

Applying handicap allowances under the World Handicap System™

What is a handicap allowance?

A handicap allowance is the percentage of a Course Handicap™ recommended to create equity in casual or competitive games and based on the chosen format of play.

Handicap allowances are applied to each player's unrounded Course Handicap prior to determining their Playing Handicap™ for the round.



What are the recommended allowances for various formats of play?

While the final decision on the handicap allowance is determined for the event by the Committee in charge of the competition, the following recommendations can be found within Appendix C of the *Rules of Handicapping*:

Individual Stroke Play	100% if field size less than 30, 95% if field size 30 or greater	Foursomes (Alternate Shot)	50% of combined team handicap
Individual Stableford	100% if field size less than 30, 95% if field size 30 or greater	Pinehurst/Chapman	60% lower handicap player + 40% higher handicap player
Individual Maximum Score	100% if field size less than 30, 95% if field size 30 or greater	Scramble (2-Person team)	35% lower handicap player + 15% higher handicap player
Four-Ball Match Play	90%	Scramble (4-Person team)	25% / 20% / 15% / 10% from lowest to highest handicap player
Four-Ball Stroke Play	85%		

In match play formats, once the percentage allowance has been applied, the player (or team in foursomes or Pinehurst/Chapman formats) with the lowest Playing Handicap plays off zero strokes relative to the other player(s) or team.

How does a handicap allowance impact a “plus handicap” player?

When applying a handicap allowance, any adjustment will always result in a Playing Handicap closer to zero, including for players with a plus Handicap Index®. This ensures relative equity among all players, regardless of ability. Below is an example using four-ball stroke play and the recommended handicap allowance of 85%.

