



CR-PAR EXPLAINER - 2024

Background

Under the current WHS – National Associations have a choice as to which formula is used to calculate a player’s Course Handicap (CH).

From April 2024 all jurisdictions in GB&I will be changing from option 1 to option 2.

Option 1	Option 2
Purely based on Slope and Course Rating	Also factoring in Par
$CH = H.I. \times Slope/113$	$CH = (H.I. \times Slope/113) + (CR-Par)$
= the number of strokes you need above or below the Course Rating, to play to your H.I.	= the number of strokes you need above or below Par, to play to your H.I.

Under Option 2 - **when Par is less than the Course Rating** – the player will receive more strokes. When **Par is greater than the Course Rating** – the player will receive less strokes.

While Par is not used in any element of the H.I. calculation – in certain circumstances, it can influence the calculation of a player’s adjusted gross score (AGS) which is used in the calculation of the player’s Score Differential. This is because:

- We insert a score of Net Par when a hole is not played
- We cap a maximum hole score at Net Double Bogey
- Stableford points and Par/Bogey formats are calculated against Par

Option 2, therefore, seeks to give golfers the number of strokes they need to play against Par rather than the Course Rating, and to make things more intuitive/transparent for golfers. Hole by hole pars are known and visible to players on scorecards and tee markers. Hole by hole ratings are not accessible or known to golfers.

Impact of Different Calculations (Old Course, St Andrews)

Option 1 (No CR-Par)

CH for Scratch Golfer – from each tee

Tee	Rating	Slope	Par	CH	Target Score
Black	73.1	132	72	0	73
Blue	71.4	129	72	0	71
Green	69.9	125	72	0	70

CH for 15.0 H.I. Golfer – from each tee

Tee	Rating	Slope	Par	CH	Target Score
Black	73.1	132	72	18	91
Blue	71.4	129	72	17	88
Green	69.9	125	72	17	87

Option 2 (CR-Par)

CH for Scratch Golfer – from each tee

Tee	Rating	Slope	Par	CH	Target Score
Black	73.1	132	72	1	73
Blue	71.4	129	72	-1	71
Green	69.9	125	72	-2	70

CH for 15.0 H.I. Golfer – from each tee

Tee	Rating	Slope	Par	CH	Target Score
Black	73.1	132	72	19	91
Blue	71.4	129	72	17	89
Green	69.9	125	72	15	87

Three important observations:

- Whichever option is used – the player's target score to 'play to handicap' is generally the same.
- Research shows that the impact of the two different calculations on two players' H.I. is no more than 0.2, should any of the players' scores in their best 8 include adjustments for Net Double Bogey. Such a difference would have very little or no impact on equity – which is why the two options were permitted at the outset of WHS.
- The number of strokes given/received in a match between two players would remain the same in most cases.

Benefits of Using CR-Par

- Having a Course Handicap that is relative to Par ensures that the correct number of strokes are received and applied for Net Par and Net Double Bogey adjustments.
- By not including CR-Par in a scenario where CR is less than Par, the player would receive more strokes and thus less adjustments for Net Double Bogey, which leads to a higher AGS.
- As Par is often the same from multiple tees on a course, this eliminates or reduces the need to apply an adjustment to Playing Handicaps in multi tee events.
- In the event that Par is different across tees golfers may be more willing to accept an adjustment when playing from different tees, as they assume Course Rating is already factored into the CH and this adjustment confuses them.
- Helpful in all Par-based formats, where the score is relative to Par. For example, in Stableford formats, 36 points would always be a score 'played to handicap'.
- Produces bigger differences in CH from different tees which is more intuitive to players
- Many golfers resonate better with Par often comparing their score to Par. It is also information that is readily available to golfers on scorecards, tee furniture, etc.
- All of our closest neighbours in Europe use CR-Par and this difference is confusing to golfers who travel and raises lots of questions.
- Despite the inclusion of the CR-Par adjustment into the CH calculation, Course Rating remains at the core of the H.I. calculation which is absolutely correct, as Course Rating is acknowledged to be a robust evaluation of course difficulty, which Par is not.
- It improves the calculation of the player's Adjusted gross Score (AGS) – because Net Double Bogeys and Net Pars are Par based adjustments and the number of strokes that

the player receives should therefore be aligned and reference the Pars of each applicable hole played.

- The majority of golfers are confused as to why this calculation is done differently in GB&I compared to the other countries they travel to – with the criticism being that we do not have a 'WHS'.
- They also struggle to understand why the adjustment is used for a 9-hole CH, but not an 18-hole CH. Making the change would bring consistency here.