

USGA Handicap System to World Handicap System – Change Summary

Course Handicap Calculation and Application

USGA Handicap System (pre-2020): A Course Handicap represents the number of strokes a player receives in relation to the Course Rating of the tees being played. The formula is:

$$\text{Course Handicap} = \text{Handicap Index} \times \text{Slope Rating} \div 113.$$

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

$$\text{Course Handicap} = \text{Handicap Index} \times (\text{Slope Rating} \div 113) + (\text{Course Rating} - \text{Par})$$

Reasons for Change:

- Under the USGA Handicap System, when players compete from different tees, a Course Handicap adjustment based on the Course Rating difference must take place to make the game fair.
 - This adjustment is necessary because players competing from different tees are competing with different benchmarks (different Course Ratings).
 - This adjustment, identified and explained in Section 3-5, has generated confusion and there have been challenges with its implementation over the years.
- Applying Course Rating minus Par within the Course Handicap calculation will allow players to compete from different tees without any adjustment – unless a difference in Par exists.
- Under the USGA Handicap System, it is common for Course Handicap values to change very little from tee to tee.
 - Confusion exists because the Course Handicap value only accounts for the number of strokes needed to play to the respective Course Rating.
- Beginning in 2020, Course Handicap values will change more from tee to tee, as they will represent the number of strokes to play to Par. Shifting the number of strokes to play against Par will be more intuitive when playing from different tees.
- Par is a term that resonates with golfers, so setting Par as the benchmark for a Course Handicap adds simplicity to handicapping.
 - Players will be able to 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 will be used for holes not played, and the maximum hole score for handicap purposes will be a Net Double Bogey. Having a Course Handicap that is relative to Par will ensure that the correct number of strokes are received and applied for both procedures.