**‘What will my new handicap be and how is it calculated?’**

**Course Measurement**

Many of you will recall that during 2019 both the Hoebridge Course and the Shey Copse Course were remeasured. Measurements were taken from all the fixed tees, which are marked by the square concrete blocks coloured Red, Yellow and White on the Hoebridge Course, and Red and Yellow on the Shey Copse Course, to the centre of the green on each hole.

**Course Rating**

This paved the way for two more inspections by the Course Rating Team from Surrey Golf, whose unenviable task was to gather data from the course regarding factors influencing its difficulty and giving these some numerical value, based on a proforma questionnaire. Factors taken into account were fairly detailed and included length; ball roll; elevation; dog legs and forced lay ups; hole topography; fairway width; recoverability from the rough; Bunkers; penalty areas; out of bounds; trees; the Green as a target and its surface, and the overall psychological impact of the hole.

These factors also included an assessment of the course from both a male and female perspective, and from that of a ‘Scratch Golfer’ and a ‘Bogey Golfer’. New terms for some that I think need some explanation.

A ‘Scratch Golfer’ is fairly simple to explain. It is effectively the Golf Professional.

The ‘Bogey Golfer’ is defined as a Male Golfer with a handicap between 20 and 22, and a Female Golfer with a handicap between 24 and 26.

The Rating Teams task, having assessed each hole, from each of the tees, for both male and female golfers, was to post a Rating for each course, expressed as the number of strokes to one decimal point, that would be taken by a Scratch Golfer (Course Rating) and a Bogey Golfer (Bogey Rating).

Whilst these have not been officially posted, I am given to understand that the following are provisional figures for the courses at Hoebridge Golf Centre:

Hoebridge Course: **White Tees Yellow Tees**

Course Rating

70.7

Bogey Rating

94.1

Bogey Rating

95.6

Course Rating

71.7

**Red Tees**

Bogey Rating

103.8

Course Rating

74.1

Shey Copse Course: **Yellow Tees Red Tees**

Bogey Rating

91.4

Course Rating

65.8

Bogey Rating

80

Course Rating

62.4

**Slope Rating**

I have heard it said by golfers for years, particularly in matches between clubs, that handicaps gained on one Club course, which was perceived as being either easier or more difficult than the players home club, do not make for fair competition, and some way of levelling the playing field should be found. Well Slope Rating is perceived as a panacea, and its effect in addressing, or otherwise, that issue will become apparent with the passing of time.

‘Slope Rating’ is defined as a number that indicates the relative difficulty of a course for Bogey Golfers compared to Scratch Golfers. Each course in the world will have one and it will be expressed as a number between 55 and 155. The higher the number the more the relative difficulty for a Bogey Golfer increases.

The number is calculated by multiplying the difference between the Course Rating and the Bogey Rating for a course by a ‘Constant Factor’ (I have no idea what that constant factor is but it is a question I intend to ask!). Suffice to say that, again whilst the Slope Rating for courses have not yet been officially posted, the following are the provisional figures for the Courses at Hoebridge Golf Centre:

Hoebridge Course:

Red

126

Yellow

126

White

129

Shey Copse Course:

Red

109

Yellow

95

I thought you might be interested in the provisional slope rating for other courses in the area to give you some idea as to how the Hoebridge Courses apparently compare on this measure. Again I must stress that these figures are yet to be formalised.

West Hill: Tiger – 130; White – 127; Yellow – 119; Red – 137.

Worplesdon: White – 129; Yellow – 124; Red – 130.

Woking: Black – 127; White – 125; Yellow – 120; Red – 131.

**One important thing about all these numbers that is vitally important to understand before we go on to the next stage is that the Slope Rating for a golf course of Standard Relative Difficulty is 113. This is the number by which all handicaps will be set**

**World Handicap System**

So how does all this affect the way in which our WHS handicaps are calculated?

Well I’m sure that most of you have heard the simple description as to how the new handicaps are calculated, which is something like:

 ‘It’s the average of the aggregate of the best eight out of your last 20 scores’.

**Adjusted Gross Score**

Simple? Well, not quite. The word ‘Score’ seems quite straight forward, but in fact it means your Stableford adjusted score. This is where the system allows a maximum score of net double bogey on any hole, and if you have either entered a score in excess of that, or no score at all for that hole, that will be the score the system has recorded. This is your Adjusted Gross Score.

In addition to that, account needs to be taken of the course that was played and its Course and Slope Rating. Also, as I eluded to at the end of the previous section, all handicaps will be based on a Slope Rating of 113, being the number attributed to the Standard Golf Course, so that needs to be taken into account. So the following is the way the calculation is worked.

* Details of your last 20 Adjusted Gross scores
* List the Course Rating of the Course played
* Calculate the difference between the two
* Divide the difference by the Slope Rating of the Course played
* Multiply the result by 113 (Standard Rated Course)
* Select the best 8 scores resulting from this calculation
* Add these scores together
* Divide the total by 8

I realise that is a lot to take in, so as an example, I have produced below a chart based on the calculation of my WHS handicap.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Score | Course Rating | Difference | Divide by Slope Rating | Multiply by 113 | Sum Best 8 | Average |
| 22.3.20 | 91 | 70.7 | 20.3 | 126 | 0.161111111 | 18.2 | 12.2 |
| 18.12.19 | 92 | 70.7 | 21.3 | 126 | 0.169047619 | 19.1 |  |
| 20.11.19 | 95 | 70.7 | 24.3 | 126 | 0.192857143 | 21.8 |  |
| 30.10.19 | 100 | 70.7 | 29.3 | 126 | 0.232539683 | 26.3 |  |
| 23.10.19 | 91 | 70.7 | 20.3 | 126 | 0.161111111 | 18.2 |  |
| 19.10.19 | 97 | 70.7 | 26.3 | 126 | 0.208730159 | 23.6 |  |
| 16.10.19 | 92 | 70.7 | 21.3 | 126 | 0.169047619 | 19.1 |  |
| 9.10.19 | 88 | 70.7 | 17.3 | 126 | 0.137301587 | 15.5 |  |
| 25.9.19 | 84 | 70.7 | 13.3 | 126 | 0.105555556 | 11.9 |  |
| 4.9.19 | 91 | 70.7 | 20.3 | 126 | 0.161111111 | 18.2 |  |
| 2.9.19 | 85 | 71.7 | 13.3 | 129 | 0.103100775 | 11.7 |  |
| 21.8.19 | 87 | 70.7 | 16.3 | 126 | 0.129365079 | 14.6 |  |
| 19.8.19 | 84 | 71.7 | 12.3 | 126 | 0.097619048 | 11.0 |  |
| 8.8.19 | 86 | 69 | 17 | 124 | 0.137096774 | 15.5 |  |
| 7.8.19 | 82 | 71.7 | 10.3 | 126 | 0.081746032 | 9.2 |  |
| 3.8.19 | 85 | 71.7 | 13.3 | 129 | 0.103100775 | 11.7 |  |
| 3.7.19 | 90 | 70.7 | 19.3 | 126 | 0.153174603 | 17.3 |  |
| 24.7.19 | 91 | 70.7 | 20.3 | 126 | 0.161111111 | 18.2 |  |
| 20.7.19 | 87 | 70.7 | 16.3 | 126 | 0.129365079 | 14.6 |  |
| 17.7.19 | 85 | 70.7 | 14.3 | 126 | 0.113492063 | 12.8 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

97.5

Most of the recorded rounds were played off the Yellow tees on the Hoebridge Course. However, the eagle eyed amongst you will have noticed that there are two entries in the list that differ from the rest. 2.9.19 was a round played off the White Tees at Hoebridge and 8.8.19 was a round played in an Open Competition at Barton-on Sea Golf Club, hence the different entries.

My ‘Exact Handicap’ under the current system is 13.3, but, as you can see from the calculation my ‘Handicap Index’, which replaces my Exact Handicap under the new World Handicap System, will at present be 12.1. Obviously, all this may change if, before the eventual change over on the 2nd November this year, I manage to submit some more qualifying scores, as these will form part of my last 20 scores and those at the foot of the table will be discarded.

Having worked out a few examples of the way the change will affect existing handicaps there is a variation. Some go up and some go down. Obviously, it all depends on the scores you recorded. Most people record their best scores in the summer period. My best scores do not appear typical, in fact my best ever score was recorded in January last year! But it must be clear to all that in order for your handicap to reflect your current playing ability the more current the qualifying scores you submit the more accurate your handicap will be.

I think that is enough for this particular paper, which hopefully has given you a bit of an insight into how the new system may affect your golf.

In the next paper, which I will circulate in due course, I will outline the process by which your new Handicap Index will be applied to your play on the course. Hopefully that will be a little more straight forward and easier to understand.

Let’s hope we’re back to golf by the time I circulate the next instalment!

Andy Richardson

Handicap Secretary