

# The World Handicap System



ENGLAND  
GOLF

**BRING YOUR  
G8ME**

World Handicap System (WHS)  
Coming into play **2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020**

**Handicap Index**  
Golfers in England will now have a Handicap Index, calculated from the best eight rounds from their last 20 scores. A Handicap Index is portable on any course around the world and will promote inclusivity within the game.

To find out more on the WHS visit:  
[englandgolf.org/whs](http://englandgolf.org/whs)

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This time we learn about

## Handicap Index

This may seem a lot to take in, but we golfers will consider the Handicap Index to be the most important element of the WHS. It will:-

- Measure the ability of a player
- Be portable from course to course
- Allow players to compete fairly and therefore promote inclusivity within the game.

A Handicap Index is calculated from the best 8 scores from the last 20 rounds. –  
(Hence the slogan “Bring your 8 game” – just a reminder, you need 8 scores)

As a new score is submitted a player’s Handicap Index will automatically update to the most recent 20 scores. A player’s Handicap Index will update promptly overnight after the submission of an acceptable score and be ready before the next time they play.

I appreciate most of you already have a handicap, but for completeness let’s start with a new golfer putting in scores for the first time:-

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## Obtaining a Handicap Index (New Golfer)

- Players are required to submit 54 holes of scores made up of any combination of 9- or 18-hole rounds.
- There is no time limit on completing the submission of these scores.
- Maximum Handicap Index of 54, for both men and women.



This is the same principle as we have now under CONGU. All of the 9 or 18 holes must be played. 9-holes scores are combined as they come in, to result in an 18-hole score. Scores per hole will be capped at par+5 until the initial index has been allocated. One change from CONGU: these scores can be submitted from any affiliated club/course.

## Obtaining a Handicap Index (New Golfer)

A new golfer will not have 20 scores to be able to generate a Handicap Index.

Instead we use the table to establish the Index until the full 8 from 20 calculation can be used.

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

The reason for the downward adjustment made is because there is less data to calculate the player's Handicap Index, so this safeguard protects the rest of the field, whose handicaps are calculated using a more robust scoring record. Also, a player typically plays to their ability one out of every five rounds. When only three of four scores exist, it's possible that the player hasn't yet played to their potential.

It is important to note that this chart will be used to calculate a Handicap Index for existing players who do not have 20 scores in their record since January 2018.

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The more scores you can submit before November 2020, the closer your Handicap Index will reflect your “demonstrated ability”.

When we mention “scores” we don’t mean your gross score from the round. The score in the handicap record is termed a “score differential”.

## What is a score differential?

A score differential is the difference between a player's adjusted gross score and the course rating, reflecting the slope rating and the playing conditions calculation (PCC).

It is a numerical value attributed to a score achieved on a golf course on a specific day that is posted into the player's scoring record.

Your  
**Handicap  
Index** is  
based on:



To calculate a score differential from your round, we take the adjusted gross score and convert it for using in the handicap calculation.

An adjusted gross score is already used by CONGU - we adjust gross scores on each hole for a maximum score of nett double bogey.

## Adjustments to Hole Scores

- By Net Double Bogey for a high hole score.
- Or
- If a hole isn't played, a Net Par is recorded (for handicap purposes only)

**Exception:** if less than 14 holes of an 18 hole round have been played, net par + 1 stroke must be added to the first hole not played and net par to the remaining unplayed holes



These adjustments are made using the **Course Handicap** and will be applied by the computer.

This does not mean you can avoid playing holes you don't like! There are penalties which are applied for such behaviour. It does mean, however, that a 15-hole Turkey Trot could be a score for your record.

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The WHS has additional adjustments:-

To convert a gross score into a score differential, first we take away the course rating (giving a gross differential, as now). Then we adjust back to a "standard" slope (effectively de-sloping the score back to using the slope 113 for relative standard difficulty). We also adjust for any calculated change for playing conditions (similar to CSS, as now).

So the calculation for score differential is:-

$$(\text{Adjusted Gross Score} - \text{Course Rating}) \times (113 \div \text{Slope Rating}) = \text{Score Differential}$$

Any adjustment for Playing Conditions (can be -1 to +3) are made to the course rating.

Once 20 scores are available a "fully developed" handicap index can be calculated. Below is an example of a player's handicap record containing the last 20 scores played in date order (most recent at the top).

The best 8 scores are identified (highlighted in yellow) and the total is divided by 8. This gives a Handicap Index of 13.0

## Handicap Index 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						

- Adding together the best 8 differentials out of the last 20:
 

12.8	
+ 15.8	
+ 13.5	
+ 15.6	
+ 11.0	
+ 10.4	
+ 13.1	
+ 12.1	
<b>104.3</b>	
- And averaging the total: = 104.3 / 8

Handicap Index of **13.0**

When a new score is added to the record the 20<sup>th</sup> score drops down and out of the best 8 from 20 calculation. Another calculation is performed exactly as the previous one using the latest score and a new Index is produced.



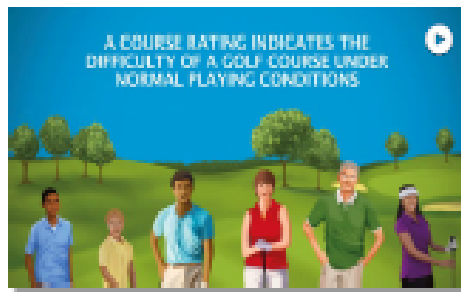
# The World Handicap System

Safeguards have been introduced to prevent any handicap manipulation. The Handicap System retains a memory of the lowest Handicap Index within a 365-day period and prevents extreme upward movement of the Handicap Index. A "Soft Cap" is applied which limits any increase over 3.0 strokes to 50% of the remainder. A "Hard Cap" will restrict upward movement on 5.0 strokes over the Low Handicap Index.

These safeguards ensure that a player's temporary loss of form does not cause the Handicap Index to move too far away from their actual ability.

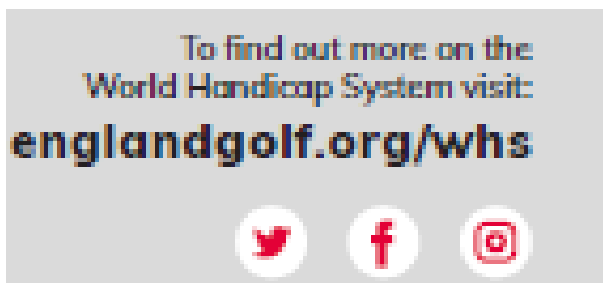
All the handicap Index calculations are done centrally by the Central Data Base after midnight, when the Playing Conditions Calculation has been done. The new Indexes are then sent back to the Club ready for the following day.

Press Ctrl +Click on the link below to learn about Playing Conditions Calculation (PCC) - this will replace the Competition Scratch Score (CSS) that we use today.



Next time we learn about Course Handicap. It will come at the end of August so more time to digest all the above information.

In the meantime, please visit the England Golf Website



If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.