



1.4 - How to Obtain a Handicap Index

1.4a Joining a Golf Club

In order to obtain a Handicap Index that can be administered in accordance with the Rules of Handicapping, a player must be:

- A member of a golf club that is affiliated with an Authorized Association, or
- A direct member of an Authorized Association which has assumed the responsibility of a golf club (see Rule 1.3(ii)).

By returning a score for the purpose of obtaining or maintaining a Handicap Index, the player acknowledges that the use of their scoring record will be available for:

- Peer review purposes (See Rule 4.4),
- Issuance of a Handicap Index, and
- Administration and research purposes.

Rule 1.4a Interpretations:

1.4a/1 – Whether a Professional Golfer Can Obtain a Handicap Index

A professional golfer may obtain a Handicap Index, provided they meet all of the player responsibilities within the Rules of Handicapping.

1.4b Designating a Home Club

A player must designate one golf club as their home club, to be responsible for maintaining their Handicap Index.

But all golf clubs that a player is a member of can share information with the home club, which may lead to the home club making an adjustment to the player's Handicap Index.

When a player is a member of more than one golf club, the player must ensure each golf club knows the details of:

- Which other golf clubs they are a member of, and
- Which golf club they have designated as their home club.

Rule 1.4b Interpretations:

1.4b/1 – Criteria to be Used When Designating a Home Club Rule

1.4b requires a player who is a member of more than one golf club to designate one golf club as their home club.

A player should decide which golf club to designate as their home club based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Proximity to primary residence,
- Frequency of play, and/or
- The golf club where they submit most of their acceptable scores.

Should a player's primary residence change on a regular basis such that different golf clubs satisfy the above criteria at different times of the year, the player should consider changing their home club accordingly.

Players must not designate a home club for the purpose of obtaining a Handicap Index that could give them an unfair advantage.

1.4b/2 – Player Changes Designation of Home Club

When a player changes the designation of their home club for any reason, they must inform all golf clubs of which they are a member and provide the new home club with their scoring record.

1.4b/3 – Player Who Belongs to Multiple Golf Clubs Within Different Jurisdictions Resulting in More Than One Handicap Index

Rule 1.1 states that the purpose of the World Handicap System is, among other things, to give as many golfers as possible the opportunity to obtain and maintain a Handicap Index.

Where a player is a member of a golf club located in a different jurisdiction from the location of their home club, the player may be required to hold a separate Handicap Index issued by the Authorized Association responsible for handicapping within the different jurisdiction. While such a requirement is discouraged, in order to ensure the same Handicap Index is issued by both Authorized Associations, it is the player's responsibility to return all acceptable scores to both their home club and the golf club that is located in the different jurisdiction.

Should there ever be a discrepancy between a player's Handicap Index as issued by different Authorized Associations, the Handicap Index within the jurisdiction where the round is being played should be used. When playing outside of either jurisdiction, the lowest Handicap Index should be used.