

## **USGA Handicap System FAQs**

Golf is a game of integrity and the handicap system, which is based on the posting of all scores by each player, is an integral part of that system. Two basic premises underlie the USGA Handicap System, namely that each player will try to make the best score at every hole in every round, regardless of where the round is played, and that the player will post every acceptable round for peer review. The player and the player's Handicap Committee have a joint responsibility for adhering to these premises.

### ***What is considered an "acceptable round" with respect to posting a score?***

Acceptable scores are:

- Scores made in an area observing an active season (April 1 through October 31 in Michigan)
- When at least seven holes are played (7-12 holes are posted as a 9-hole score; 13 or more are posted as an 18-hole score)
- Scores on all courses with a valid Course Rating and Slope Rating
- Scores in ***all forms of competition*** where each player plays his own ball: match play, stroke play, as well as team competitions

### ***What is Equitable Stroke Control?***

Equitable Stroke Control (ESC) dictates the maximum number of strokes you can take on any hole for handicap purposes. ESC is used when a player's actual *or most likely score* exceeds a maximum number. This mandatory procedure reduces high hole scores for handicap purposes in order to make handicaps more representative of a player's potential ability.

- If your course handicap is 0-9, your maximum score allowed is a double bogey
- If your course handicap is 10-19, your maximum score allowed is an 7
- If your course handicap is 20-29, your maximum score allowed is a 8
- If your course handicap is 30-39, your maximum score allowed is a 9

### ***I did not finish my round so how do I post my score?***

If 13 or more holes are played, the player must post an 18-hole score. If 7 to 12 holes are played, the player must post a nine-hole score. In either case, scores for un-played holes must be recorded as **par** plus any handicap strokes that the player is entitled to receive on the un-played hole (*most likely score*).

### ***We played a Match Play/Best Ball event, how can I post a score?***

A player who starts, but does not complete a hole or is conceded a stroke must record for handicap purposes the *most likely score*. The *most likely score* may not exceed the player's ESC maximum. This *most likely score* should be preceded by an "X." There is no limit to the number of unfinished holes a player may have in a round, provided that failure to finish is not for the purpose of handicap manipulation.

#### ***Example 1***

"A" and "B" are partners in a four-ball stroke play competition. On a hole which neither player receives a handicap stroke, player "A" lays two, 18 feet from the hole. Player "B" lays two, 25 feet from the hole. "B" holes a putt for a 3. "A" picks up on the hole because "A" cannot better "B's" score. "A" records X-4 on the scorecard because 4 is A's *most likely score*.

#### ***Example 2***

"A" and "B" are playing a match. On a hole on which neither player receives a handicap stroke, player "A" has holed out in 4; player "B" has a 30-foot putt for a 5. "B" has lost the hole, and picks up. "B" records X-6 on the scorecard because 6 is "B's" *most likely score*.

### **Does posting all my scores really matter?**

Yes, it does. Your handicap is determined by using the lowest 10 scores from your last 20 rounds played, plus a tournament score influence. You may feel that if you made an inordinately high score, it won't matter, but it does. Posting every score keeps your last twenty scores accurate which helps determine your handicap. The more scores a player has posted, the more accurate his handicap will be. The more accurate the index, the more equitable our flights, tournaments and friendly games become.

### **When does my handicap index change and can I post in the winter months?**

All handicap revisions take place on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of every month beginning on April 1<sup>st</sup> and ending on October 31<sup>st</sup> in Michigan. Any rounds played in this area during the months of November through March (inactive) are NOT to be posted for handicap purposes. However, if rounds are played in areas of the country that are in season such as Florida, California, etc (active year-round areas), they are to be posted.

**Does the Handicap Committee conduct reviews to check for member posting compliance?**

Yes, the Moors Handicap Committee reviews check-ins versus posting records on a monthly basis for all member play, as well as periodic review of League play and Tournament results.

***Did you know that members can post scores at the Golf Association of Michigan (GAM) website or via a smartphone app (as well as the Club Handicap computer terminal)?***

In addition to using the Club kiosk, scores may be posted at the GAM website or via an available smartphone you app. Members are able to post home or away scores as well as view scoring history, access their USGA handicap index, view their current handicap label and history, calculate course handicap, lookup handicap or scoring history for other members, and access the member club directory. Simply contact GAM to obtain an ID and password.