USGA Handicap System to World Handicap System – Change Summary

Course Handicap Calculation and Application

**USGA Handicap System (pre-2020):** A Course Handicap represented the number of strokes a player received in relation to the *Course Rating* of the tees being played. The formula was:

\[
\text{Course Handicap} = \text{Handicap Index} \times \frac{\text{Slope Rating}}{113}.
\]

**Rule Change for 2020:** A Course Handicap represents the number of strokes a player receives in relation to the *Par* of the tees being played. The formula includes a Course Rating minus Par adjustment:

\[
\text{Course Handicap} = \text{Handicap Index} \times \frac{\text{Slope Rating}}{113} + (\text{Course Rating} - \text{Par})
\]

**Reasons for Change:**

- Under the USGA Handicap System, when players competed from different tees, a Course Handicap adjustment based on the Course Rating difference had to take place to make the game fair.
  - This adjustment was necessary because players competing from different tees were competing with different benchmarks (different Course Ratings).
  - This adjustment, identified and explained in Section 3-5, had generated confusion and there has been challenges with its implementation over the years.

- Applying Course Rating minus Par within the Course Handicap calculation allows players to compete from different tees without any adjustment – unless a difference in Par exists.

- Under the USGA Handicap System, it was common for Course Handicap values to change very little from tee to tee.
  - Confusion existed because the Course Handicap value only accounted for the number of strokes needed to play to the respective Course Rating.

- Beginning in 2020, Course Handicap values began changing more from tee to tee, as they now represent the number of strokes to play to Par.

- Par is a term that resonates with golfers, so setting Par as the benchmark for a Course Handicap adds simplicity to handicapping.
  - Players can now determine their Target Scores (the score they'll shoot if they play to their handicap) by simply adding their Course Handicap + Par.

- A score of Net Par is used for holes not played, and the maximum hole score for handicap purposes is a Net Double Bogey. Having a Course Handicap that is relative to Par ensures that the correct number of strokes are received and applied for both procedures.