

USGA Handicap System to World Handicap System – Change Summary

Limit of Upward Movement of a Handicap Index (Cap)

USGA Handicap System (pre-2020): There was no restriction on the upward movement of a Handicap Index built into the calculation.

- The Handicap Committee at a golf club was responsible for monitoring extreme upward movement of any members' Handicap Index and making modifications where appropriate.

Rule Change for 2020: A “soft cap” and “hard cap” is included within the Handicap Index calculation.

- The soft cap suppresses the upward movement of a Handicap Index by 50 percent if a 3.0 stroke increase takes place within 12 months.
- The hard cap restricts upward movement if, after the application of the soft cap, a 5.0 stroke increase takes place within 12 months.

Reasons for Change:

- A new term, “Low Handicap Index” is included within the *Rules of Handicapping* and is made visible to players. This value serves as the baseline for the soft cap and hard cap procedures.
 - A Low Handicap Index is established once a player has at least 20 acceptable scores in their scoring record. At that point, the soft cap and hard cap procedures begin taking effect.
 - A newly determined Low Handicap Index is considered each time an acceptable score is posted and a Handicap Index is updated.
- There is no limit on the amount by which a player's Handicap Index can decrease, but the soft cap and hard cap ensure that a temporary loss of form does not cause a player's Handicap Index to increase to a level inconsistent with their demonstrated ability.
- The automatic calculation prevents extreme upward movement of a Handicap Index and assists Handicap Committees as an anti-abuse safeguard.
 - When special circumstances exist, such as injury, the Handicap Committee has the ability to override the soft cap or hard cap.
- This procedure favors the consistent player, as players who have significant volatility in their scoring history over a 12-month period will be impacted by it more often.