

# Your handicap will be changing – are you ready?

The World Handicap System will be four years old this year and is currently going through its first major update since launch – with some fairly significant changes coming in from April 1. But what does it mean for you?

Current WHS handicaps are calculated by dividing the **Slope Rating** of a course by the number 113, and then using that number, multiplied by the player's **WHS index**, to reach a **Course Handicap**.

Each set of tees on every course also has a **Course Rating** – which is what it is expected that scratch golfers would need to get round. Depending on where you play and what set of tees you choose, the Course Rating may be higher or lower than the par scorecard for that course.

In effect, if the Course Rating is lower than Par it means that the Par score is “easier” to reach than the Course Rating - which may explain why so many of our Stableford competitions have scores in the high 30s and low 40s.

Gemma Hunter, the R&A's Handicapping and Course Rating Manager, in explaining why WHS is trying to get Course Handicaps closer to Course Ratings said: “There is a lot more golf played in the Stableford format, so people are playing to par and seeing par, more often. Currently the number of points needed to play to par changes depending on whether the Course Rating is higher or lower than par. From April 1, to play to par will be 36 points in a Stableford. We may see competition scores change as a result, bringing scores back towards that 36-point marker.”

The new Course Handicap calculation formula will begin as it does now - the slope rating divided by 113, and then using that number multiplied by the player's WHS index. However, the new calculation will then also **add on** a new number; **Course Rating minus Par**.

In many cases, here at Stoke, this will mean members seeing a reduction in their Course Handicap, and subsequently their Playing Handicap in competitions.

The incoming changes are summarised below, but as always, if you need more information or have any feedback, please contact Harry Hibbert on [harry.hibbert@stokebynayland.com](mailto:harry.hibbert@stokebynayland.com)

- **Calculation of Course Handicap:**  
This now includes (Course Rating - Par) ie:  
*Course Handicap = Handicap Index x (Slope Rating / 113) + (Course Rating - Par)*  
To 'play to handicap' will now be to Par or 36 points not to the Course Rating.
- **Course Handicap, Playing Handicap and Rounding:**  
Previously the Course Handicap was rounded to a whole number. When machine calculation (software) is used, this rounding will now occur after the Playing Handicap has been calculated. (this will be done by the Club V1 software for competitions). General Play will still be rounded at Course Handicap.
- **4BBB Competition Scores may be included for handicap purposes:**  
If a pair score at least 42 points or 6 under par and one player has featured more than 9 times on the score card, then the competition software triggers a handicap calculation for that player.
- **Expected Score when hole not played:**  
This will now not be a 'net par', but a 'formula/calculation' will be applied to find an expected score.
- **Team Match Play:**  
The application of allowances in team match play events has also been changed so that the % is applied to the difference between the players course handicaps, taken from the lowest player upwards.
- **Using multiple tees:**  
When multiple tees are used in a competition (for instance white and green tees in a Seniors competition) there will now be no additional shots for anyone playing off the harder tees. The new Course Handicap and Playing Handicap calculations will take away that necessity.