

For more information please call Golf Canada or your Provincial Golf Association or reference your 2016 edition of the Golf Canada Handicap Manual.



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**The Handicap System**

*All You Need To Know*

## What is the purpose of the Handicap System?

The *Handicap System* makes the game of golf more enjoyable by enabling golfers of differing abilities to compete on an equitable basis. It also enables you to measure your golf ability and performance relative to others. The *Handicap System* is the best method we've found to give you the opportunity to compete fairly with any golfer, on any golf course.

The *Handicap System* is only as fair as the golfers who use it, however, and assumes that you will be honest, try to make the best possible score on every hole, and submit every acceptable score for peer review.

## What is a Handicap Factor?

A *Handicap Factor* is a numerical measure of your potential golfing ability that enables you to compete equitably with golfers of differing ability. It travels with you wherever you play and you will usually "play to your handicap" about one in five times.

Every time you play golf, your *Handicap Factor* is converted to a *Course Handicap*, which is simply your handicap adjusted for the difficulty of the course and tees played and represents the number of strokes you will receive for that round. Consult the *Course Handicap Tables* provided by your club to do the conversion.

*Handicap Factors* can only be calculated and issued by authorized provincial golf associations and Golf Canada Member golf clubs in accordance with the requirements of the *Handicap System*. Only official *Handicap Factors* will be accepted for entry into Golf Canada or provincial golf association tournaments.

## How is a Handicap Factor calculated?

Your *Handicap Factor* is calculated by averaging the lowest 10 of your last 20 *Handicap Differentials* (a *Handicap Differential* is your *adjusted score* minus the *course rat-*

*ing*, multiplied by 113, divided by the *Slope Rating* rounded to one decimal place) and then multiplying by 0.96. All digits after one decimal place are dropped.

## Adjusting your scores for ESC

Equitable Stroke Control (ESC) sets a maximum number that a player can post on any hole depending on your *Course Handicap*. The purpose of adjusting scores is to prevent exceptionally bad holes from artificially increasing your handicap. There is no limit to the number of holes on which you can adjust your score. Adjust your gross, or total, score downward using the following chart:

Course Handicap	Max on Any Hole
9 or less	Double Bogey
10-19	Max score of 7
20-29	Max score of 8
30-39	Max score of 9
40 and over	Max score of 10

All scores, including tournament scores, must be adjusted for ESC.

## How many strokes do I get?

The number of strokes you will receive or give for the round depends on the type of game played, who you are playing and the tees played.

Different types of competitions (stroke or match play, four-ball, best-ball, etc.) are treated differently in the interests of equity and fairness. Refer to Section 9 of the *Golf Canada Handicap System* manual for more information on the assignment of strokes and handicap allowances.

For regular matches between two players from the same tees, the higher handicapped player receives the difference between the *Course Handicaps* of the two players and the lower handicap player plays from scratch. For example, a player with a *Course Handicap* of 17 receives

four strokes from a player with a *Course Handicap* of 13. The higher handicap player consults the score card to determine which holes he or she will receive the strokes on, indicated in the row marked "Handicap Strokes", "HDCP" or other similar designation. In this example, the strokes will be applied to the four lowest numbered handicap-stroke holes, i.e. stroke holes 1 through 4 as indicated on the score card. These are the holes where the higher handicapped golfer most needs an additional stroke to equalize the abilities of the two players.

When you are playing a match against someone playing from a different set of tees, the golfer playing from the tees with the higher *Course Rating* receives extra strokes equal to the rounded-off difference between the *Course Rating* of the two tees played. For example, if player A plays from the forward tees with a *Course Rating* of 70.9 and player B plays from the middle tees with a *course rating* of 72.1, player B's *Course Handicap* increases by one stroke.

## Your responsibilities as a golfer

- Know your *Handicap Factor* so you can convert it to a *Course Handicap* before playing.
- Know the number of handicap strokes you are entitled to for the course and tees played.
- Record your hole-by-hole scores
- Adjust your score for ESC before posting
- Post a score for every acceptable round as soon as possible after completion of the round so your *Golf Canada Handicap Factor* is current.
- Contact your *Handicap Committee* when you have problems

## How Course Ratings affect your Handicap

A *Course Handicap* is your *Handicap Factor* adjusted for the difficulty of the course and tees played, which is indicated by the *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating*.

The *Course Rating* represents the playing difficulty of the golf course for the scratch golfer, while the *Slope Rating* is a measure of the difficulty for higher handicap golfers (relative to a scratch golfer). A course with a *Slope Rating* of 113 is considered to be of "standard", or average, difficulty. On courses with a *Slope rating* below 113, players receive fewer strokes than their *Handicap Factor* but more strokes on courses with a *Slope Rating* higher than 113. *Slope Ratings* range from 55 to 155.

## What Scores Should I Post?

Fair handicapping is only possible when players submit full and accurate scoring information for all rounds played. Golfers should post the following scores for handicapping purposes:

- Scores from 9 and 18 hole rounds, or when 13 or more holes (7 holes for 9-hole rounds) are played
- Scores made in an area during its "active season"
- Scores from all forms of competition
- Scores made at home, away, or out-of-country on courses with a valid *Course* and *Slope rating*
- Scores made under the Rules of Golf

If you start but do not finish a hole (e.g. you picked up, were given a putt or were conceded a hole) record the score you would most likely have made. This is the number of strokes, including penalty strokes, taken to that point plus the number of strokes it will likely take to finish the hole.

When you don't play a hole (e.g. you stop playing after 13 or more holes) record par plus any handicap strokes to which you are entitled for the remaining holes (based on your *Course Handicap*).

An "X" should precede the score on the score card for unfinished holes or holes not played.