.

The Handicap Committee should ensure that it has procedures in place to settle any disputes in relation to a handicap review or the application of the Rules of Handicapping in general. The player may escalate their appeal of the Handicap Index adjustment to the AGA Handicap Committee for review if they believe the club's Handicap Committee is not operating within the Rules of Handicapping.

## **Penalty Score**

It is strongly encouraged for a player to post the score on the same day of play. The Handicap Committee is authorized to post a penalty score to a player's record when a player fails to post an acceptable score from an authorized format of play in a timely manner. No prior notification is required, however, as a part of the club's policies and procedures it is recommended to notify players of the consequences for failing to post acceptable scores (see Sample Letter – Penalty Score).

The penalty score will be identified with the score type "P" using the date that the score was not posted and can be applied by the Handicap Committee through the handicap software. The Handicap Committee should decide the appropriate penalty score based on the intent of the player and can select a high or low penalty score. This will duplicate the highest or lowest Score Differential found in the player's most recent 20 scores.

Alternatively, if the Handicap Committee is aware of the score information it may post the actual score with the score type of "P". The Handicap Committee has the discretion to post the actual score in addition to the penalty score.

Note: If the score not posted was a 9-hole score, or a 10-17-hole score, an 18-hole penalty Score Differential can be issued.

## **Most Improved Player**

The recommended method for determining a golf club's most improved player at the end of a season, year or custom date range is as follows:

The Committee may determine that they will only consider a player who has at least 20 scores in the scoring record. Add 12 to the player's Handicap Index at the start date. The number 12 is used to provide a consistent value for all players being evaluated. This value is A. Add 12 to the player's Handicap Index at the end date. This value is B.

Divide value A by value B, calculating to three decimal places. This is the improvement factor. The player with the highest improvement factor is the most improved player.

## Rule 7 Guidance

### Example for Most Improved Player

Starting Handicap Index:	24.3
Ending Handicap Index:	16.2
Value A:	$24.3 + 12 = 36.3$
Value B:	$16.2 + 12 = 28.2$
A / B:	$36.3 / 28.2 = 1.287\dots$
Improvement Factor:	1.287

Important Note: Players who had a Handicap Index adjustment (reset, frozen, withdrawn) during the selected date range should not be eligible for the most improved player.

### Working With the Competition Committee

The Competition Committee typically organizes and runs competitions for the club. The Handicap Committee should consult with the Competition Committee to ensure the following items are decided in advance and clearly communicated:

- Establish the Terms of the competition for all applicable events at the club.
- Establish a schedule of events that caters to players of all abilities, offering all members the opportunity to post acceptable scores for handicap purposes.
- In certain circumstances, the Competition Committee (or the Handicap Committee) has the discretion to decide what Playing Handicap the player should use for specific rounds being played.
- If needed, jointly obtain approval from the appropriate AGA requesting a suspension of score submission due to exceptionally poor course conditions.
- Refer to and use the recommended handicap allowances outlined in Appendix C of the Rules of Handicapping for various formats of play.
  - Using the Terms of the competition, scorecards, pairings sheet, or other methods, players should be alerted of any handicap allowances that will be applied to the unrounded Course Handicap to determine the Playing Handicap for the competition.
- The Handicap Committee should examine the results of competitions and take appropriate action if needed. For example, if a player repeatedly wins or places high in net competitions, then a handicap review to ensure their Handicap Index is reflective of their demonstrated ability would be appropriate.
- Determine the Handicap Index eligibility requirements for the event.
- Determine the stroke index allocation to be used for the competition.
  - In mixed competitions where players play their own ball and where allocations are different for men and women, the players are to receive

strokes based on their respective stroke allocations.

- In mixed foursomes, including selected drive match play (each side plays one ball), strokes should be received based on the allocation for men.
- Determine the Handicap Index to be used for the competition.
  - It is recommended to use the Handicap Index in effect on a date as close to the start of the competition as possible with consideration to the preparation work that needs to take place (pairing, scorecards, etc.).
  - If the competition is played across multiple weeks in a season (such as a season long match play competition), it is recommended to use the player's Handicap Index on the date that each individual match is played to calculate their Playing Handicap.
- For multi-round events, determine if the Handicap Index will be updated between rounds or if the Handicap Index at the start of the competition will be used for all rounds.
  - To ease administrative tasks, it is recommended the Handicap Index remain unchanged between rounds for the duration of the competition.
  - If a round is started and play is then suspended, the Handicap Index in effect at the beginning of the round should be used until the round is completed.
- The USGA strongly encourages the Competition Committee to post all scores. The Committee should also announce they are posting the scores to avoid a duplicate posting scenario. The Committee (preferably the Handicap Committee, in consultation with the Competition Committee) must announce in advance whether the score will be identified by the letter "C" when posted.
  - Even if the same Handicap Index is used throughout the event, it is important for the Committee to post scores at the end of each day.
  - The player's full, unrestricted Course Handicap should be used for the calculation of the adjusted gross score based on the Handicap Index on the day the competition was played.

### Temporary Course Rating and Slope Rating

If the Competition Committee has, at its discretion, used a combination of tees for a one-time event, a Course Rating and Slope Rating must be available to post an acceptable score for handicap purposes. Under this circumstance, the Committee may use Appendix G from the Rules of Handicapping to determine a temporary Course Rating and Slope Rating without AGA involvement. However, this procedure is not a substitute for a formal Course Rating and Slope Rating. If such a combination is utilized long-term, then a request must be sent to the AGA for the issuance of formal Ratings.

## Rule 7 Guidance

Before using Appendix G for a competition, it is important for the Committee to consider the following:

- If the combination of tees results in less than a 100-yard difference from an existing Rated tee, then no adjustment is necessary, and
- If the combination of tees results in more than a 300-yard difference from an existing Rated tee, or if the length of a hole has been modified significantly (which could significantly change the way the hole is played), the AGA must be contacted for support.

### Competitions Where Multiple Nines are Played

In competitions with a round robin or other format where multiple individual nines are played, the USGA recommends each nine be posted independently for handicap purposes. This provides consistency with the Rules of Golf where they are treated as separate rounds (for example – a player can swap out clubs between rounds, escalating penalties are reset, and the player can receive separate penalties for being late to the tee in respective rounds). As a result, each 9-hole score will receive an 18-hole Score Differential™ in the scoring record.

### Competing from Different Tees

When players are competing from different tees or men and women are competing from the same set of tees with the same par, no additional adjustment needs to be made to the Playing Handicap of the players. However, depending on the format of play, if players are competing from tees with different pars an adjustment may be necessary to create equity.

For stroke play or match play formats (including individual stroke play, four-ball stroke play, singles match play and four-ball match play), the player(s) competing from tees with a higher par must receive additional strokes equal to the difference in par. For example, if par is 71 for some players and 72 for others, those playing from the tees with a par of 72 would receive 1 additional stroke for the round.

In most formats of play, the lower score is used to determine a result, i.e., the par is not relevant. For example, on a hole that is a par-4 for men and a par-5 for women, if both players score their respective par, the man wins the hole since a 4 is lower than a 5.

If the format of play is either Stableford (where a player's point total is compared directly against other players) or a par/bogey format (where the result for the round is compared directly against other players), no adjustment is needed to account for a difference in par (see 6.2b Calculation When Multiple Tees Are Used in a Competition).

## **Formats of Play and Handicap Allowances**

The following is a list of common formats of play with descriptions, as well as their recommended handicap allowances in parentheses. For information on the impact of field on recommended handicap allowance, see C/1 – Impact of Field on Recommended Handicap Allowance.

### Stroke Play

#### Individual Stroke Play (95%)

Each competitor receives full Playing Handicap. The net score is equal to the gross score minus the Playing Handicap. A player with a plus Playing Handicap will add to the gross score to determine the net score.

#### Individual Stableford (95%)

The scoring in Stableford competitions is made by points awarded in relation to a fixed score (such as par) for each hole as shown below:

HOLE PLAYED IN	POINTS
MORE THAN ONE OVER FIXED SCORE OR NO SCORE RETURNED	0
ONE OVER FIXED SCORE	1
FIXED SCORE	2
ONE UNDER FIXED SCORE	3
TWO UNDER FIXED SCORE	4
THREE UNDER FIXED SCORE	5
FOUR UNDER FIXED SCORE	6

The winner is the competitor who scores the highest number of points. Players use full Playing Handicap, and strokes are taken according to the stroke index allocation.

#### Individual Par/Bogey (95%)

A form of stroke play that uses scoring as in match play where: the competitor wins, loses or ties a hole by completing the hole in fewer strokes, more strokes, or the same strokes as a fixed score for that hole set by the Committee. The competition is won by the player with the highest total of holes won versus holes lost (that is, adding up the holes won and subtracting the holes lost).

## Rule 7 Guidance

### Individual Maximum Score (95%)

A player's score for each hole is capped at a maximum set by the Committee, which may be fixed (such as 8, 9, 10, etc.), related to par (such as two times par or triple bogey), or related to the player's handicap (such as net double bogey). A player who does not complete a hole (often referred to informally as "picking up") is not disqualified, but simply gets the maximum score for the hole.

### Four-Ball Stroke Play (85%)

Two competitors play as partners, each playing their own ball. The lower net score of the partners is the score for the hole and the total score for all holes played is the team score.

In mixed four-ball stroke play, strokes are taken as assigned on the player's respective stroke index allocation, and players must play from the sets of tees designated by the Competition Committee.

One of the recommendations under the previous USGA Handicap System (not in use since 2019) was to try to keep the difference between partners' Course Handicaps to 8 strokes or less. If this difference could not be avoided, then an additional 10% reduction for both partners was encouraged. However, with four-ball stroke play having a lower handicap allowance under the WHS (85% for all players) as compared to the previous USGA Handicap System (90% for men and 95% for women), the 8-stroke limit between partners is not necessary to produce equity among teams of various handicap levels. As a result, it is no longer recommended to assign an additional reduction if partners have more than an 8-stroke difference in their Course Handicaps.

### Four-Ball Stableford (85%)

Two competitors play as partners, each playing their own ball. The scoring in Stableford competitions is made by points awarded in relation to a fixed score (such as par) for each hole. The higher point total of the partners is the score for the hole.

The winner is the side who scores the highest number of points. Players use full Playing Handicap, and strokes are taken as they are allocated on the stroke index allocation.

### Four-Ball Par/Bogey (90%)

A form of stroke play that uses scoring as in match play where: the side wins, loses or ties a hole by completing the hole in fewer strokes, more strokes, or the same strokes as a fixed score for that hole set by the Committee. The competition

is won by the side with the highest total of holes won versus holes lost (that is, adding up the holes won and subtracting the holes lost).

**Match Play**

In match play, the game is played by holes. Except as otherwise provided in the Rules of Golf, a hole is won by the player or side that completes the hole in fewer strokes. In a handicap match, the lower net score wins the hole. This includes when the par of the hole is different for those competing in match play. A match is won by the player or side that is leading by a number of holes greater than the number of holes remaining to be played.

**Individual Match Play (100%)**

The match is won by the player who is leading by a number of holes greater than the number of holes remaining to be played. The higher-handicapped player receives the full difference in the Playing Handicap between the two players; the lower-handicapped player plays from scratch.

**Four-Ball Match Play (90%)**

Each player plays their own ball. Two players play their better ball against the better ball of two other players. After the unrounded Course Handicap of each player has been determined, the Course Handicap of all four players is adjusted so that the player with the lowest value plays from scratch and a 90% handicap allowance is then applied to the difference in the unrounded Course Handicap for the other players. The resulting values are then rounded to determine each player’s Playing Handicap (see below for an example).

	Course Rating – 72.3		Slope Rating – 135		Par – 72
PLAYER	HANDICAP INDEX	COURSE HANDICAP (UNROUNDED)	DIFFERENCE (UNROUNDED CH)	HANDICAP ALLOWANCE (90%)	PLAYING HANDICAP (ROUNDED)
A	+1.2	+1.133...	–	–	0
B	12.6	15.353...	16.486...	14.838...	15
C	11.4	13.919...	15.053...	13.547...	14
D	15.2	18.459...	19.592...	17.633...	18

**Concurrent Individual Match Play and Four-Ball Match Play**

In a competition where Individual Match Play and Four-Ball Match Play are conducted concurrently, the Committee has discretion to have each player use the same Playing Handicap for both formats. After the unrounded Course Handicap of each player has been determined, the Course Handicap of all four

## Rule 7 Guidance

players is adjusted so that the player with the lowest value plays from scratch and a handicap allowance determined by the Committee in charge of the competition is then applied to the difference in the unrounded Course Handicap for the other players. The resulting values are then rounded to determine each player's Playing Handicap.

### Other Formats of Play

In a team competition where players do not play their own ball throughout play of a hole (Foursomes, Chapman/Pinehurst, Scrambles) and a single Playing Handicap is used for the team, the handicap allowances are to be applied to each player's unrounded Course Handicap, then combined and rounded as the final step to determine the team Playing Handicap.

#### Foursomes Stroke Play (50% of combined team handicap)

Two players form a side and the side plays one ball. The partners play alternately from the teeing grounds as well as during the play of each hole.

**Foursomes Match Play (Higher handicapped side receives 50% of the difference between the combined Course Handicap of each side; lower handicapped side competes at scratch)**

Two players form a side and the side plays one ball. The partners play alternately from the teeing grounds as well as during the play of each hole.

Course Rating – 72.3			Slope Rating – 135		Par – 72	
PLAYER	HANDICAP INDEX	COURSE HANDICAP (UNROUNDED)	COMBINED TEAM HANDICAP	DIFFERENCE (UNROUNDED CH)	HANDICAP ALLOWANCE (50%)	PLAYING HANDICAP (ROUNDED)
A	8.4	10.335...	25.688...	6.690...	3.345...	0
B	12.6	15.353...				
C	11.4	13.919...	32.378...	6.690...	3.345...	3
D	15.2	18.459...				

#### Greensomes (60% low handicap + 40% high handicap)

Two players form a side and the side plays one ball. The partners each play from the teeing ground. Partners select the ball with which they wish to score and play that ball alternately to complete the hole. Depending on whose tee shot is chosen, the other team member will hit the second shot.



**Chapman or Pinehurst (60% low handicap + 40% high handicap)**

Two players play as partners. Each partner plays from the teeing ground and plays the partner’s ball for the second shot. After the second shot, partners select the ball with which they wish to score and play that ball alternately to complete the hole.

Course Rating – 72.3			Slope Rating – 135		Par – 72
PLAYER	HANDICAP INDEX	COURSE HANDICAP	HANDICAP ALLOWANCE (60% LOW HANDICAP + 40% HIGH HANDICAP)	PLAYING HANDICAP (ROUNDED)	TEAM PLAYING HANDICAP (ROUNDED)
A	8.4	10.3353982301	6.201...	12.343...	12
B	12.6	15.3530973451	6.141...		

**Scramble**

- 4 Players (25%/20%/15%/10% from the lowest to highest handicap)
- 3 Players (30%/20%/10% from the lowest to highest handicap)
- 2 Players (35% low/15% high)

Each player on the team hits from the teeing ground, then the team chooses the best of the shots for the next shot. All team members then play the second shot from that location, and again choose the best shot. Play continues in this manner until the hole is completed. The team handicap is deducted from the total gross score.

**Scramble (4 Players) Example**

Course Rating – 72.3			Slope Rating – 135		Par – 72
PLAYER	HANDICAP INDEX	COURSE HANDICAP	HANDICAP ALLOWANCE (25%/20%/15%/10% FROM LOWEST TO HIGHEST HANDICAP)	TEAM PLAYING HANDICAP	TEAM PLAYING HANDICAP (ROUNDED)
A	8.4	10.335...	2.583	13.650...	14
B	12.6	15.353...	3.071...		
C	23.4	28.255...	4.238...		
D	31.2	37.574...	3.757...		

## Rule 7 Guidance

### Total Score of 2 Match Play (100%)

Two players form a side and play against another side. Each player plays their own ball. The combined total of the two player's scores for each hole is recorded for the side. The Playing Handicap of all four players is reduced by the Playing Handicap of the player with the lowest Playing Handicap, who then plays from scratch. Each of the three other players is allowed 100% of the difference.

The following formats of play below do not have an official recommendation from the WHS for handicap allowances; however, analysis of scoring data shows the percentages below may provide equity amongst the players. Each golf club should determine if these percentages should be adjusted for their events.

### Shamble

In a shamble format, members of the team each hit a tee shot and select the best drive. From there, each player plays their own ball and the lowest score is the team score for the hole. The Competition Committee may want to consider using 75% of each player's Course Handicap when using selected drive for a two-person team or 65% of each player's Course Handicap for a four-person team.

### Ringer or Eclectic

A ringer or eclectic event is typically played over 36 holes. From the player's two scorecards, the player selects the better score on each hole. The winner is the player with the lowest total score for the selected 18 holes. Since this format is similar to a four-ball stroke play format, 85% of the Course Handicap may be considered. For a 72-hole eclectic event or ringer board, the Competition Committee may want to use the format of a best 1 of 4 stroke play competition (75%). This event may be completed in one day or extended over consecutive days.

For a ringer/eclectic event extending for more than 72 holes, such as a season long net ringer board, there is not a singular allowance percentage that would provide equity for the competitors. The golf club may want to consider flighting the competitors based on Handicap Index and play a gross ringer within these flights to determine a winner.

### Quota

It is suggested to use the handicap allowance recommendation for individual stroke play Stableford of 95%.

## Net Skins

The WHS does not have an equitable way to handle net skins and has no recommendations for using handicaps and allocation of strokes in a net skins competition.

## Holes Not Played

When one or more holes are not played in match play, the recommendation is for the players to calculate their Course Handicap, apply any handicap allowances for the format of play, and consider a hole not played as tied for the purposes of the competition.

If all 18 holes are not available in a stroke play competition, a percentage of the Course Handicap should be used. For example, if two holes are not being played, the Committee should use 16/18ths of the Course Handicap.

## Applying Handicap Allowances

To avoid multiple rounding points when converting a Handicap Index into a Playing Handicap, any handicap allowance should be applied to the unrounded Course Handicap. Also, when determining the allowance in formats of play where the lowest handicap player plays at scratch, the allowance is applied to the unrounded difference.

## How to Determine Flights

### Match Play

For a match play competition, customarily the number of players or teams in a flight should be placed in the appropriate draw of 8, 16, 32, or 64 (see below). The players or teams in each flight may be determined based on Handicap Index or Playing Handicap. In which case, if there are to be flights of 16, the 16 players with the lowest handicaps (or the 16 teams with the lowest combined handicaps) should comprise the Championship Flight, the next best 16 players or teams based on handicaps should comprise the First Flight, and so on.

Another commonly used method of determining the players or teams for each flight is a stroke-play qualifying round or rounds. If this method is used and there are to be flights of 16, the 16 players or teams with the lowest scores in the qualifying competition should comprise the Championship Flight. If there are to be flights other than the Championship Flight, the 16 players or teams with the next lowest scores should comprise the First Flight, and so on. It is recommended that a tie for last place in the Championship Flight be decided by a hole-by-hole playoff and that players should be advised in advance as to the time and place of

## Rule 7 Guidance

the playoff. If a playoff is not feasible, ties should be decided by matching scorecards.

In the case of a handicap match–play competition in which flights are to be determined by a qualifying round, the qualifying round may be conducted at scratch or on a handicap basis. If it is desired not to have high and low-handicap players competing against one another in matches, qualifying at scratch is recommended. Although the draw for match play may be completely blind or certain players may be distributed (seeded) throughout different quarters or eighths, the General Numerical Draw is recommended if flights are determined by a qualifying round. When using the General Numerical Draw, each player is assigned a number based on the player’s qualifying score. The lowest qualifier is no. 1, the second lowest qualifier is no. 2, and so on. Under the General Numerical Draw, players are paired by number for matches as follows:

UPPER HALF	LOWER HALF	UPPER HALF	LOWER HALF
64 Qualifiers		32 Qualifiers	
1 vs. 64	2 vs. 63	1 vs. 32	2 vs. 31
32 vs. 33	31 vs. 34	16 vs. 17	15 vs. 18
16 vs. 49	15 vs. 50	8 vs. 25	7 vs. 26
17 vs. 48	18 vs. 47	9 vs. 24	10 vs. 23
8 vs. 57	7 vs. 58	4 vs. 29	3 vs. 30
25 vs. 40	26 vs. 39	13 vs. 20	14 vs. 19
9 vs. 56	10 vs. 55	5 vs. 28	6 vs. 27
24 vs. 41	23 vs. 42	12 vs. 21	11 vs. 22
4 vs. 61	3 vs. 62	16 Qualifiers	
29 vs. 36	30 vs. 35	1 vs. 16	2 vs. 15
13 vs. 52	14 vs. 51	8 vs. 9	7 vs. 10
20 vs. 45	19 vs. 46	3 vs. 13	3 vs. 14
5 vs. 60	6 vs. 59	5 vs. 12	6 vs. 11
28 vs. 37	27 vs. 38	8 Qualifiers	
12 vs. 53	11 vs. 54	1 vs. 8	2 vs. 7
21 vs. 44	22 vs. 43	4 vs. 5	3 vs. 6

For purposes of determining places in the draw, recommendations can be found in the "Official Guide to the Rules of Golf, Committee Procedures, 5G(1)."

Note: If there are insufficient players to complete a flight, byes are used to complete it. If there is one bye, the player in the no. 1 position in the draw should receive it. If there are two byes, the players in the no. 1 and no. 2 positions in the draw should receive them, and so on. If the competition is made up of numerous flights, the Committee should fill in as many flights as possible before using the byes. The byes should be used in completing the last flight.

### Stroke Play

If the field is comprised of high and low handicapped competitors, the Committee might wish to establish flights so that each competitor will be competing against other competitors with comparable ability. The handicap range for each flight is up to the Committee as well as if the flights are to be determined using Handicap Index, Course Handicap, or Playing Handicap.

If the Committee wishes to have players of similar abilities in the same flight, they may wish to determine flight distribution based on the Handicap Index rather than the Course Handicap, which is dependent on the tees played.

For example, in an individual stroke play competition, Flight A might be comprised of competitors with a Handicap Index of 9.9 or less, Flight B for those with a Handicap Index from 10.0 through 19.9, Flight C for those with a Handicap Index from 20.0 through 29.9, and so on. Another option is to wait until entries are complete and then create flights with the players divided evenly by Handicap Index or along natural breaks in the entries.

### Determining Overall Flight Winner

For member–guest style events with multiple flight winners, how the overall winner will be decided is up to the Competition Committee.

If a “shootout” will take place, the Committee can choose to use the player’s full 9 or 18–hole Course Handicaps before applying the handicap allowance for the format of play or use a percentage of Playing Handicap based on the number of holes played. If a percentage of Playing Handicap is used, it is recommended that the shootout take place over at least three holes.

## **How Ties Will Be Resolved**

In match play and stroke play, the Terms of the competition should include how ties are resolved.

### Match Play

If a match is tied after the final hole, the match is extended one hole at a time until there is a winner, unless the Terms of the competition state otherwise.

## Rule 7 Guidance

The Terms of the competition should specify if the match may end in a tie or if the playoff method will differ from that specified in Rule 3.2a(4) of the Rules of Golf. Options include the following:

- The match ends in a tie,
- The match will be extended starting at a specific hole other than the first hole.

In a handicap match, the stroke index allocation as set by the Committee should be used to determine where handicap strokes should be given or received during play of extra holes unless the Terms of the competition state otherwise.

A tie in match play should not be decided by a stroke play playoff.

### Stroke Play

The Terms of the competition should specify whether a competition may end in a tie, if there will be a playoff, or if matching of scorecards will be used to determine the winner and other finishing positions.

A tie in stroke play should not be decided by match play.

### Playoff in Stroke Play

If there is to be a playoff in stroke play, the Terms of the competition should set the following:

- When the playoff will be held – for example, if it will start at a specific time, as soon as possible after the last group finishes, or on a later date.
- Which holes will be used for the playoff.
- The number of holes over which the playoff will be played – for example, over a specified number of holes such as 3, 6 or 18 holes, and what to do if there is still a tie after that.
  - In the format of stroke play, if a playoff for a handicap competition is over fewer than 18 holes, the number of holes played should be used to determine the number of strokes to be deducted. The fraction of the Playing Handicap determines the rounded value to be used. It is recommended that any such playoff consist of at least three holes. For example, if a playoff is over three holes, one sixth of the Playing Handicap should be deducted from the score for the playoff holes.
  - For playoffs in net competitions where the stroke index allocation is used, such as Four-Ball, Par/Bogey or Stableford competitions, handicap strokes should be applied during the playoff holes as they were assigned for the competition, using the stroke index allocation.

- Players are only required to return a scorecard for the playoff if the Committee issues them to the players.

### Matching Scorecards

If a playoff is not feasible or desired, the Terms of the competition may specify that any ties will be decided by matching scorecards. Even when the winner of a competition is to be decided by a playoff, other positions in the competition may be decided by matching scorecards. The method of matching scorecards should also provide for what will happen if this procedure does not produce a winner.

One method of matching scorecards is to determine the winner based on the best score for the last round. If the tying players have the same score for the last round or if the competition consisted of a single round, determine the winner based on the score for the last nine holes, last six holes, last three holes and finally the 18th hole. If there is still a tie, then the last six holes, three holes and final hole of the first nine holes will be considered in turn. If the round is less than 18 holes, the number of holes used in matching scores may be adjusted.

If this process does not result in a winner, the Committee could consider the competition a tie, or alternatively could decide the winner by chance (such as tossing a coin).

#### Additional Considerations:

- If this method is used in a competition with a multiple tee start, it is recommended that the “last nine holes, last six holes, etc.” are holes 10–18, 13–18, etc.
- For net competitions where the stroke index allocation as set by the Committee is not used, such as individual stroke play, if the last nine, last six, last three holes scenario is used, one-half, one-third, one-sixth, etc. of the Playing Handicaps should be deducted from the score for those holes. Handicap stroke fractions should be rounded if this method is used.
- In net competitions where the stroke index allocation as set by the Committee is used, such as Four-Ball stroke play, Par/Bogey or Stableford competitions, handicap strokes should be applied consistently with how they were applied for the competition.

### **Stroke Index Allocation**

Recommended stroke index allocations can be provided to the club by the AGA using Course Rating data. The raw hole rankings are based on the combination of Course Rating and Bogey Rating™ relative to par, with the final recommendation adjusted to accommodate stroke play and match play. However, clubs can continue to determine stroke allocation using alternative methods.

## Rule 7 Guidance

The USGA recommends that each course has one allocation for men and one for women, based on the most commonly played tees for each gender. For more information on stroke index allocation, please refer to Appendix E: Stroke Index Allocation of the Rules of Handicapping.

### **The Golf Course, Course Rating and Slope Rating**

#### Course Rating and Slope Rating

For a score to be acceptable for handicap purposes, it must be played on a set of tees on a golf course with a valid Course Rating and Slope Rating. All tees up to 6,000 yards on an 18-hole course (3,000 yards on a 9-hole course) must be rated for both men and women. It is recommended that all tees up to 6,500 yards on an 18-hole course (3,250 yards on a 9-hole course) be rated for both men and women. If one or more sets of tees on a course have not been rated, the Handicap Committee should contact its AGA for assistance.

Newly constructed courses change rapidly in the first few years and must be re-rated within five years. An established course must be re-rated at least every 10 years, even if it has not been changed in any way. A course must no longer use its Course Rating and Slope Rating if the Ratings are more than 10 years old and scores recorded on that course may not be posted to a player's scoring record.

The rating information from every set of tees should be:

- made readily available via online applications,
- displayed in a prominent place at the club, or
- printed on the scorecard.

#### Ensure Course Details are Accurate

The Handicap Committee should periodically review the published Course Rating, Slope Rating, par, and stroke index values within the handicap software to confirm they match what is listed on the scorecard, as well as what is set in the tournament management software ensuring the current information is being used. Published Ratings can be found on the Course Rating and Slope Database™.

#### Modifications to the Course

The Handicap Committee must notify the AGA when temporary physical changes are made such as use of temporary tees and/or greens. It is especially important to contact the AGA when the course length differs by at least 100 yards from an existing rated tee and the duration of such a change could impact scores posted. After review of the temporary changes, the AGA will determine whether scores



made under those conditions are to be accepted for handicap purposes, and whether a temporary Course Rating and Slope Rating should be issued.

If a temporary Rating is issued, the Handicap Committee has the responsibility to notify its members and guests of the temporary Rating and when to resume posting scores to the permanent/published Ratings. If it is determined that temporary Ratings will not be issued, the Handicap Committee has the responsibility to notify its members and guests that when a hole is not played or temporary tees/greens are in use, hole-by-hole score entry must be used so that an expected score can be calculated for holes not played. Alternatively, under limited and practical circumstances, the Handicap Committee may advise players to use net par. Use of net par is only permitted for use one 1 or 2 holes not played. If the holes not played and holes where temporary tees/greens are use in use exceeds 9 holes (and the AGA has decided not to issue temporary Ratings), then the score is not acceptable for handicap purposes.

The Handicap Committee must notify the AGA when permanent changes are made to the course or course set-up has changed significantly. The AGA should then review the current Course Rating and Slope Rating and determine whether a re-rating is necessary. Examples of such occurrences might be:

- a storm caused a landslide where a green was located, and the course must permanently shorten a hole from a par 5 to a par 3; or
- in a cost savings effort, maintenance practices changed from cutting the rough daily to twice a week resulting in an increase in average rough height of 1–2 inches; or
- a portion of the property is sold, and holes are reconfigured to create a new layout.

In the case where modifications impact the stroke index allocation, please contact your AGA for support. This can likely be addressed during the process of generating temporary Ratings for the golf course.

In addition, if nines have been reversed on the golf course, please contact your AGA for support. It is possible that the AGA can accommodate this change through the WHS Course Rating Software if no other significant changes were made to the golf course.

### **Playing from an Unrated Set of Tees**

When a set of tees does not have a Course Rating and Slope Rating for the appropriate gender, the Handicap Committee must contact the AGA for approval to utilize the yardage adjustment table in Appendix G: The Golf Course, Course Rating and Slope Rating to determine temporary Ratings that can be used by the player(s) to post acceptable score(s) for handicap purposes. If scores are posted

## Rule 7 Guidance

frequently using the temporary Ratings, the Handicap Committee must contact the AGA so that permanent Ratings can be issued (see rating requirements at “Course Rating and Slope Rating” above).

### **Working with the Green Committee and Golf Course Superintendent**

The Handicap Committee should seek the cooperation of the Green Committee and/or the golf course superintendent/staff in maintaining both length and normal playing difficulty at a constant and fair level. This can be accomplished by balancing the placement of tee markers so that the course’s effective playing length is approximately the same on a daily basis. Similarly, there should be balanced selection of hole locations for the entire course with respect to left, right, center, front and back positions.

A golf course is rated on its effective playing length and its playing difficulty under normal conditions. Due to temporary maintenance practices or unusual weather, a course may play firmer or softer than normal. While these abnormal conditions are present, it is recommended for the Committee to consider using the rear tee areas for a firm course or the forward tee areas for a soft course.

As stated in 7.2 Committee in Charge of a Competition of the Rules of Handicapping, the Handicap Committee or Competition Committee may request that score posting be suspended due to exceptionally poor course conditions. Generally, normal maintenance procedures, such as aeration, would not fall under the category of exceptionally poor course conditions.

The club would need to determine if the course is not reflective of its Ratings or if putting is exceptionally difficult due to aeration, which would be a reason to suspend score posting. The course would not be able to suspend score posting simply because the greens have been aerated. Sometimes, the process has no impact on the how the greens play, in which case, score posting should continue.

The Handicap Committee must consult with the AGA before suspending score posting. The AGA will decide whether scores are to be accepted for handicap purposes.

### **Preferred Lies**

Adverse conditions such as heavy snows, spring thaws, prolonged rains or extreme heat can sometimes damage the course or prevent use of heavy mowing equipment.

When such conditions are widespread on the course, the Committee can choose to adopt a Local Rule for “preferred lies” (also known as “winter rules”) to allow

fair play or help protect the fairway. Such a Local Rule should be withdrawn as soon as conditions allow.

The use of this Local Rule outside the fairway in the general area is not recommended as it may result in a player receiving free relief from areas where a ball might otherwise be unplayable (such as in areas of bushes or trees).

In competition play, it is not authorized to implement this Local Rule once play has begun for a stroke–play round. Doing so would allow players who have more holes to play the advantage of using it for a longer period of time. The Local Rule could be implemented once a match has begun between the play of two holes as opponents have an equal benefit.

For guidance on drafting the Local Rule, please refer to Model Local Rule E-3 in the Rules of Golf.

Scores made while the Local Rule for preferred lies is in effect must be posted unless the Handicap Committee (in consultation with their AGA) determines that course conditions are so poor that score posting should be temporarily suspended. Scores may also be acceptable if the player elects to proceed under this Local Rule if it has not been adopted by the Committee.

## **USGA Local Handicap Administration and WHS Statistics**

### **Allied Golf Association (AGA)**

AGAs, in collaboration with the USGA, provide many services and support for players, golf clubs, and other stakeholders in their territories. This includes:

- Handicap administration in support of the World Handicap System,
- Ensuring completion of the club authorization assessment,
- Providing educational opportunities to meet club authorization requirements,
- Providing oversight of the USGA/AGA GC,
- Providing Course Rating services,
- Administering the Rules of Golf and the Rules of Amateur Status,
- Recruiting and training volunteers,
- Conducting AGA championships and USGA Championship qualifiers, and
- Developing community initiatives and promoting those community initiatives.

The AGA is the body under which your golf club sits and should be consulted as needed for guidance.

### **USGA Centralized Computation Service**

The USGA issues a Handicap Index for all players within the United States and performs all calculations exclusively within its Centralized Computation Service. All players with a Handicap Index within the United States are a part of the centralized service and can be accessed for peer review purposes by the Handicap Committee. Each player is assigned a unique Handicap ID that can be used to access their scoring record as well as verification by others involved in peer review.

A player who belongs to more than one golf club within the USGA Centralized Computation Service must register as a multi-member with a single scoring record. If it is determined a player has multiple profiles within the centralized service, the Handicap Committee should contact its AGA to have the scoring records merged.

## Handicap ID

The Handicap ID refers to the unique identification number assigned to each individual player in the USGA Centralized Computation Service. The Handicap ID should be used by the player when entering a competition for Handicap Index verification. The club official can use this number to search the USGA Centralized Computation Service to manage the player’s membership or verify the Handicap Index. It should be the primary identifier for the player with the descriptor referenced with secondary emphasis. Example: Handicap ID (MGA#).

## Score Frequency/Probability Table

The following table depicts odds of a player shooting a net score differential based on their Handicap Index. It is a helpful resource to the Handicap Committee during their review of a player.

A net score differential is the score differential minus the player's *Handicap Index*.

Net Score Differential	Less Than 0.0	0.0-4.9	5.0-9.9	10.0-14.9	15.0-19.9	20.0-24.9	25.0-29.9	30.0-34.9	35.0-39.9
3	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4
2	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9
1	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
0	5.9	5.5	5.3	5.2	5.1	5.0	5.0	4.8	4.6
-1	11.1	9.7	8.9	8.2	7.7	7.4	7.1	6.6	6.0
-2	23.0	18.5	16.1	13.8	12.4	11.3	10.5	9.4	8.2
-3	53.5	38.5	31.2	24.7	21.1	18.0	16.0	13.7	11.3
-4	139.8	87.1	64.7	46.9	37.3	29.8	25.1	20.4	16.1
-5	376.5	210.9	140.1	93.3	68.6	51.2	40.4	31.0	23.1
-6	986.8	535.7	317.4	191.5	130.5	89.9	66.5	47.9	33.6
-7	2247.9	1282.2	704.6	391.4	251.2	161.8	110.5	74.5	48.8
-8	6362.8	3361.9	1580.6	743.0	451.2	265.7	170.1	109.3	67.1
-9	13861.8	8202.6	3609.9	1362.7	828.0	449.0	264.2	159.8	94.0
-10	22831.3	15812.0	7186.6	2204.6	1431.9	715.9	398.0	226.6	127.7
-11	32344.3	28561.4	13166.4	3153.5	2202.2	1061.6	559.8	299.6	164.5
-12	58219.8	44968.9	21133.7	4085.7	3157.2	1476.7	748.1	380.5	205.1

Note 1: For competitions, the recommended allowance applied to the Course Handicap for the format of play and field size/makeup creates equity in formats

where players/teams may have a better chance of shooting lower scores.

Note 2: There is an insufficient volume of scoring data for Handicap ranges above 40.0 to provide a statistically meaningful comparison, therefore omitted from this table.

## **WHS Statistics**

Statistics are available on USGA.org, including the average Handicap Index as well as Handicap Index distribution charts for all players. [Click here to view the stats page.](#)

## Sample Letters

### Sample Letter – Penalty Score

Although not required, as a courtesy a club may want to send a penalty score letter.

*[Written on Club Stationery]*

*[Date]*

Dear *[Player Name]*,

The Handicap Committee has determined that a penalty score should be assigned to you for *[state reason – failure to post, failure to post for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage, posting an incorrect score]*.

*[After having issued you several warnings or based on our club's policies and procedures]*, the Handicap Committee will issue this penalty to your scoring record on *[date]*. Your Handicap Index® will be updated appropriately the following day. This penalty score will be identified in your scoring record with the letter "P" as the score type.

Sincerely,

Handicap Committee

### Sample Letter – Resetting the Handicap Index

Sample Letter Applying Rule 7.1a – Resetting the Handicap Index

*[Written on Club Stationery]*

*[Date]*

Dear *[Player Name]*,

After performing a review of your scoring record, the Handicap Committee has determined that your Handicap Index® is not reflective of your demonstrated ability.

In accordance with Rule 7.1a of the Rules of Handicapping, we have determined an adjustment to your Handicap Index is warranted due to *[state reason – incapacitating injury, lack of score submissions, improvement of play following lessons, etc.]*.

In the interest of fair play, your Handicap Index will be adjusted to a *[e.g., 7.6M]*. Before the adjustment becomes effective, you may appeal to the Handicap Committee either by letter or in person by *[date]*. If the Handicap Committee does not receive a response either in writing or verbally from you or determines that the reasons for adjustment are still valid, the adjusted Handicap Index will become effective on *[date]*.

As new scores are posted, your Handicap Index will be updated accordingly thus allowing you to play out of the adjustment. The Handicap Committee will continue to review your scoring record to determine whether further action is required, or if the adjustment remains appropriate. In the meantime, please continue to post all acceptable scores and observe all aspects of the Rules of Handicapping.

Sincerely,

Handicap Committee



## Sample Letter – Freezing the Handicap Index

Sample Letter Applying Rule 7.1a – Freezing the Handicap Index

*[Written on Club Stationery]*

*[Date]*

Dear *[Player Name]*,

After performing a review of your scoring record, the Handicap Committee has determined that your Handicap Index® is not reflective of your demonstrated ability.

In accordance with Rule 7.1a of the Rules of Handicapping, we have determined to adjust your Handicap Index due to *[state reason – incapacitating injury, lack of score submissions, improvement of play following lessons, etc.]*.

In the interest of fair play, your Handicap Index will be frozen at [e.g., 7.6M] for a period of *[state the duration of freeze]*. Before the freeze is applied, you may appeal to the Handicap Committee either by letter or in person by *[date]*. If the Handicap Committee does not receive a response either in writing or verbally from you or determines that the reasons to freeze the Handicap Index are still valid, the new Handicap Index value will become effective on *[date]*.

During this time, please continue to post your acceptable scores and observe all aspects of the Rules of Handicapping. The Handicap Committee will continue to review your scoring record to determine whether further action is required, or if the adjustment remains appropriate.

Sincerely,

Handicap Committee

### Sample Letter – Withdrawing the Handicap Index

Sample Letter Applying Rule 7.1c – Withdrawing the Handicap Index

*[Written on Club Stationery]*

*[Date]*

Dear *[Player Name]*,

After previously *[resetting or freezing]* your Handicap Index®, the Handicap Committee has found it necessary to withdraw your Handicap Index in accordance with Rule 7.1c for *[deliberately or repeatedly]* failing to comply with your responsibilities under the Rules of Handicapping.

In the interest of fair play, your Handicap Index will be withdrawn until *[state the period of when the Handicap Index will be withdrawn]*. Before withdrawing the Handicap Index, you may appeal to the Handicap Committee either by letter or in person by *[date]*. If the Handicap Committee does not receive a response either in writing or verbally from you or determines that the reasons to withdraw the Handicap Index are still valid, your Handicap Index will be withdrawn on *[date]*.

During this time, continue to post your acceptable scores and observe all aspects of the Rules of Handicapping. The Handicap Committee will continue to review your scoring record to determine if the calculation of your Handicap Index should revert to the normal formula.

Sincerely,

Handicap Committee

## Sample Letter – Policies and Procedures for a Club

The following is a template for use by clubs wishing to outline its policies and procedures set forth by the Handicap Committee. It should be referenced in the club's bylaws, provided to new members or available to the membership through designated channels.

*[Written on Club Stationery]*

Handicapping Policies and Procedures of the *[insert name of golf club]*

The Handicap Committee of the golf club is responsible for ensuring compliance with the obligations under the World Handicap System™ in accordance with the Rules of Handicapping and the USGA. As a Committee, we will verify that acceptable scores are posted for handicap purposes and made available for peer review. The Handicap Committee will perform random score audits and review members scoring records on a monthly basis.

In addition, the Handicap Committee provides guidance to club officials and other club Committees to ensure players consistently have the ability to use their Handicap Index® to compete, or play a casual round, with anyone else on a fair and equitable basis. Key Committees include the *[Golf Course or Green Committee\*]* and the Competition Committee.

*[\* Green Committee may not apply to all clubs.]*

The Handicap Committee consults with the Competition Committee to establish the Terms of the competition for all applicable events at the club. The Handicap Committee cooperates with the golf course superintendent *[or Green Committee]* in maintaining both length and normal playing difficulty of the course at a constant and fair level.

The Handicap Committee members are *[List names of the Handicap Committee]*.

The Handicap Committee has set forth the following policies and procedures for all members wishing to establish and maintain a Handicap Index with our club.

- Maintain an active membership on the handicap roster of the club.
- Post all acceptable scores on the same day the round is played.
- Where applicable, apply adjustments to scores for handicap purposes, including net double bogey and most likely score.

## Sample Letters

- Try to make the best score at every hole in every round, regardless of where the round is played.

What is an acceptable Score?

- Scores from the minimum number of holes played, i.e., 9 holes that correspond to a 9-hole Course Rating and Slope Rating.
- Scores made in match play, stroke play and team competitions.
- Scores made under Rule 3.2 when a hole is not played.
- Scores made under Rule 3.3 when a player does not hole out.
- Scores made if a player is disqualified from a competition but has an acceptable score.
- Scores made when played by the Rules of Golf
- Scores made when played on a course during its active season.
- Scores made in the company of at least one other person, who can also act as a marker.

All acceptable scores are to be posted on the same day of play using one of the following methods: *[The following statements are examples you might consider at your club's discretion.]*

- Score posting kiosk in the clubhouse.
- Mobile app
- Club website
- AGA website
- Returned to the golf shop/Handicap Committee for posting.
- By the Competitions Committee
- *[List other methods your club and/or AGA provides]*

Disciplinary actions for failure to post or player manipulating their Handicap Index: *[The following statements are examples you might consider at your club's discretion.]*

1. First failure to post or potential manipulation of your score will result in a written warning.
2. Second failure will result in the appropriate penalty score issued for score(s) not posted.
3. After your third failure to post your score or continued manipulation of your scoring record, further disciplinary

action will be taken as the Handicap Committee deems appropriate. Examples include ineligibility to compete in certain club events and a Handicap Index adjustment.

A player must earn a Handicap Index. No player has an inherent right to a Handicap Index without demonstrating their playing ability to our golf club's Handicap Committee. The Handicap Committee has the authority and obligation to adjust a Handicap Index if it feels necessary to do so.

Please direct any questions or concerns to *[Chair Name]*, handicap chair at *[contact information such as email address and phone number]*.



### Other Resources and How to Get Support

#### Other Resources

- Rules of Handicapping
- [Resources for Club Administrators](#)
  - [Club E-Learning](#)
- [Resources for Players](#)
  - [Player Reference Guide](#)

#### How to Get Support

Reach out to your local Allied Golf Association. Click here to find your AGA.

Contact the USGA Handicapping and Course Rating Department

Phone: 908.234.2300 ext. 5

Email: [hdcquestions@usga.org](mailto:hdcquestions@usga.org)





# Index

	Rule	Page
<b>Acceptable Score</b>		
- Active Season	2.1	28
- Authorized Format of Play	2.1a	30
- Certification of Scores	4.4	48
- Minimum Number of Holes	2.2a/ 2.2b	35
- Played by The Rules of Golf	2.1b	33
- Temporary Greens or Tees	2.1/3	29
<b>Active Season</b>	2.1	28
<b>Adjusted Gross Score</b>		
- After a Handicap Index Has Been Established	3.1b	37
- Before a Handicap Index Has Been Established	3.1a	36
- Maximum Hole Score	3.1	36
- Net Double Bogey	3.1b	37
- When a Hole is Not Played	3.2	38
- When a Hole is Started But Player Does Not Hole Out	3.3	41
<b>Authorized Association</b>		
- Adjudicating Par	Appendix A	87
- Jurisdiction	1.3(iv/v)	23
- Multi-National Association	1.3(v)	24
- National Association	1.3(iv)	23
- Regional Association	1.3(iii)	23
- Responsibilities	Appendix A	86
<b>Authorized Format of Play</b>		
- 9-holes	2.2b	35
- 18-holes	2.2a	35
- Four-Ball Match Play	2.1a	30
- Four-Ball Stroke Play	2.1a	30
- General Play	2.1a	30
- Handicap Allowances	Appendix C	96
- Individual Match Play	2.1a	30
- Individual Stroke Play	2.1a	30
- Maximum Score	2.1a	30
- Organized Competition	2.1a	30
- Outside Player's Jurisdiction	2.1a(ii)	30

## Index

	Rule	Page
- Par/Bogey	2.1a	30
- Stableford	2.1a	30
- Within Player's Jurisdiction	2.1a (i)	30
<b>Bogey Player</b>	Appendix G	111
<b>Cap</b>		
- Hard Cap	5.8(ii)	65
- Low Handicap Index	5.7	63
- Soft Cap	5.8(i)	65
<b>Certification of Score</b>		
- Peer Review	4.4	48
<b>Course Handicap</b>		
- 9-hole Course Handicap	6.1b	69
- 18-hole Course Handicap	6.1a	68
- 18-hole Course Handicap Based on 9-holes Played	6.1a	69
- Course Rating	Appendix G	110
- Course Rating and Par	6.1	68
- Handicap Allowance	Appendix C	96
- Playing Handicap	6.2	70
- Plus Handicap Players	Appendix C	98
- Slope Rating	Appendix G	111
- Strokes Given Back (Plus Handicap Players)	Appendix C	98
- Strokes Received	Appendix E	106
<b>Course Rating</b>		
- Bogey Player	Appendix G	111
- Bogey Rating	Appendix G	111
- Course Handicap	6.1	68
- Effective Playing Length	Appendix G	111
- Issuing a Course Rating and Slope Rating	Appendix G	111
- Measured Length of The Golf Course	Appendix G	111
- Obstacles	Appendix G	111
- Scratch Player	Appendix G	111
- Slope Rating	Appendix G	111
<b>Exceptional Score</b>		
- Handicap Committee	7.1	74
- Handicap Index Adjustment	7.1a(ii)	75
- Handicap Review	7.1a	74
- Reduction	5.9	66

	Rule	Page
- Score Differential	5.9	66
- Scoring Record	Appendix B	93
- To Ensure Impact of Adjustment Remains	5.9	66
<b>Expected Score</b>		
- When One or More Holes Not Played	3.2b	39
- Calculating a Score Differential Using an Expected Score	3.2b/1	40
- Playing Conditions Calculation Procedure	5.6/1	60
- Reason For Not Submitting a Score Was Not Justified	7.1b (ii)	79
<b>Golf Club</b>		
- Adjudicating Par	Appendix A	87
- Handicap Committee	1.3(ii)	23
- Home Club	1.4b	25
- Member of a Golf Club	1.4a	24
- Responsibility to Post Scores	5.4/2	58
<b>Golf Course</b>		
- Course Measurement	Appendix G	110
- Course Rating	Appendix G	111
- Display of Course Rating and Par	Appendix G	110
- Modification	Appendix G	111
- Slope Rating	Appendix G	111
- Tee Markers	Appendix G	110
- Temporary Changes	Appendix G	111
<b>Handicap Allowance</b>		
- Course Handicap	6.1	68
- Extra Holes	Appendix C	98
- Format of Play	Appendix C	97
- Handicap Competitions	Appendix C	97
- Playing Handicap	6.2	70
- Plus Playing Handicaps	Appendix C	98
- Strokes Received / Given for Plus Handicap Players	Appendix C/3	101
<b>Handicap Committee</b>		
- Adjudicating Par	Appendix A	87
- Adjusting a Player's Handicap Index	7.1a(ii)	75
- Committee Actions	7	74
- Handicap Review	7.1a	74

## Index

	Rule	Page
- Penalty Score	7.1b	78
- Reinstatement of a Player's Handicap Index	7.1d	81
- Score Submission	7.2b	82
- Terms of the Competition	7.2a	81
- Withdrawing a Player's Handicap Index	7.1c	80
<b>Handicap Index</b>		
- Ageing of Scores	5.5	58
- Adjustment	5.2a	54
- Calculation of Score Differentials	5.1	52
- Demonstrated Ability	5	52
- Fewer Than 20 Scores	5.2a	54
- For 20 Scores	5.2b	56
- Handicap Committee Actions	7	74
- Handicap Index Calculation	5.2	54
- Hard Cap	5.8(ii)	65
- Initial Handicap Index	4.5	49
- Lapsing of a Handicap Index	5.5	58
- Low Handicap Index	5.7	63
- Maximum Handicap Index	5.3	57
- Plus Handicap Index	5.2c	56
- Responsibilities of Stakeholders	Appendix A	84
- Soft Cap	5.8(i)	65
<b>Handicap Review</b>		
- Adjusting a Handicap Index	7.1a(ii)	75
- At the Request of the Player	7.1a(i)	74
- Freezing the Handicap Index	7.1a(ii)	75
- Handicap Committee	7.1	74
- Injured Player	7.1a/2	78
- Other Clubs to Request an Adjustment	Appendix D	103
- Resetting the Handicap Index	7.1a(ii)	75
<b>Hard Cap</b>		
	5.8(ii)	65
<b>Home Club</b>		
- Designating a Home Club	1.4b	25
- Handicap Committee	7.1	74
- Handicap Index	Appendix A	86
- Jurisdiction	1.4b/3	26
- Single Scoring Record	Appendix A	86
<b>Inactive Season</b>		
	Appendix A	88

	Rule	Page
<b>Jurisdiction</b>		
- Authorization to Use Rules of Handicapping	1.2	21
- Authorized Association	1.3	22
- Outside Player's Jurisdiction	2.1a(ii)	30
- Registered Marks of the WHS	1.2	22
- Within Player's Jurisdiction	2.1a(i)	30
<b>Low Handicap Index</b>		
- 20 Acceptable Scores	5.7	63
- Scoring Record	5.7	63
- Time Frame	5.7/1	64
<b>Maximum Hole Score</b>		
- After a Handicap Index Has Been Established	3.1b	37
- Before a Handicap Index Has Been Established	3.1a	36
- Net Double Bogey	3.1b	37
<b>Member</b>		
- Joining a Golf Club	1.4a	24
- Member of More Than One Club	1.4b/3	26
<b>Net Double Bogey</b>		
- Maximum Hole Score	3.1b	37
<b>Net Par</b>		
- Hole Not Played	3.2b/2	40
<b>Par</b>		
- Establishing Par	Appendix F	108
- Hole Lengths	Appendix F	108
- Stroke Index Allocation	Appendix E	106
<b>Peer Review</b>		
- Certification of a Score	4.4	48
- Scoring Record	Appendix B	90
<b>Penalty Score</b>		
- Applying a Penalty Score	7.1b	79
- Gaining an Unfair Advantage	7.1b(ii)	79
- No Valid Reason for a Score Not Having Been Submitted	7.1b(i)	78
- Score is Discoverable	7.1b(ii)	79
- Valid Reason for a Score Not Having Been Submitted	7.1b(i)	78

# Index

	Rule	Page
<b>Playing Conditions Calculation (PCC)</b>		
- 9-hole Scores	5.1b	53
- Away Score Returned to Home Club	5.6/5	61
- Calculation of a Score Differential	5.1	52
- Daily Playing Conditions Calculation	5.6	59
- Eligible Players	5.6/1	60
- Golf Club with 27 Holes	5.6/6	62
- Handicap Index Calculation	5.6	59
- Minimum 8 Acceptable Scores	5.6	60
- More Than One PCC on a Single Day	5.6/2	61
- Range of PCC Adjustments	5.6	60
- Separate PCC Calculations for the Same Day	5.6/3	61
- Time Frame for Submitting a Score	4.3	47
<b>Playing Handicap</b>		
- Course Handicap	6.1	68
- Playing Handicap Calculation	6.2	70
<b>Rules of Golf</b>		
- Acceptable Scores	2.1	28
- Certification of a Score	4.4	48
- Stroke Index Allocation	Appendix E	106
<b>Rules of Handicapping</b>		
- Authorization to Use the WHS	1.2	21
<b>Score Differential</b>		
- 9-hole Scores	5.1b	53
- 18-hole Scores	5.1a	52
- Calculation of a Score Differential	5.1	52
- Exceptional Score	5.9	66
<b>Score Type</b>	Appendix B	94
<b>Scoring Record</b>		
- Handicap Committee	Appendix B	90
- Home Club	Appendix B	90
- Information Required for Scoring Record	Appendix B	90

	Rule	Page
<b>Scratch Player</b>		
- Course Rating	Appendix G	111
- Handicap Index	5.2c/1	57
- Slope Rating	Appendix G	111
<b>Slope Rating</b>		
- Bogey Rating	Appendix G	111
- Course Handicap	6.1	68
- Course Rating	Appendix G	111
- Display of Ratings	Appendix G	110
- Strokes Received	6	68
- The Golf Course	Appendix G	110
<b>Soft Cap</b>	5.8 (i)	65
<b>Stroke Index</b>		
- Applying More Than 18 Strokes Received	Appendix E	106
- Committee Procedures	Appendix E	106
- Course Rating System	Appendix G	110
- Handicap Strokes	6	68
- Stroke Index Allocation	Appendix E	106
- Stroke Index Allocation for 9-Hole Play	Appendix E	107
<b>Submitting a Score</b>		
- Eligibility to Submit a Score	4.2	47
- Hole not Played	3.2	38
- Hole Started But The Player Does Not Hole Out	3.3	41
- Incomplete Rounds	3.2b	39
- Not Submitting a Score	7.1b(ii)	79
- Submitting Hole-by-Hole Score	4.1a (ii)	45
- Time Frame for Submitting a Score	4.3	47
- Timely Submission	4	45

# Notes



# Notes

# Notes

# Notes

# Notes