WELCOME TO THE WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM

Rules of Handicapping

GOLF IRELAND

WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM

R&A USGA

CONTENTS

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SECTION 1: Getting Started

- Purpose of WHS
- What has Changed
- What is new
- What stays the same

SECTION 2: Before Your Round

- Handicap Index
- Calculate your Course Handicap
- Handicap Allowances

SECTION 3: During Your Round

- Know where you get your strokes
- Know your maximum hole score
- Hole not played

SECTION 4: After Your Round

- Submit your score
- Playing Conditions Calculation
- Calculation of score differential
- Basic Calculation
- If your round is exceptional
- If your handicap is going up
- Safeguards

Purpose of the World Handicap System (Rule 1.1)

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The World Handicap System includes the Rules of Handicapping and the Course Rating System.

Its purpose is to enable 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.
- Compete with anyone else on a fair and equal basis.

The World Handicap System has been designed to consider fairness for all players within its key features:

What has Changed?

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- You will have a Handicap Index instead of an exact Handicap
- It is an averaging calculation based on the best 8 out of your last 20 scores
- No 0.1 increases and no handicap categories or buffer zones
- Handicap Indexes will be recalculated at the end of each day (no longer at close of competition)
- Handicap Index is valid worldwide

What is new?

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- Slope Rating
- Course Handicap
- Playing Handicap
- CSS is replaced by Playing Conditions Calculation but NO REDUCTION ONLY
- Peer review

What Stays the Same

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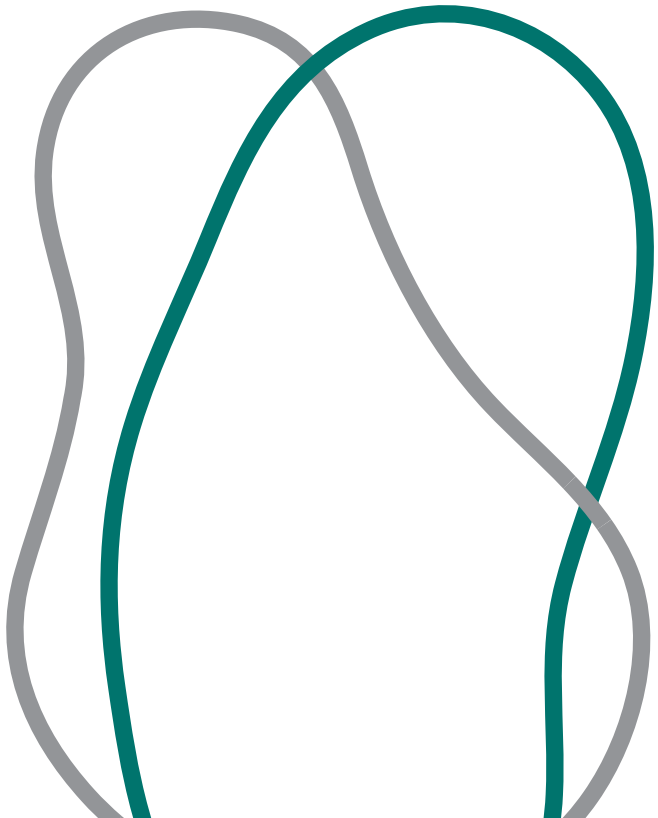
- Playing by the Rules of Golf
- Designation of your Home club to manage and maintain your Handicap Index
- Pre-Registering (on day of play) your intent to return a score
- Option to return General Play scores (replacing supplementary), including society scores
- Competition results will be processed in the normal way (no CSS calculated)



Also staying the same

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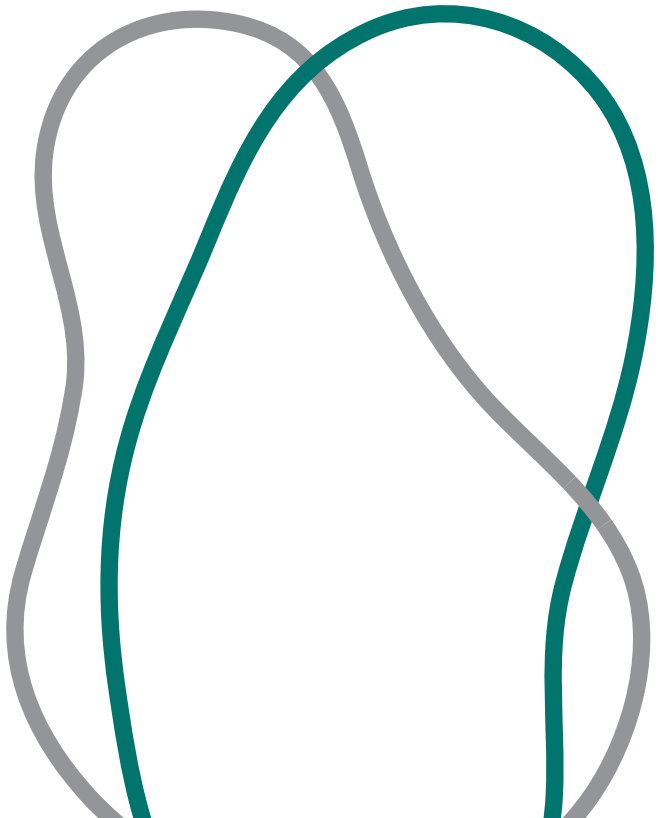
- 54 holes to get an initial Handicap Index
- Maximum Handicap Index of 54 for both genders
- Maximum hole score of net double bogey for handicap purposes
- Exceptional Score (with different rules)
- Safeguards to prevent handicaps rising too quickly
- Annual review



Acceptability of Scores (Rule 2.1)

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Rounds must be played:

- In an authorised format of play;
- Over a minimum number of holes;
- By the Rules of Golf;
- With at least one other person (Authorised Marker);
- On a course with a current Course Rating and Slope Rating;
- Certified in accordance with Rules of Handicapping

Registration – Prior to Play

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- Authorised Associations have decided players are required to pre-register their intent to submit a Score in general play for handicap purposes.

- Such registration must be made:
  - On the day, before the player starts the round, and
  - In the manner prescribed by the Handicap Committee.

Handicap Index

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- Your Handicap Index is the portable number you take with you (previously your exact Handicap)
- It is calculated to one decimal point
- It is a measure of your playing ability
- It is not the Handicap you use on the course

Every golf club has a Handicap Committee.

If you have any questions about the Rules of Handicapping or local procedures, it will be there to help you.

How to get a Handicap Index

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- For new players - initial Handicap Index is 54 holes from a combination of 18 or 9 hole scores.
- For existing players - the Handicap Index is calculated using the best 8 score differentials from your most recent 20 scores
- Chart shows how this works for less than 20 scores

The maximum hole score for handicap purposes during your initial 54 holes is par +5. This adjustment will be made automatically within the handicap software.

Once you have submitted scores from a total of 54 holes, made up of 9 or 18-hole scores, you will be allocated an initial Handicap Index.

Course Rating and Slope Rating

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Key Terminology

Handicap Index	The measure of a player's demonstrated ability calculated against the Slope Rating of a golf course of standard playing difficulty
Course Rating	The difficulty of a course for the scratch player under normal conditions.
Slope Rating	The relative difficulty of a course for bogey players compared to scratch players
Scratch Player	A player with a 0.0 Handicap Index.
Bogey Player	A player with a Handicap Index of about 20.0 for men; 24.0 for women.

Calculation of a Handicap Index

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For Fewer Than 20 Scores

Number of score differentials in scoring record	Score differential(s) to be used in calculation of Handicap Index	Adjustment
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

Basic Calculation of a Score Differential (Rule 5.1)

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Key Terminology

Score Differential	The difference between a player's adjusted gross score and the Course Rating, taking account of Slope Rating. It is the value 'played to' on a specific course on a specific day.
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.

Basic Calculation of a Score Differential (Rule 5.1)

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Example of 8 of 20 Calculation

Score No.	Date Played	Course	Course Rating	Slope Rating	Adjusted Gross Score	Score Differential
1	22/9/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	91	18.5
2	5/9/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	92	19.4
3	1/9/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	99	25.8
4	28/8/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	89	16.7
5	23/8/20	River GC	71.3	127	92	18.4
6	26/7/20	Meadow GC	72.2	131	87	12.8
7	14/7/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	97	24.0
8	4/7/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	88	15.8
9	19/6/20	River GC	71.3	127	87	13.5
10	16/6/20	Valley GC	69.9	118	95	24.0
11	12/6/20	Forest GC	70.1	115	86	15.6
12	5/6/20	Meadow GC	72.2	131	85	11.0
13	2/6/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	82	10.4
14	30/5/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	94	21.2
15	25/5/20	Valley GC	69.9	118	89	18.3
16	22/5/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	97	24.0
17	29/4/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	85	13.1
18	14/4/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	93	20.3
19	10/4/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	94	21.2
20	3/4/20	Meadow GC	72.2	131	86	12.1
21						

Score No.	Date Played	Course	Course Rating	Slope Rating	Adjusted Gross Score	Score Differential
1	25/9/20	Meadow GC	72.2	131	89	14.5
2	22/9/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	91	18.5
3	5/9/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	92	19.4
4	1/9/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	99	25.8
5	28/8/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	89	16.7
6	23/8/20	River GC	71.3	127	92	18.4
7	26/7/20	Meadow GC	72.2	131	87	12.8
8	14/7/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	97	24.0
9	4/7/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	88	15.8
10	19/6/20	River GC	71.3	127	87	13.5
11	16/6/20	Valley GC	69.9	118	95	24.0
12	12/6/20	Forest GC	70.1	115	86	15.6
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15	30/5/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	94	21.2
16	25/5/20	Valley GC	69.9	118	89	18.3
17	22/5/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	97	24.0
18	29/4/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	85	13.1
19	14/4/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	93	20.3
20	10/4/20	Hill GC	70.5	125	94	21.2
21	3/4/20	Meadow GC	72.2	131	86	12.1

What is a Course Rating/ Bogey Rating?

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- **Course Rating:**
  The evaluation of the playing difficulty of a course for scratch golfers under normal course and weather conditions.

- **Bogey Rating:**
  The evaluation of the playing difficulty of a course for bogey golfers under normal course and weather conditions.

- Based on yardage and other obstacles to the extent that they affect the scoring difficulty of the scratch and Bogey golfers.

- Expressed as the number of strokes taken to one decimal place.

What is a Slope Rating?

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- **A Slope Rating** is the number which indicates the relative playing difficulty of a course for bogey golfers, compared to scratch golfers.

- It is the combination of the Course Rating and the Bogey rating that allow us to calculate the Slope Rating of a set of tees.

Relationship between Handicap Index, Course Handicap, Playing Handicap and Score Differential?

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Handicap Index → **Course Handicap** → **Playing Handicap** → **Score Differential**

Handicap Index	Course Handicap	Playing Handicap	Score Differential
Measure of player's demonstrated ability	For adjusting hole scores for handicap purposes	Course Handicap x Handicap Allowances = Strokes Received in a competition	Value played to for the round

STEP 1:

Handicap Index is slope adjusted to provide player with the required number of strokes needed to play from a specific set of tees, relative to a course with Slope Rating of 113.

STEP 2:

Go out and play!

Adjust to format of play, using Handicap Allowances prescribed or recommended by authorised Association.

STEP 3:

(113/Slope)
x
(Adj Gross score – CR)
=
VALUE USED IN THE LIST OF 20 SCORES

Finding your Course Handicap for a Competition

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- Your exact Handicap Index can be established on the club's competition software or on the Golf Ireland website/app.
- The software will then calculate your Course Handicap according to the tees being used
- Your Playing Handicap is dependent on the format of play

The conversion process is easy – and can be done by using a look-up table located near the first tee, your Club software or a mobile app.

Course Handicap	=	**Handicap Index x (Slope Rating / 113)**		
Playing Handicap	=	**Course Handicap**	x	**Handicap Allowance**

Finding your Course Handicap in General Play

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- Pre-Register in the manner prescribed by the club.
- If the club competition software is not available consult the charts relevant to the tees being used.
- Calculate your Course Handicap using your Handicap Index.
- After the round return the card as directed

Handicap Allowances

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Formats of Play	Handicap Allowance	Formats of Play	Handicap Allowance
Individual stroke play	95%	Best 1 of 4 stroke play	75%
Individual stableford	95%	Best 2 of 4 stroke play	85%
Individual par / bogey	95%	Best 3 of 4 stroke play	100%
Individual Maximum Score	95%	All 4 of 4 stroke play	100%
Four-ball stroke play	85%	Scramble (4 players)	25%/20%/15%/10% from lowest to highest handicap
Four-ball stableford	85%	Scramble (2 players)	35% Low / 15% High
Four-ball par / bogey	90%	Total score of 2 match play	100%
Individual match play	100%	Best 1 of 4 par / bogey	75%
Four-ball match play	90%	Best 2 of 4 par / bogey	80%
Foursomes	50% of combined team handicap	Best 3 of 4 par / bogey	90%
Greensomes	60% Low handicap + 40% high handicap	4 of 4 par / bogey	100%

Course Handicap Calculation

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Handicap Index – 0.0

TEE	YARDS	RATING	SLOPE	PAR	CH
Black	7033	74.2	135	72	0
Blue	6684	72.8	131	72	0
White	6414	71.7	128	72	0
Silver	6021	69.9	125	72	0
White/ Silver/Red	5886	68.6	123	71	0
Red	5637	67.8	121	71	0
Green	5385	66.5	118	70	0
Gold	4957	64.4	113	69	0

Handicap Index – 15.0

TEE	YARDS	RATING	SLOPE	PAR	CH
Black	7033	74.2	135	72	18
Blue	6684	72.8	131	72	17
White	6414	71.7	128	72	17
Silver	6021	69.9	125	72	17
White/ Silver/Red	5886	68.6	123	71	16
Red	5637	67.8	121	71	16
Green	5385	66.5	118	70	16
Gold	4957	64.4	113	69	15

During the Round

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- Players should act with integrity
- Attempt to make the best score possible at each hole
- Play by the Rules of Golf and certify scores with your marker after each hole
- Refer any queries to the committee before signing and returning the card

Holes Required for a Valid Score

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- If a hole is started but not completed in Stableford, v Par or Maximum Score formats. For handicap purposes **net double bogey** will be added to the score
- If a hole is **NOT STARTED** for a valid reason net par will be added

Net Par = **Par** + **Handicap strokes received**

- Blanks/dashes no longer acceptable on Score Cards.
- All 9 holes must be played or started for a 9 hole score to be acceptable for handicap purposes
- A minimum of 10 holes must be played or started for an 18 hole score to be acceptable for handicap purposes

Hole not Played

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If you did not play a hole for a valid reason, you should mark the hole as 'not played' (NP).

Valid reasons for not playing a hole include:

- ✓ *Failing light or bad weather*
- ✓ *Player injury or illness*
- ✓ *A hole being declared out of play by the Committee for maintenance or reconstruction purposes*

Invalid reasons for not playing a hole include:

- ✗ *Not playing a hole for the purpose of gaining a scoring advantage (high or low)*

Scaling Up an Incomplete* 18-hole Round – Example Calculation

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SUNNYSIDE GOLF CLUB

Bronze Tees Course Rating: 72.1 **Slope Rating:** 122
Name of Player: Jane Smith **Handicap:** 22

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	
Par	4	4	5	4	3	5	4	5	3	37	
S.I.	7	13	3	9	15	1	11	5	17		
Score	5	5	7	5	4	8	5	7	4	50	
Hole	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**In**	**Total**
Par	4	5	3	5	4	3	5	4	4	36	73
S.I.	8	12	18	4	10	16	2	6	14		
Score	6	5	5	7	5	4	7	5	5	49	99

Score differential

= (113 ÷ 122) x (99 – 72.1)

= 24.9

Scaled up Scores:

- Net par + 1 stroke
- Net par

*if returned for a valid reason

How your 9 hole score is calculated for a score differential

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SUNNYSIDE GOLF CLUB

Bronze Tees Course Rating: 36.1 **Slope Rating:** 122
Name of Player: Jane Smith **Handicap:** 22

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out
Par	4	4	5	4	3	5	4	5	3	37
S.I.	7	13	3	9	15	1	11	5	17	
Score	5	5	7	5	4	8	5	7	4	50

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out
Par	4	4	5	4	3	5	4	5	3	37
S.I.	7	13	3	9	15	1	11	5	17	
Score	6	5	7	5	4	7	5	6	4	49

Score differential

= (113 ÷ 122) x (99 – 72.2)

= 24.8

Scaled up Scores:

- Net par + 1 stroke
- Net par

Submit your score

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Submit your score in accordance with Club procedures **as soon as possible after you have completed your round.**

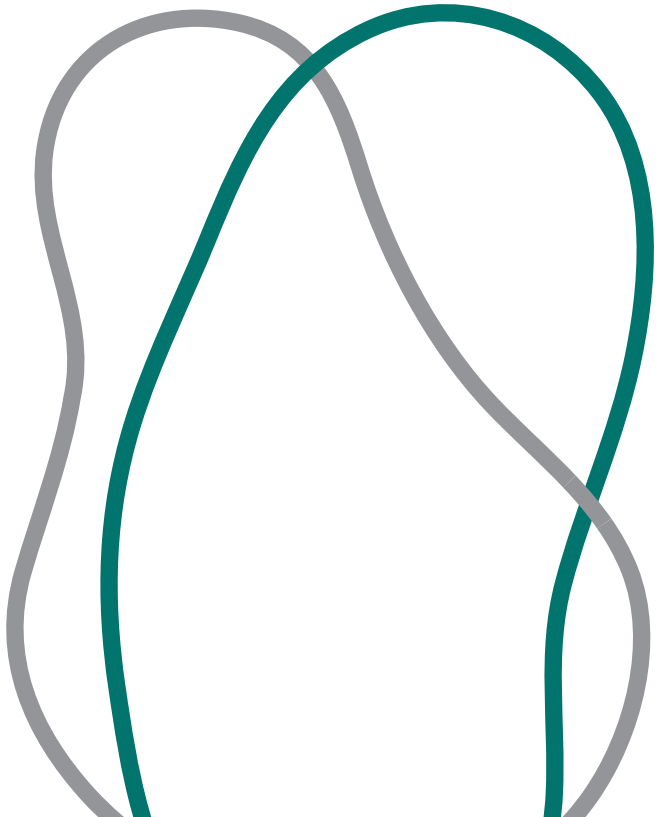
It must be signed by a marker.

The prompt submission of your score is important as it will enable:

Your score to be included in the daily PLAYING CONDITIONS CALCULATION

and

Your Handicap Index to be UPDATED READY FOR YOUR NEXT ROUND



Finding your Revised Handicap

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- Handicap decreases or increases will not be calculated along with the competition results
- Scores will be uploaded to a new platform for adjustment after midnight
- Your Handicap Index will be recalculated using the PCC at the end of every day you play
- Your new Handicap Index can be viewed early next day either on the Golf Ireland website or available app.
- Your correct Handicap Index will appear on the competition software in your Home club when you enter a competition

Playing by the Rules of Golf (Rule 2.1b)

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A round must be played by the Rules of Golf to be acceptable for handicap purposes.

EXCEPTION:

When a player is disqualified from a competition, but no significant advantage has been gained, the score should remain acceptable for handicap purposes.

For example, failure to sign a scorecard in stroke play.

Playing by the Rules of Golf (Rule 2.1b)

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In General Play - a score is not acceptable for handicap purposes if the player is known to have:

- Breached the Rules of Golf and the correct penalty has not been applied as prescribed by the Rules of Golf, or
- Deliberately ignored the Rules of Golf.

EXCEPTION:

- When a player follows a Model Local Rule, not adopted by the Committee.

The final determination is at the discretion of the Handicap Committee.

Examples of Unacceptable Scores

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- Foursomes (also known as Alternate Shot)
- Scrambles
- When practising or being coached
- When using non-conforming equipment
- When the minimum number of holes have not been played

Exceptional Scores

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A score differential which is at least 7.0 strokes or more better than the player's Handicap Index at the time the round was played.

Score can be from any format of play, competitive or general play. Not restricted to Tournament scores.

When a player submits an exceptional score, the handicap formula applies an additional adjustment to the player's updated Handicap Index – according to the table.

This adjustment is in addition to any reduction caused within the 8/20 calculation.

Score Relative to Index	-7.0	-10.0
Extra adjustment	-1.0	-2.0

If your Handicap Index is Going Up

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Even the best players struggle from time to time - and although form changes, a player's underlying ability does not change rapidly.

To prevent your Handicap Index from increasing too quickly, every time it is up-dated, the 8 out of 20 calculation is compared to the lowest Handicap Index that you have achieved during the last 365 days.

If the difference is more than 3.0 strokes:	**If the difference is more than 5.0 strokes:**
A soft cap will be applied, which slows down the rate of increase.	A hard cap will prevent any additional upward movement after the soft cap is applied.

The Handicap Committee may override the cap in exceptional circumstances, such as injury.

Memory of Low Handicap Index

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- A player's Low Handicap Index is remembered within the handicap formula
- It provides a reference point against which the current Handicap Index can be compared
- This is to help ensure that the player's current Handicap Index cannot stray too far away from their demonstrated ability, in too short a space of time
- If the new Handicap Index is more than a certain number of strokes above the Low Handicap Index, the cap is triggered.

Playing Conditions Calculation (PCC)

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The PCC is applied for abnormal course and weather conditions

- Is generally performed only once a day
- Considers all acceptable scores submitted on a golf course (all formats, competitive & recreational, 9 & 18 holes)
- Requires at least eight acceptable scores submitted by players with a Handicap Index of 36.0 or below
- Is automatically applied within the calculation of score differentials for all players
- Is designed to be simple and conservative in nature, adjusting score differentials in integer values ranging from -1 to +3

Player Responsibilities

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- Have one Handicap Index which should be recorded on your scorecard along with the course handicap
- The Course Handicap for the tees being used MUST be recorded on the card
- Designate one club to be your Home club to maintain your Handicap Index
- Ensure that all clubs of which you are a member of has your details
- Be responsible for knowing and confirming your Handicap Index particularly when you play away from home and in matches

If you ever feel that your Handicap Index or the Handicap Index of any other golfer needs to be reviewed, contact the relevant Handicap Committee.

Transition to World Handicap System

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- CONGU Handicap calculations will calculate as normal until transition
- Prior to transition, WHS Handicap Indices will also be calculated for all players returning scores
- Transition to WHS – **2 November 2020**
- WHS Handicap Index calculation – uses players' existing scores

  >20 scores – best 8 of most recent 20 score differentials

  <20 scores – uses initial handicap allocation table

Further information is available at www.randa.org and www.whs.com

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Please direct questions to all the contacts in your region

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