USGA Handicap System to World Handicap System – Change Summary

Playing Handicap Calculation and Application

USGA Handicap System (pre-2020): When a player’s Course Handicap was adjusted based on the application of a Handicap Allowance or other term(s) of a competition, the resulting value was not defined and was still referred to as a Course Handicap.

Rule Change for 2020: The term “Playing Handicap” is included within the Rules of Handicapping and represents the number of strokes a player receives in a competition. The following formula is used to determine a Playing Handicap:

\[ \text{Playing Handicap} = \text{Course Handicap} \times \text{Handicap Allowance} \]

If players are competing from tees with different Pars, then the player(s) competing from the tees with the higher Par will receive an additional stroke(s) based on the difference.

Reasons for Change:

- By introducing the term Playing Handicap, there is a clear distinction between two key Rules of Handicapping definitions, where both serve specific purposes:
  - A Course Handicap is used to adjust individual hole scores (Net Double Bogey and Net Par procedures).
  - Playing Handicaps are used for net competition purposes – including determining the results and winner(s).

- Under the previous system, confusion existed because there was only one defined term that often represents two different values.
  - For example – A player with a Course Handicap of 21 participating in a four-ball stroke play competition using the recommended Handicap Allowance of 85% receives 18 strokes during the round. The 18 strokes received is now referred to as their Playing Handicap.

- The defined term Playing Handicap is intuitive and ensures that both terms are applied properly.