

The World Handicap System (WHS)

This information sheet should tell you most of what you need to know about handicaps. e.g. how to obtain one, how to keep it current, what the disadvantages are of not keeping it up to date etc.

The purpose of the World Handicap System is to enable golfers of differing abilities, men and ladies alike, to take part in various forms of competitions on as equitable and fair a basis as possible.

Handicapping is not an exact science but rather a statistical approximation of playing ability in time. The accuracy of the handicap relies heavily on the number of scores returned within a specified time frame. The higher the number of scores the better the confidence that the handicap reflects the player's ability. In fact the biggest problem in maintaining a representative handicap is the number of scores presented for handicap adjustment. This applies particularly where a player presents fewer than ten scores for handicap consideration.

The World Handicap System is based on the following two fundamental principles:

- Every player will endeavour to make the best score he can at each hole during a qualifying round.
- Every player will return a sufficient number of scores to provide reasonable evidence of his/her playing standard. Every score improves the accuracy of the handicap substantially.

One of the obligations of a player is to endeavour to comply with the intent and purpose of the fundamental principles of the World Handicap System at all times.

If you join Minthis and already have a handicap index from another golf club, then you should be able to obtain an WHA handicap index more or less straight away. This is one of the advantages of the WHS.

If you do not have a handicap from another club, or if it is out-of-date, you will have to play one game of golf under handicap conditions, have your scorecard marked by a player who does have an WHS handicap index and hand this scorecard in to the Pro-Shop, for the attention of the Club Professional. He will then use this score as the basis for allocating you an initial handicap index. If you get allocated an initial handicap you can play in competitions at Minthis, but you will not be eligible to win a prize until you have returned at least 8 qualifying scorecards.

“Playing under handicap conditions means:

- You must play the game strictly according to the R&A Rules of Golf for a stableford competition, e.g. no “gimmes”, no accepting advice on how to play a shot or make a putt, no rolling the ball out of a divot on the fairway etc.;
- You must have your card properly marked and signed, both by the marker, who must have a current WHS handicap index and yourself. The gross score on each hole must be recorded, if it is a stableford “blob” then you may indicate the gross score by a minus (“-”) sign;

Once you have a handicap the best way to keep it current is to play in the qualifying medal and stableford competitions each month. You should also record the scorecards for any individual round of golf you play under handicap conditions.

To record a scorecard yourself need to register for MyCGF. This system enables you to record scores, check your handicap record, look at previous scorecards you've recorded etc. The instructions for registering with MyCGF are given here:

<https://www.cgf.org.cy/spotlights/mycgf-new-pages-step-step-instructions>

The WHS Handicap Index is effectively the average of the best 8 of your last 20 qualifying scores. Strictly it is strictly not the score but the score-differential. The score-differential for a score is the handicap you would have needed in order to score 36 stableford points. A simplified example of this would be:

WHS Handicap Index = 20.5; Stableford Score= 34;

Score-Differential = 20.5 + (36 - 34) = 22.5 (approximately)

PLAYING HANDICAP

Introduction

Your playing handicap changes according to how difficult the course is rated from the tees selected. In general, the par for a course has no bearing on how difficult that course is. This is where the Course & Stroke Rating comes into play.

USGA Course and Stroke Rating System

The Course Rating (CR) is a measure for the playing difficulty for a “scratch player”, whereas the Slope Rating (SR) measures the playing difficulty for a “bogey player” relative to a “scratch player”. The playing handicap is computed using these two indices thus equalising the difference in playing difficulty and making scores from different courses and from different tees comparable.

For the purpose of course rating, a male “scratch player”, is defined as a player with a scratch handicap who hits his drive 250 yards and can reach a 470-yard hole in two shots, while a lady “scratch player” has a scratch handicap, can hit her drive 210 yards and can reach a 400-yard hole in two shots.

A male “bogey player” is defined as a player with an exact handicap of 17.5 to 22.4 who, under normal situations can hit his tee shot 200 yards and can reach a 370-yard hole in two shots. A lady “bogey golfer” has an exact handicap of 21.5 to 26.4, can hit her tee shot 150 yards and can reach a 280-yard hole in two shots.

The rating indices for the tees at Minthis are:

TEEs	PAR	CR	SR
RED	73	71.3	129
BLUE	74	75.2	139
YELLOW	71	69.8	131
WHITE	72	72.1	134

Calculation of Playing Handicap

By comparing the Course Ratings (CR) it is obvious that a scratch lady golfer playing from the Blue tees would find the course more difficult to play than a scratch male golfer playing from the Yellow tees, since she would on average take 75.2 strokes, while he would go round on average in 69.8 strokes, a difference of 5.4 strokes. However, the Playing Handicap Formula takes care of this. The formula is:

$$\text{PLAYING HANDICAP} = \text{WHS HANDICAP INDEX} \times (\text{SR} / 113) + (\text{CR} - \text{PAR})$$

This would mean that the lady would have a playing handicap of 1.2 (rounded to 1), while the man would have a playing handicap of -2.2 (rounded to -2). The difference is 3, equal to the difference in PARs.

It is not necessary to remember this formula to calculate your playing handicap as you go from course to course, since each golf club should display the USGA Playing Handicap Tables for each set of tees on their course, so that you can easily look-up your playing handicap given your WHS Handicap Index.

Your Golf Committee