



World Handicap System (WHS) is Coming in 2020!

The USGA and the R&A have made major changes to the fabric of our handicap system. Beginning in early 2020, Golf Canada and other world governing bodies will be implementing the new World Handicap System.

The World Handicap System includes the Rules of Handicapping and the Course Rating System. Its purpose is to make the game of golf enjoyable and to give as many golfers as possible the opportunity to obtain and maintain a Handicap Index, use their Handicap Index on any golf course around the world, and compete, or play a casual round, with anyone else on a fair and equal basis.

8 Things You Need to Know

1. Rules of Handicapping

Handicapping has been compressed into 7 rules that cover the fundamentals, determining appropriate scores to post, handicap computation and administration. This way the Rules of Handicapping simulates the Rules of Golf.

2. Handicap Factor is changing to Handicap Index.

Long time ago Canada parted ways with the U.S. in using *Handicap Factor* instead of *Index*. But now we're sort of going back home and WHS will use Handicap Index.

3. Your Handicap Index may change.

Handicap Index will average your eight best scores out of your most recent 20 (currently, it's 10 out of 20 with a .96 multiplier). In most cases for golfers in Canada, it will change less than one stroke and most likely downward.

4. You need to know your Course Handicap.

Course Handicap will be the number of strokes needed to play to **par**. This will result in greater variance in that number and presents a change, as historically it has represented the number of strokes needed to play to the Course Rating. It is important that an accurate par be established for each hole on a golf course for both men and women. British Columbia Golf will be the final adjudicator of par.

5. Net Double Bogey.

The maximum hole score (currently Equitable Stroke Control or ESC) for each player will be a Net Double Bogey. Net Double Bogey is Par + 2 + any handicap strokes the player receives.

5. Safeguards in the new system.

The new system will limit extreme upward movement of a Handicap Index. WHS introduces two new concepts, Soft Cap and Hard Cap to take effect only once a player has at least 20 acceptable scores in their scoring record. There is no such cap on the amount by which a player's Handicap Index can decrease. There will also be an automatic adjustment to the Handicap Index when an exceptional score of at least 7 strokes better is posted. The exceptional score reduction will be applied whether the score is a tournament or regular play.

6. Playing Conditions Calculation (PCC)

PCC determines whether playing conditions on the day differed from normal conditions to the extent that an adjustment is needed to compensate. It is a daily statistical procedure that compares the scores submitted by players on the day against expected scoring patterns. PCC accounts for abnormal course or weather conditions to ensure that scores reflect when a course plays significantly different than its established Course Rating and Slope Rating.

If a PCC adjustment is necessary, an adjustment of -1.0, 0.0, +1.0, +2.0 or +3.0 may be applied to score differentials for that day.

7. Maximum Handicap Index

The maximum Handicap Index that can be issued to a player is **54.0** (currently it is 36.4 for men and 40.4 for women). But the Committee in charge of a competition may set a maximum limit for entry into a competition.

8. Stroke Index Allocation

There is a new procedure to calculate the order of holes at which handicap strokes are to be given or received. Stroke index allocation are to be applied over 18-holes, split into six triads with each hole ranked on its playing difficulty relative to par. The difficulty of each hole can be determined objectively using hole-by-hole data provided from the Course Rating.

In the past, Course Rating has had no bearing on stroke index allocation.