

Summary of The World Handicap System

Introduction

Previously, different regions around the world ran handicap systems in different ways which meant you could not use or convert your handicap when playing in a different region. The World Handicap System unites the different systems so that whilst the way golf is played does not change, players now have a portable handicap they can use on any course in the world. There are 3 key parts to how the use of handicaps operate.

- 1) Members get a **handicap index** - a number to 1 decimal place representing their base or raw handicap. Effectively replaces the term 'exact handicap'
- 2) With a handicap index, a member can go to any course and based on the course difficulty of the particular tee, their handicap index will be adjusted, giving a **course handicap** to play there.
- 3) In competition play, course handicaps need to be adjusted by specified allowance figures (e.g 95% in singles and 85% in Betterball) to give a **playing handicap** you play with on the day.

The Handicap Index

- Calculated to 1 decimal place e.g 10.1
- Based on average (mean) of the best 8 scores out of 20, that a player has, going back up to 2 years
- If a player has less than 20 rounds in the last 2 years than the handicap would still be valid but the averaging will just be based off a smaller range
- As is currently, a new member would need to put in 3 cards to get an official handicap and can do so in 9 hole combinations (up to 6 cards if done this way)
- The scores used for handicapping purposes is a figure called the **score differential**. So on a simple level, a player who shoots 12 over gets a score differential of 12
- The score differential is adjusted to limit scores on each hole to nett double bogey and in some cases limit to nett par for holes not played
- The score differential is further adjusted based on the difficulty of the particular course played, so that a score of 12 over, on a tough course may count as 11 for example.
- Score differentials are posted to players records **the next day**, after midnight. This is because all scores submitted on a course that day in competitions or social play, are fed into the system to form **Playing Conditions Calculations (PCC)**. Similar to how Competition Standard Scratch has been employed, the PCC means your handicap will not go up as much if conditions that day were much tougher than normal.
- Exceptional Scoring Reductions still exist and the system will automatically cap handicap increases so that it never strays too far from a recent good round

Course Handicaps and Course Ratings

The difficulty of a particular set of tees on a course form an important part of the system.

- A **Course Rating** is what a scratch golfer would expect to shoot on the course so replaces the term Standard Scratch. The figure is given to 1 decimal place e.g 72.0 for Fulwell white tees and 73.9 for the red tee
- A **Slope Rating** is a number between 55 and 155 representing how difficult a high handicap golfer (20 – 24) would find the course as compared to a scratch golfer.
- This Rating is due to the fact that a course usually plays differently for lower and higher handicappers. A smaller rating would indicate the challenge is similar for both whilst a higher rating would indicate that higher handicappers have a much tougher experience
- The official World Handicap System standard Slope Rating is 113. Fulwell's are men's white: 127, men's yellow 125 and ladies red 135 which suggests Fulwell is a challenging course.
- Members and Visitors at a course would be able to run the calculation *course handicap = handicap index x (slope rating/113)* or simply use a look up chart that will display the corresponding Course Handicap for each handicap index value.

Competitions and Social Play

-“**Acceptable Scores**” replaces the term “qualifying scores” and these can be from competitions or social play

- the formats deemed **acceptable** are unchanged i.e single medals and stablefords but not match play, pairs comps or alternative shots formats such as foursomes and scrambles

-For acceptable comps, it is mandatory for players to return scorecards. For handicapping calculation purposes, scores on holes will be limited to nett double bogey or may count as nett par in particular instances of incomplete holes

-For social play, players do not have to submit a scorecard each time but are encouraged to do so if they play an acceptable format following the rules of golf e.g no gimmies. They would need to pre-register before a round starts, to submit a score

-Scores from Away courses can be used for handicap purposes

Handicap Committee

-The Handicap Committee will need to review handicaps at least once per year and can cut and increase handicaps based on the evidence provided.

-Members can also request handicap reviews and would be able to appeal committee review decisions.

Players failing to submit scores for competition affects the integrity of the handicapping calculation, the Handicap Committee therefore has responsibility for policing the issue of No Returns and can apply penalty sanctions where necessary

The Full Rules of Handicapping: <https://www.congu.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CONGU-Rules-of-Handicapping1.pdf>