

USGA Handicap System™ 2016 Update:



Basic Premises of the USGA Handicap System

- Players will try to make the best score at every hole in every round
- Players will post every acceptable round for peer review

The purpose of the USGA Handicap System is to make the game of golf more enjoyable by enabling players of differing abilities to compete on an equitable basis.



Section 2

Definitions

Tournament Score

REVISED

A "tournament score" is a score made in a competition organized and conducted by the Committee in charge of the competition.

The competition must identify a winner(s) based on a stipulated round(s), and must be played under the Rules of Golf.



Tournament Score

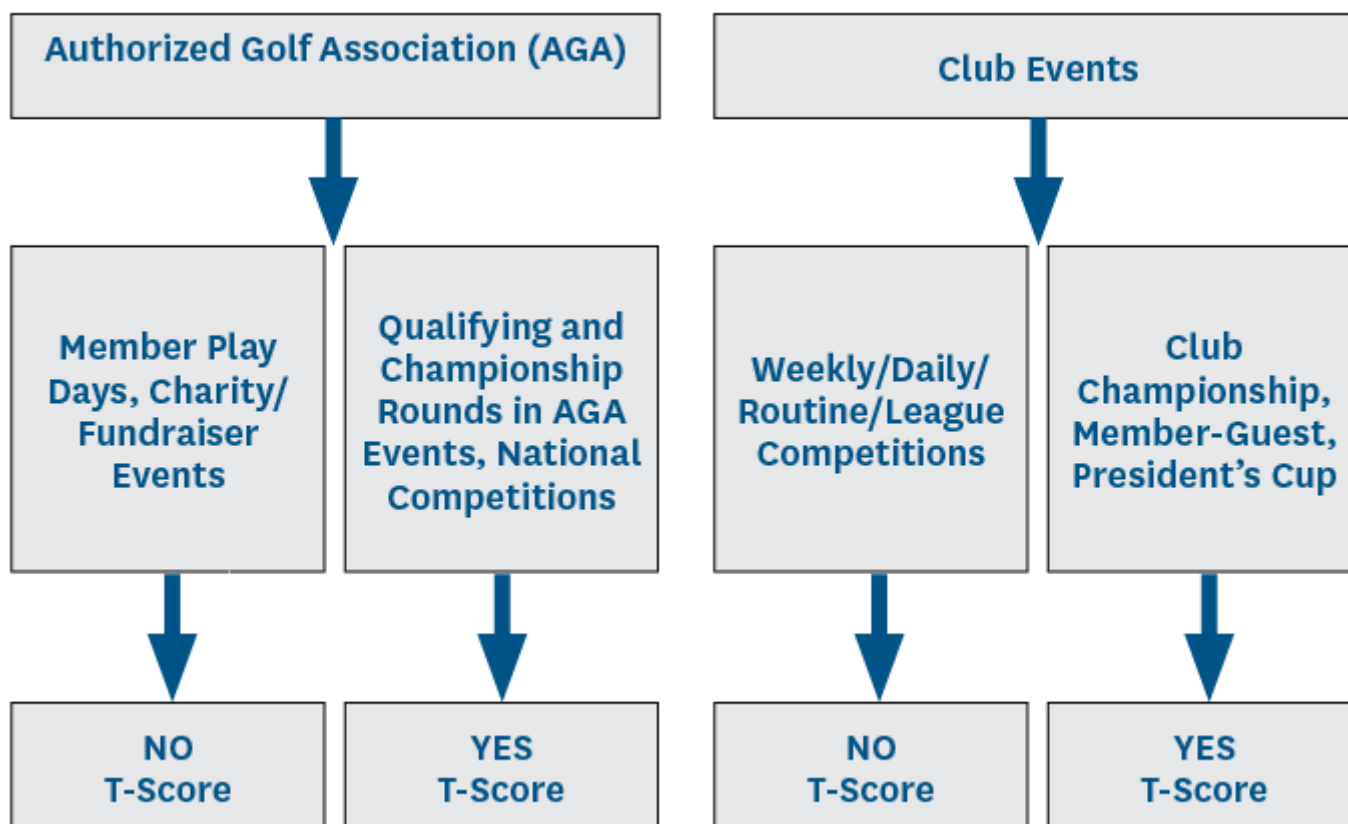
The Committee (in charge of the competition) must announce in advance whether the score is to be designated as a tournament score.

Not all club competitions qualify to be posted as a tournament score.

For example, club events that are routine events such as daily, weekly, or monthly play days should not be designated as Tournament Scores.



T-Score Designation



Tournament Score



Note

The consequence of designating too many competition rounds as T-Scores is that the chart value in the Handicap Reduction Table will be diluted (see Section 10-3 and Decisions 10-3/1 through 10-3/6).

The Committee should scrutinize each competition in advance to determine whether it should be designated as a T-Score.

Par

REVISED

"Par" is the score that a scratch golfer would be expected to make for a typical hole.

Par means expert play under ordinary conditions, allowing two strokes on the putting green.

Par is not a significant factor in either the USGA Handicap System or USGA Course Rating System.

HOLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT
GOLD	519	413	641	251	391	513	611	213	532	4084
BLACK	465	382	610	211	350	458	534	183	469	3662
BLUE	420	369	554	191	345	397	500	170	410	3356
WHITE	360	328	501	165	340	387	480	155	360	3076
HANDICAP	7	13	1	11	15	5	9	17	3	
PAR	4	4	5	3	4	4	5	3	4	36
RED	314	289	442	122	271	315	421	111	326	2611
HANDICAP	7	13	1	11	15	5	9	17	3	



Section 4

Adjusting Hole Scores

Section 4-2

Eliminate the phrase “Principles of The Rules of Golf”

Holes Not Played or Not Played Under Rules of Golf

New Decision to clarify that occasionally holes are not played under the Rules of Golf, where applying Sections 4-1 or 4-2 to adjust the hole score would still allow the score to be posted for handicap purposes.

Three areas covered under the examples include:

- ✓ Where a Local Rule is not in effect such as the use of DMDs or Preferred Lies
- ✓ Where a player does not wish to cause Undue Delay
- ✓ Where the situation is outside of the player's control

Decision 4-2/1

NEW

Explanation of “Holes Not Played” under the Rules of Golf in accordance with the USGA Handicap System

***Q:** Are there any circumstances in which it is permissible for a player to record his or her most likely score for a hole, rather than recording par plus handicap strokes even though the hole was not played under the Rules of Golf?*

A: Yes. Flexibility has been provided within the USGA Handicap System for a score to remain acceptable for handicap posting purposes in limited situations where the player has not played a hole(s) under the Rules of Golf, but the hole was played in such a manner that the player's score on the hole would be sufficiently accurate for handicap posting purposes. This policy better ascertains the player's potential ability by attempting to capture more scores for handicap purposes.

Examples

1. If a player uses a distance-measuring device or plays a round under preferred lies where a Local Rule is not in effect, the score remains acceptable for handicap purposes. (See Decision 5-1e/2 and Section 7).
2. A player starting, but not finishing a hole in stroke play (e.g., picking up before holing out) records the “most likely score” for handicap posting purposes (See Section 4-1) even though in breach of Rule 3-2 for failing to hole out.
3. For situations that are generally out of the player’s control, such as an incorrectly marked golf course, or incorrectly installed hole liners, the player’s score for the hole is acceptable for handicap purposes.





Section 5

Scores


Section 5

Scores

Scores To Post

- To post a 9-hole score, the player must play 7 to 12 holes, and at least 7 holes must be played in accordance with the Rules of Golf.
- To post an 18-hole score, the player must play at least 13 holes in accordance the Rules of Golf.



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- Eliminate the designation of Internet (I) score as a score type.
 - Internet score posting is a means of posting and not a type.

Section 5-1e

Unacceptable Scores

Revised Section to add reference to Rule 14-1b to list of unacceptable scores for handicap posting purposes and to address playing alone as an unacceptable score.



Section 5-1d

Disqualification

A player who is disqualified from a competition, but has an acceptable score, must record an adjusted gross score for handicap purposes using Section 4-2.

Examples

- Player fails to hole out under Rule 3-2
- Player fails to sign scorecard under Rule 6-6b
- Player refuses to apply a Rule in stroke play which affects the rights of another player under Rule 3-4

If the breach is determined to provide an advantage for the player the score is not acceptable for handicap purposes.

(see Section 5-1e (vii)) (REVISED)



Unacceptable Scores

- I. When fewer than seven holes are played;
- II. When made on a golf course in an area in which an inactive season established by the authorized golf association is in effect;
- III. When, as a condition of the competition, the maximum number of clubs allowed is less than 14, or types of clubs are limited as, for example, in a competition that allows only iron clubs;
- IV. When scores are made on a course with no USGA Course Rating or Slope Rating;

Unacceptable Scores

V. When a player uses non-conforming clubs, non-conforming balls, or non-conforming tees; or when a player incurs a second breach of Rule 14-3.

VI. When a player plays alone.

VII. When a player ignores one or more Rules of Golf and fails to post an adjusted hole score as required under Section 4-1 and 4-2, or fails to record the appropriate penalty for a breach of a rule.

- For example, if a player anchored the club while making a stroke during a round and did not record a penalty for doing so (see Rule 14-1b), the score would not be reflected as playing under the Rules of Golf and therefore would be unacceptable for handicap purposes.



NEW

Decision 5-1e/2

Amended Decision 5-1e/2 to be consistent with “The Rules of Golf.”



REVISED

Q: *Are scores made using information generated from a distance-measuring device or multi-functional device acceptable for handicap purposes?*

A: In certain situations, **yes**. If a player uses a distance-measuring device to measure **distance only**, regardless of whether the Committee has established a Local Rule allowing the use of a distance-measuring device, **then the score is acceptable for handicap purposes.**

If a player uses a multi-functional device to **access weather reports** provided by weather stations **through an application or internet browser**, the player is not participating in the specific act of gauging or measuring variable conditions that might affect a player's play as is prohibited under Rule 14-3 of “The Rules of Golf” and the score is **acceptable** for handicap purposes.

However, if a player uses the device or information available through an application or internet browser **to gauge or measure other conditions that might affect a player's play** as is prohibited under Rule 14-3 of “The Rules of Golf” (e.g. gradient or wind speed) the score is **unacceptable** for handicap purposes.

Decision 5-1e/3

Scores Made using an Artificial Device, Unusual Equipment, or use of any Equipment in an Abnormal Manner

REVISED

***Q:** Are scores made using artificial device(s), unusual equipment, or use of any equipment in an abnormal manner acceptable for handicap purposes?*

A: In certain situations, yes. If the player breaches Rule 14-3, the player incurs a penalty of two-strokes in stroke play or loss of hole in match play. Any **subsequent breach** of Rule 14-3 is **disqualification** and the score is **unacceptable** for handicap purposes according to Section 5-1e.



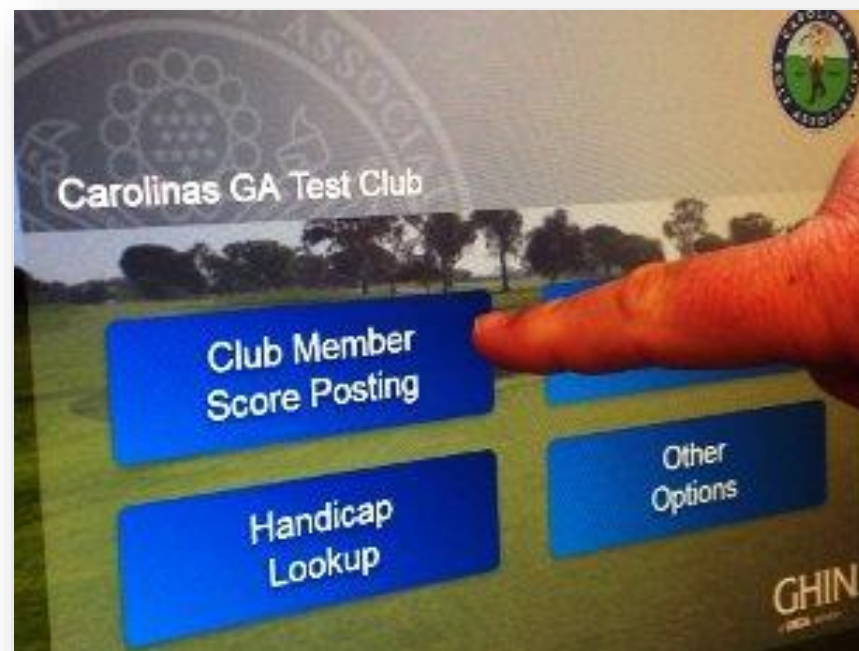
Section 5-2

Posting Scores

REVISED

Posting scores in person immediately following the round at the course where the round is played is the preferred way to expose scores to peer review.

This method of posting **should be used** whenever possible. The place for returning scores from all courses should be convenient to make it as easy as possible for players to record every round played.



The posted scores for the day must be immediately available to all members for peer review. (See Decision 5-2a/1.)

Posting Scores (cont.)

For handicap purposes, the following information must be returned as soon as practical prior to the next revision so that a scoring record is up-to-date:

- i. Player's name or identification number;
- ii. Date **Played**;
- iii. Course Name*;
- iv. USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating of the **tee** played;
- v. Adjusted gross score;
- vi. Score type.

*Type 1 and Type 2 golf club recommendation. Type 3 golf club requirement.



Section 6

Scoring Records

Section 6-3

Handicap Index and Scoring Records

The accessibility of scoring records is an important component of peer review.

Accordingly, the club must provide the ability to view the scoring records of all members that includes the last 20 scores (fewer if the scoring record has fewer than 20 scores), plus any eligible tournament scores.

This information must be readily available for inspection by fellow members and others.

(See Decisions 6-3/1 and 6-3/2.)



Decision 6-1/1

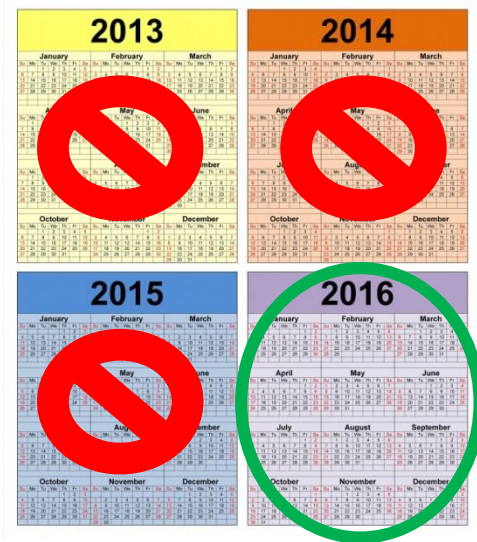
Procedure for Player who Discontinues Playing Golf for Lengthy Period and Then Resumes

REVISED

Q: *A player with an established Handicap Index discontinues playing golf for a lengthy period, and then resumes playing. Should the player use the last Handicap Index on resumption of play or establish a new Handicap Index?*

A: If the player's scoring record is available via the club's computation service then the player should **use the last Handicap Index in resumption of play**. If the existing scores **do not accurately represent** the player's current potential ability, the Handicap Committee may **modify the player's Handicap Index** under Section 8-4c.

If the player's scoring record is **unavailable** then the player has no Handicap Index until **five scores have been posted** and a handicap revision takes place.



Section 8

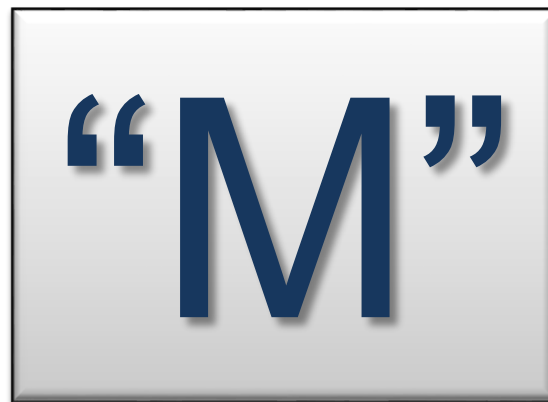


The Handicap Committee

Temporary Disability

Section 8-4c(iii)

- An increase in a Handicap Index must not be granted because a player's game is temporarily off or the player has discontinued play. However, an increased handicap may be given for a temporary disability.
- The modified Handicap Index must be identified by the “M” to indicate that it has been modified by the club’s Handicap Committee. For example, a player having had recent surgery may be given a modified Handicap Index while recovering.



Amended

Section 8-4c(iii)

Temporary Disability and Permanent Disability modifications will be required to be displayed with an “M” designation and not an “L” designation.

Note

This should help simplify the process for the Handicap Chairperson to have one letter designation for all modifications, and will allow the adjusted Handicap Index to be used when the player is playing away from the local/home club.



Decision 8-4c/1

Treatment of Player with Temporary Disability

REVISED

Q: *A player with a Handicap Index of 11.1 discontinued play due to hip replacement surgery. The player has started to play again, but due to recovery and fatigue, the player's three latest scores have been 104, 100, and 102. May the player receive a special adjustment while recovering?*

A: The player is entitled to a special adjustment under Section 8-4c(iii). The player should be assigned a modified Handicap Index (M) to reflect current ability, as needed during the temporary disability, and it must be identified by the letter "**M**" to indicate that it has been modified by the club Handicap Committee.



Decision 8-4c/2

Treatment of Player with Permanent Disability

REVISED

Q: *Two players have suffered extreme physical disabilities. Both have been able to resume playing golf after not being able to play for many months. Neither will ever be able to play to the Handicap Index established before illness. May these players be entitled to a special adjustment?*

A: Yes. The disabilities described appear to be permanent and more extensive than contemplated by Section 8-4c(iii). The club Handicap Committee may discard the players' previous scoring records and provide each with a modified Handicap Index (**M**) for use until five scores have been returned to establish a new Handicap Index.





2016-2017

THE USGA HANDICAP SYSTEM

Developed by the United States Golf Association




To purchase please visit:
2016-2017
USGA Handicap System,

<https://www.usgashop.com/publications>

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“USGA Handicap System” online.

Questions?

