

World Handicap System

1. Some Definitions

Acceptable Score

A score from an authorised format of play which meets all the provisions set out within the Rules of Handicapping.

Adjusted Gross Score

A player's gross score, including any penalty strokes, adjusted 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.

Authorised Format of Play

A format of play eligible for handicap purposes, as determined by the Authorised Association where the round is played.

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.

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.

Course Rating

An indication of the difficulty of a golf course for the scratch player under normal course and weather conditions.

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.

General Play

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

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

Handicap Allowance

The percentage of a Course Handicap recommended creating equity for all players participating in a specific format of play.

Handicap Index

The measure of a player's demonstrated ability calculated against the Slope Rating of a golf course of standard playing difficulty (Slope Rating 113)

Low Handicap Index

The lowest Handicap Index achieved by a player during the 365 day period preceding the day on which the most recent score in their scoring record was played.

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. This is used by the system when a player plays and does not complete a hole or whose score on the whole is excessive

Net Par

A score equal to the par of a hole adjusted for any handicap strokes applied on that hole. This is used by the system when a player does not play a hole ie when, at Helensburgh, an 11 hole competition is played. Net par would be attributed to a players score for holes 13 to 18 incl. (Net par +1 would be added for hole 1) - (see Penalty Score Definition)

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.

Penalty Score

A score posted at the discretion of the Handicap Committee or Authorised Association for a player who does not submit an acceptable score when required. There are 4 valid reasons for not submitting a score for a round that has been pre-registered

- Sudden injury or illness
- An Emergency
- Dangerous weather conditions or
- Any reason for stopping play that is considered valid by the *Handicap Committee*

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. Formally the CSS.

Playing Handicap or Strokes Received

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.

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.

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).

Scratch Player

A player with a Handicap Index of 0.0.

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.

Stroke Index

The value assigned to each hole on a golf course to indicate where handicap strokes are given based on assessed difficulty.

2. Course Rating & Slope Rating

Course and Slope Ratings are derived from physical surveys carried out in accordance with the USGA Course Rating System

The surveys are carried out by the National Association or local Unions every 10 years or when major course changes occur

Course Rating represents the difficulty of a golf course for a scratch golfer (0 Handicap Index), calculated to the nearest 0.1.

Slope Rating represents the relative difficulty of a course for a bogey golfer (20 to 24 Handicap Index) compared to a scratch golfer.

A course with long carries, narrow fairways, lots of hazards and thick rough will have a high slope rating because these features are more of a challenge to bogey golfers.

Slope Rating can be anywhere between 55 and 155. 113 is the neutral value that is used in handicap calculations. The GB&I average Slope Rating is 125.

You can look up the ratings for other courses anywhere in the World on the USGA course rating & slope database.

A golfer's course handicap for a specific course or set of tees is determined by multiplying their Handicap Index by the Slope Rating and dividing by 113, as described on the Course and Playing Handicaps page.

How Slope Ratings are calculated

MEN

A male scratch golfer is defined as someone who hits the ball about 250 yards with a driver and 230 yards with a fairway wood. The course assessors calculate what a male scratch golfer should average on the course.

A male bogey golfer is defined as a typical 20 handicapper who hits the ball about 200 yards with a driver and 170 yards with a fairway wood.

Subtracting the Scratch Rating from the Bogey Rating and multiplying by a Constant of 5.381 gives the Slope Rating

WOMEN

A female scratch golfer is defined as someone who hits the ball about 210 yards with a driver and 170 yards with a fairway wood.

A female bogey golfer is defined as a typical 24 handicapper who hits the ball about 150 yards with a driver and 130 yards with a fairway wood.

Subtracting the scratch rating from the bogey rating and multiplying by a Constant of 4.240 gives the Slope Rating.

3. Acceptable Scores for Handicap Purposes

All 9 hole and 18 hole Singles Competition Rounds in Authorised Formats must be submitted for handicap purposes, subject to the competition being played to the Rules of Golf and over a measured course.

Measured courses at Helensburgh are from the White, Yellow and Green tees for both Men and Women.

Scores from team competitions and match play are not presently acceptable in Scotland.

Pre-registration

Players are required to register their intention to submit a score from general (non-competition) play before commencing the round

Minimum Number of Holes.

Scores may be submitted over 9 holes or 18 holes.

All 9 holes must be played to submit a 9 hole score. The software system will then work out an equivalent 18 hole score.

An 18 hole score will count as long as 10 or more holes have been completed. Holes not played are recorded as Net Par or (Net Par + 1), depending on the number not played.

Adjusted Gross Score.

For handicap purposes a big score on any hole is reduced to Net Double Bogey, using the player's Course Handicap. Holes started, but not completed are also recorded as Net Double Bogey.

Score Differential

The Adjusted Gross Score is compared with the Course Rating and is "de-sloped" to give the Score Differential for the round, which is added to the player's Scoring Record

Playing Conditions Calculation (PCC) (Formally CSS)

Determines if course and weather conditions on the day differed from normal to the extent that they significantly impacted players' performance.

Calculated using all scores submitted on the course that day, as long as 8 or more golfers with a Handicap Index of less than 36 and a fully developed Scoring Record played.

It is conservative in nature and can increase the Adjusted Gross Score by 1 in easy conditions or decrease it by 1, 2 or 3 in difficult conditions

9 Hole Scores

A 9 hole Score Differential is calculated as = $[113 / 9 \text{ hole Slope Rating}] \times [9 \text{ hole Adjusted Gross Score} - 9 \text{ hole Course Rating} - (0.5 \times \text{PCC})]$

4. Handicap Index

Handicap Index is a measure of a player's demonstrated ability calculated against the Slope Rating of a golf course of standard playing difficulty

It represents a golfer's playing handicap on a course with a Neutral Slope Rating of 113

It is calculated as a rolling average of the lowest 8 from the last 20 Score Differentials

Each time a new score is submitted the average of the lowest 8 from the last 20 is re-calculated, which may or may not lead to a change of Handicap Index

There are additional safeguards to ensure that a player's handicap does not rise too quickly when a player is going through a spell of poor form.

Low Handicap Index (LHI)

A player's lowest Handicap Index during the last 12 months is used as an Anchor Point to limit increases in Handicap Index

Soft CAP: Potential increases of Handicap Index to a figure greater than (LHI + 3) are limited by half the amount over three, e.g. 5 is limited to 4, 6 is limited to 4.5, etc.

Hard CAP: The maximum that the Handicap Index can increase to is (LHI + 5).

Exceptional Scores:

- An adjustment to the Handicap Index after a very low score has been posted
- A reduction of -1 for scores between 7 and 9 below Handicap Index
- A reduction of -2 for scores 10 or more below Handicap Index
- The reduction is applied to the last 20 scores on the Scoring Record and drops off gradually over the next 20 rounds.

New Handicaps

A New Player's Handicap Index is initially allocated at 2 less than the best of the Adjusted Gross Scores from 3 x 18 hole cards submitted. Cards can be submitted as 6 x 9 holes or some other combination. Subsequent Handicap Index calculations change as more scores are entered:

- 3 scores: lowest score -2
- 4 scores: lowest score -1
- 5 scores: lowest score
- 6 scores: average of lowest 2 scores -1
- 7 to 8 scores: average of lowest 2 scores
- 9 to 11 scores: average of lowest 3 scores
- 12 to 14 scores: average of lowest 4 scores
- 15 to 16 scores: average of lowest 5 scores
- 17 to 18 scores: average of lowest 6 scores
- 19 scores: average of lowest 7 scores
- 20 scores: average of lowest 8

Transition Handicaps @ 2nd November 2020

Player's that already have a current CONGU Handicap will be allocated an initial Handicap Index when the new system comes into effect as described on the Transition Handicaps page.

(Scroll down to Section 6 for Definitions)

4. Course and Playing Handicaps (Strokes Received)

Course Handicap

Course Handicap is the number of handicap strokes a player receives before Handicap Allowances, on a specific course and from a specific set of tees, as determined by the Slope Rating

There will be tables on display where you can look up your Course Handicap

It is Course Handicap that is used to determine Net Par and Net Double Bogey adjustments in calculating Adjusted Gross Scores and in assessing scores for Unplayed Holes.

A player's Course Handicap is determined by multiplying their Handicap Index by the Slope Rating and dividing by the neutral Slope Rating of 113.

Handicap Allowance

Handicap Allowance is the percentage of Course Handicap specified for a particular format of play and/or specified in the Terms of the Competition

Playing Handicap (Stroke Received)

Playing Handicap is the Course Handicap adjusted for any Handicap Allowance. It represents the actual number of strokes the player gives or receives for the round being played. The calculation uses the exact Course Handicap (nearest 0.1). This will change to use the rounded Course Handicap (nearest 1).

It is Playing Handicap that is used to determine Competition Results.

The Process

Before starting a round of golf the player must register their intention to enter a Competition or submit a General Play Score and establish their Course Handicap and Playing Handicap for the particular set of tees being used.

Scores must be submitted as soon as possible after the round and before midnight on the day of playing, which is when their Handicap index will be re-calculated

9 Hole Handicaps

When submitting a 9 hole score:

9 hole Course Handicap = [Handicap Index / 2] x [9 hole Slope Rating / 113] + [9 hole Course Rating - 9 hole Par] (to be confirmed)

9 hole Playing Handicap = [9 hole Course Handicap] x [Handicap Allowance]