

How often is my handicap updated?

Handicaps are updated on the 1st and 15th of every month according to the National Revision Schedule.

Posting Scores

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 must 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 form of reporting is the responsibility of the golf club or the authorized golf association, and will depend upon the procedure adopted by the Handicap Committee. The posted scores for the day must be immediately available to all members for peer review.

The Handicap Committee may adopt a policy to accept scores returned by mail, facsimile, e-mail or the Internet. Scores may not be returned verbally by the telephone.

Scores returned to the club by mail, facsimile, e-mail or the Internet shall be exposed to the same peer review as scores posted in person at the club. If a club adopts a policy to accept scores via mail, facsimile or e-mail, the Handicap Committee must designate an official at the club who is authorized to receive these scores. If a golf club adopts a policy to accept scores posted via the Internet, the club must also provide the ability to review all scores for all members via the Internet.

Total scores may be returned and need not be recorded hole-by-hole. The Handicap Committee shall not require the returning or attesting of scorecards before allowing scores to be posted.

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Some important points to remember:

1. While the decision to allow scores to be posted over the Internet rests with each club, the MGA has arranged for all clubs using the MGA Handicapping Service to have Internet score posting available. If clubs DO NOT wish to adopt the procedure, they must contact the MGA Handicap Department.
2. Clubs that wish to adopt the procedure for posting scores over the Internet must provide the ability to review all scores for all members via the Internet. Clubs using the MGA Handicap Service can use the MGA Web site to comply with this requirement. This will improve peer review by giving members the ability to view other members' scores at any time.
3. The MGA and USGA encourage all golfers to post their scores immediately following their round at the course where they played and to only use the Internet score posting procedure when necessary.
4. Scores posted over the Internet will be identified with an "I" for Internet. Clubs using the MGA Handicap Service will receive an Internet Score Posting Report with each revision. This report is not a requirement of the USGA Handicap System but an additional peer review tool provided by the MGA. See Section 2 (definition of Score Type) of the USGA Handicap System Manual for more details.
5. Scores posted over the Internet must be eligible scores as outlined in Section 5-1 of the USGA Handicap Manual. Scores that do not comply with Section 5-1 (i.e. scores made during the inactive season as established by an authorized golf association) are not eligible to be posted over the Internet or in any other fashion.

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Equitable Stroke Control (ESC)

Equitable Stroke Control (ESC) is the downward adjustment of individual hole scores for handicap purposes in order to make handicaps more representative of a player's potential ability. ESC sets a maximum number that a player can post on any hole depending on the player's Course Handicap. ESC is used only when a player's actual or most likely score exceeds his maximum number based on the table below. Each player is responsible for adjusting his score in accordance with the table. ESC was modified in 1998 to allow golfers with a single digit Course Handicap to post a double bogey. This procedure, which is now in effect at all MGA clubs, will not change for at least eight years.

Equitable Stroke Control (ESC)

18-Hole Course Handicap

Maximum Score Post On Any Hole

9 or Less	Double Bogey
10 through 19	7
20 through 29	8
30 through 39	9
40 and Above	10

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Incomplete Holes

A player who picks up and does not finish a hole, must record a score for handicap purposes using the following procedure(s):

A player whose score will have no effect on the outcome of a hole, should help speed up play by picking up! If a player picks up before he has completed a hole, he shall record the score he most likely would have made had he completed the hole, not exceeding the maximum allowable under Equitable Stroke Control (ESC). Picking up before a hole is completed does not require or entitle a player to automatically post his ESC maximum.

When a player's next stroke is conceded, the same procedure applies. For handicapping purposes the player shall record the score he most likely would have made had his next stroke not been conceded, again, not exceeding the maximum allowable under ESC.

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Incomplete Rounds

If at least 13 holes of an 18-hole round are played (seven holes for a nine-hole round) the remaining holes, for handicap purposes, shall be recorded as par plus any handicap strokes that the player is entitled to receive on the unplayed holes. Example: Player "A" has a Course Handicap of three. Because of darkness, he is forced to stop play after 16 holes. The 17th hole is a par four and has a stroke allocation of two. The 18th hole is also a par four but has a stroke allocation of 10. Had player "A" been able to complete the round, he would have been entitled to a stroke on the 17th hole, but not on the 18th. Therefore, for handicap purposes, player "A" should record a five for the 17th hole (par plus the handicap stroke), a four for the 18th hole and then, after ESC has been applied to the first 16 holes, post the 18-hole score.

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Scoring for Holes Under Construction or Temporary Greens

If a player does not play a hole or plays it other than under the principles of the Rules of Golf (except for preferred lies), the score recorded for that hole for handicap purposes must be par plus any handicap strokes the player is entitled to receive on that hole. This is covered under section 4-2 of the USGA Handicap Manual.

Example: A player with a Course Handicap of 10 receives a handicap stroke on the first 10 allocated handicap-stroke holes. If the player does not play the sixth allocated handicap-stroke hole, which is a par 4, because of construction on the green or it being closed, the player must record a score of par plus one for handicap purposes, or X-5. (See Decision 4-2/1 and Section 5-2b.)

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Handicap Allowances

The MGA Handicap Committee endorses the USGA recommendations for handicap allowances in various forms of match and stroke-play events. Handicap allowances are always applied to the appropriate Course Handicaps, not the USGA Handicap Index. The recommendations are:

Match Play

1. SINGLES MATCH PLAY: Allow the higher handicapped player the full difference between the Course Handicaps of the two players.
2. FOUR BALL MATCH PLAY, BETTER BALL: Reduce the Course Handicaps of all four players by the Course Handicap of the low handicapped player, who shall then play from scratch. Allow each of the three other players 100% of the resulting difference.

Stroke Play

1. INDIVIDUAL STROKE PLAY: Allow the full Course Handicap.
2. FOUR BALL STROKE PLAY, BETTER BALL BASIS: Allow each man 90% of his Course Handicap. Allow each woman 95%.
3. BEST BALL OF FOUR, STROKE PLAY: Allow each man 80% of his Course Handicap. Allow each woman 90%.

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Posting Winter Scores

Any round played in the Met area is NOT eligible to be posted for handicap purposes during the off-season; this can be further explained in Section 6-2 of the USGA Handicap Manual.

The authorized golf association having jurisdiction in an area is responsible for declaring the duration of any inactive season. A golf club located within the area covered by an authorized golf association must observe any inactive season established by the golf association, even if the club is not a member of the association. (See Decision 6-2/1.)

Scores made at any golf course observing an inactive season are not acceptable for handicap purposes. Scores made at a golf course in an area observing an active season must be posted for handicap purposes, even if the golf club from which the player receives a Handicap Index is observing an inactive season. The club's Handicap Committee must make it possible for a player to post these away scores at the beginning of the active season. If possible, the club may re-compute the player's Handicap Index at that start of the active season.

Example: If a player belonging to a golf club in Michigan plays golf in Florida during January, any scores made in Florida are acceptable and must be returned to the player's Michigan golf club. If the player is also a member of a golf club in Florida, scores must be posted to the player's Florida club.

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Definitions

Active Season

An active season is the period of time, determined by the authorized golf association having jurisdiction in a given area, during which scores made there will be accepted for handicap purposes.

Adjusted Gross Score

Adjusted gross score is a player's gross score adjusted under USGA Handicap System procedures for unfinished holes, conceded strokes, holes not played or not played under the Rules of Golf, or Equitable Stroke Control.

Bogey Golfer

A male bogey golfer has a USGA Handicap Index of 17.5 to 22.4. He can hit tee shots an average of 200 yards and can reach a 370-yard hole in two shots.

A female bogey golfer has a USGA Handicap Index of 21.5 to 26.4. She can hit tee shots an average of 150 yards and can reach a 280-yard hole in two shots.

Course Handicap

A Course Handicap is the USGA's mark that indicates the number of handicap strokes a player receives from a specific set of tees at the course being played to adjust his scoring ability to the level of scratch or 0-handicap golf. For a player with a plus Course Handicap, it is the number of handicap strokes the player gives to adjust his scoring ability to the level of scratch or 0-handicap golf. A Course Handicap is determined by applying the player's USGA Handicap Index to a Course Handicap Table or Course Handicap Formula. A player's Course Handicap is expressed as a whole number of strokes.

Course Rating

USGA Course Rating is the USGA's mark that indicates the evaluation of the playing difficulty of a course for scratch golfers under normal course and weather conditions. It is expressed as strokes taken to one decimal place, and is based on yardage and other obstacles to the extent that they affect the scoring ability of a scratch golfer.

Eligible Tournament Score

An eligible tournament score is a tournament score made either within the last 12 months or within the player's current 20 score history.

Equitable Stroke Control

Equitable Stroke Control (ESC) is the downward adjustment of individual hole scores for handicap purposes in order to make handicaps more representative of a player's potential ability. ESC sets a maximum number that a player can post on any hole depending on the player's Course Handicap. ESC is used only when a player's actual or most likely score exceeds his maximum number based on the table in Section 4-3.

Golf Club

A golf club is an organization of at least ten individual members that operates under bylaws with committees (including a Handicap Committee) to supervise golf activities, provide peer review, and maintain the integrity of the USGA Handicap System. Members of a golf club must have a reasonable and regular opportunity to play golf with each other. They must be able to return scores personally, and these scores must be immediately available for review by fellow club members.

Note: For administrative reasons, some golf associations may require a golf club to have more than the USGA minimum of ten members in order for that club to be a member of the golf association.

Gross Score

A gross score is the number of actual strokes plus any penalty strokes taken by a player.

Handicap Allowance

A handicap allowance is the percentage of the Course Handicap recommended for a handicap competition. Allowances vary for different forms of competition and are designed to produce equitable competition.

Handicap Committee

A Handicap Committee is the committee of a golf club that ensures compliance with the USGA Handicap System, including peer review. A majority of the Handicap Committee must be members of the club; club employees may serve on the Handicap Committee, but an employee may not serve as chairman.

Handicap Differential

A handicap differential is the difference between a player's adjusted gross score and the USGA Course Rating of the course on which the score was made, multiplied by 113, then divided by the USGA Slope Rating from the tees played and rounded to the nearest tenth. Handicap differentials are expressed as a number of strokes rounded to one decimal place, e.g. 12.8.

Handicap Index

A Handicap Index is the USGA's service mark used to indicate a measurement of a player's potential ability on a course of standard playing difficulty. It is expressed as a number taken to one decimal place, and is used for conversion to a Course Handicap.

Inactive Season

An inactive season is the period of time determined by the authorized golf association having jurisdiction in a given area during which scores made there will not be accepted for handicap purposes.

Most Likely Score

A most likely score is the score a player shall post for handicap purposes when he starts but does not complete a hole or is conceded a stroke. The most likely score consists of the number of strokes already taken plus, in his best judgment, the number of strokes that the player would need

to complete the hole from that position more than half the time. This number may not exceed the player's Equitable Stroke Control limit.