

# World Handicapping System 2020

## Background

A new World Handicapping System (WHS) is due to be introduced in England on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020. The objective is to provide an equitable and transportable handicap for players of golf throughout the world. It replaces six incompatible systems that have been used by the different National Authorities.

## Courses

Each golf course and tee position will be assessed and given both a **Course Rating** and a **Slope Rating**. The **Course Rating** is a measure of the number of strokes that should be taken by a scratch golfer (Handicap 0.0) playing under normal conditions. This is expressed to one decimal place. A **Slope Rating** is the relative difficulty for a bogey golfer (Handicap 20-24) when compared to a scratch golfer playing the same course. The range is from 55 to 155 with 113 considered as neutral. Each tee position can be assessed for both genders by a team of trained and accredited course raters.

## WHS Handicap

Under the WHS all players have a **Handicap Index** and use this to find a **Playing Handicap** which is used when playing a round of golf. This is updated once a day at midnight, not when a competition is closed.

## Obtaining a Handicap Index

Players must submit a minimum of 54 holes (any combination of 9 or 18) to get an initial **Handicap Index**. A fully developed **Handicap Index** is based on an average of the best 8 of the last 20 rounds submitted.

The system includes a number of safeguards, called 'anchor points' and 'caps', to ensure players' handicaps don't go up too quickly. There are also procedures to ensure rapidly improving golfers' handicaps can come down at a faster rate than the basic calculation would allow.

A **Playing Conditions Calculation** may be applied when the index is recalculated after a competition.

## Finding a Playing Handicap

Each set of tees on every course will have a **Slope Table** based in its **Slope Rating**.

Players will look up their **Handicap Index** on the **Slope Table** to find their **Course Handicap**. Depending on the format of play the **Course Handicap** may be adjusted by an allowance to give a **Playing Handicap**. This is to ensure equity across the full handicap range in both stroke play and match play competitions. In practice this calculation will be done by the club's handicapping software or via an App on a smartphone.

## Which Scores Contribute To The Handicap Index?

National Authorities have some discretion so this may vary from country to country. England Golf has decided that all official club competitions, Medals and Stablefords, must be included in a player's handicap record. In addition, it is recommending that competitive social golf played under the Rules of Golf is also included. Committees have been asked to consider whether scores from some or all regular 'roll-ups' should be included in a player's handicap record. It is also possible to submit General Play cards. As now, all rounds for handicap must be pre-registered before starting play and have the score agreed by at least one other person.

Any averaging system requires a reasonable amount of recent data to work effectively. As a guide, players should try to ensure that at least two scores are added to their handicap record each month.