

DG WHS 2020 Update 2

What is Slope and how do I calculate my Playing Handicap?

In the first update, we said we'd explain how to turn your handicap index into your playing handicap. First, we need to explain the concept of 'Slope' as it determines course handicaps which is the first step.

Slope

A Slope Rating is a numerical expression of a course's relative difficulty. Indeed, it's not just a course that gets a rating, it's every set of tees. Ratings range from 55 for the easiest course to 155 for the hardest. 113 is deemed the mid-point and this number's relevance will be explained shortly.

Worldwide, courses are rated according to a common set of criteria so a course rated 120 in Japan, say, will be of a similar level of difficulty to a course here in the UK with the same rating.

Here at DG our ratings are : Red tees (Ladies) - 131, Yellow tees (Men) - 132 and, White tees (Men) - 138. This makes us as one of the hardest courses in the area - which may not come as a surprise.

How do I calculate my Playing Handicap?

Step 1 will be to calculate your course handicap.

The good news is that just about every golf club in the county plan to have course specific "look-up" charts either by the clubhouse or first tee, or both. Using these charts is easy, simply find your handicap index and look across to the column for the tees you'll be playing from to find your course handicap. England Golf also promise an App but it may not be available immediately.

However, for those who want know a little more about the calculations, to calculate your course handicap manually, multiply your handicap index by the slope rating (for the set of tees you will be playing from) and divide the answer by 113.

Why divide by 113? It's the number deemed to be the average slope rating (world-wide) and everyone's handicap index is adjusted to a course with a slope rating of 113.

So, for each of your 20 scores in your record, the system will have checked which course and set of tees each was played from and then multiplied each by 113 and divides by the appropriate slope rating for that course/tees. The average of the best eight in twenty is calculated is then calculated.

Then, every time we play, we have to adjust our handicap index from the "hypothetical course" with a 113 rating to the rating of the course about to be played and this is then called the course handicap.

Step 2 is to calculate your playing handicap.

If you are out playing for fun with friends, your course handicap should be your playing handicap.

However, for some competitions you will also need to apply an adjustment e.g. we may run comps where you only get 95% of your handicap, as happens already. This is your playing handicap.

Each competition's entry information will make it clear what playing handicap to use.