

Handicap Articles

Included here are some relevant handicap articles that has appeared in the BLAST. Contact Cindi DeBrino, the Handicap Chair, with any questions (cindidebrino@comcast.net)

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Handicapping and Posting Guidelines

Q. WHAT IS THE MAIN PURPOSE OF HAVING A HANDICAP?

The main purpose of handicapping is so people of differing levels of ability can compete together. For that purpose, it is very important that all EWGA members of the Naples Chapter establish and maintain a handicap. In addition, participation in most of our chapter's events requires a handicap.

Generally, the way a handicap works is the lesser of the two players is allotted "strokes" so that the better player not only has to win, but has to win by that predetermined margin of strokes. One obtains a handicap by entering one's scores into a USGA recognized computer system. The computer does all the required calculations. After you have entered five 18-hole scores the system will calculate your handicap.

Q. WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES IN MAINTAINING A HANDICAP?

Whenever you play, you must enter (post) your score. It is your responsibility to make sure all eligible rounds of golf are posted. As with all aspects of golf, the handicap system expects honesty and integrity from all its participants. All individuals maintaining an official handicap have the following responsibilities:

Post every eligible scores

Play all rounds eligible for posting under the USGA Rules of Golf

Make an effort to make the best score on each hole of every round played.

A golfer is required to post scores whenever she plays at least 7 holes. If 7 to 12 holes are played, then that score shall be posted as a 9-hole round. If 13 or more holes are played, it shall be posted as an 18-hole round.

Q. WHAT IS THE "MOST LIKELY SCORE" TO BE RECORDED ON A HOLE NOT FINISHED IN A BEST BALL EVENT?

The hole score is par plus any handicap strokes the player is entitled to receive on the hole. For example, a player with a Course Handicap of 10 receives handicap strokes on the first 10 handicap stroke holes. Suppose a player quits after playing 13 holes. For any holes 14-18 that are handicap stroke holes for this player, the player shall record a score of par plus one. For any hole on which the player receives no handicap strokes, the hole shall be recorded as par.

Q. HOW OFTEN IS MY HANDICAP UPDATED?

USGA handicap indexes are revised no less often than once a month and no more often than once every two weeks during the playing season as determined by the authorized golf association. GN21 handicaps via EWGA are revised every two weeks. In order for the calculation to be meaningful and up to date, a player must post all rounds in a timely manner. You should post all your scores at least on a weekly basis if not the day you play. If you are posting a score played on a date other than the date you are posting, remember to change the date in the computer to reflect the date you played.

Q. WHAT IS THE COURSE AND SLOPE RATINGS?

Generally, a course rating represents what an average professional golfer will shoot on that course on an average day. So if pay for the course is 71 and the course rating is 73, the course is more difficult than par would indicate. The course rating is based primarily on the length of the course.

The slope rating is the degree to which a course is more difficult for an “average” golfer than a pro. Generally, it takes into account water hazards, bunkers, width of fairways, etc and indicates a course’s difficulty. The average slope rating is 113, so if a course has a slope rating of 135, it is more difficult than average, and a rating of 108 would indicate the course is easier than average.

Handicaps are calculated using these two numbers. Par is not part of the handicap calculation. So it is critical to make sure when you post your score, you have either selected the correct course and tee box or when manually posting, that you have entered the correct course and slope ratings using the current score card.

Q. HOW DO I CALCULATE SCORES FOR UNFINISHED ROUNDS?

It is very important to post all scores unless you play 6 or less holes in a round. If you play 7 through 12 holes, you should post a nine-hole score (your first nine holes count, disregard your scores on holes 10, 11 & 12). If you play 13 through 18 holes, you will post an 18-hole score. When you play less holes than you are posting (e.g. you play 16 but are posting an 18-holes score or play 7 holes and are posting a 9-hole score) you must include a score for the holes not played.

How to do this: First, look at the scorecard and ascertain which holes on the course are considered the hardest. You will see a “handicap rating” for each hole on the card. So, for example, at the Quarry the 17th hole is considered the 10th hardest hole on the course. The 3rd hole is the hardest for the ladies’ listed as 1 whereas the 16th hole is the easiest listed at 18.

Now, take your current handicap and look to see on which holes you are assigned a stroke.

Example 1: your handicap is 15 – assign yourself a stroke for handicap holes number 1 through 15 (the hardest 15 holes on the course). At the Quarry you would list a 4 (par) for 16th hole (easiest hole -18) but add 1 stroke to 17th hole (10th hardest hole) for a 5 (Par 4 + 1 stroke).

Example 2: your handicap is a 28 – assign yourself one stroke on each hole than one additional stroke for the 10 hardest holes (18 + 10). In this example, at the Quarry you would list a “5” (par +1) for the 16th hole (handicap 18) but add two strokes for 17 (handicap 10) for a “6” (par +2 strokes).

After you have done this, you can determine your “postable score” for any hole you did not play. The postable score is par plus the number of handicap strokes you are assigned for that hole. This will result in the best estimated score had you been able to finish your round. Use this estimate to calculate the score for any un-played holes and include them when you calculate your total score to be posted.

ADJUSTED GROSS SCORE

Recently after league play, when the ladies were told to record their adjusted gross score, there were quite a few puzzled faces. So, I looked it up in my USGA book and, really was no less puzzled than the rest of you. I won't give you the "textbook" definition, instead I will try to break it down to what I believe will make sense to all of us.

Gross score is the number of actual strokes, including any penalty strokes. Equitable Stroke Control is what really comes into play. This is the downward adjustment of individual hole scores in order to make handicaps more representative of a player's potential ability. ESC sets a maximum number that a player can post on any hole depending on a player's handicap:

	Double Bogey
9 or less	
10 through 19	7
20 through 29	8
30 through 39	9
40 or more	10

Course Handicap Maximum Score

Clear as mud now?? Here's my story. My handicap is 26. I have a great hole and score a par. Due to my excitement, and another "lemonade", on the next hole I score a 10. That would certainly skew my score. So, the most I can take on a hole is an 8 and that is my adjusted gross score for that hole. Although in my heart I know I scored a 10, for handicap purposes an 8 is recorded on the card. ESC reduces high hole scores for handicap purposes in order to make handicaps more representative. So, if you are having a really horrible hole, it is not representative of your ability – it's just a terrible hole and your handicap doesn't end up suffering for it.

Also, you can pick your ball up when you hit your maximum. This achieves two things – you retain some patience and can move on to the next hole, thus helping to keep the pace of play up. Hope this helps!! Cindi DeBrino, Handicap Chair (cindidebrino@comcast.net)

WHAT IS A SANDBAGGER

The last time I played, February 5, I shot an 89. This is unusual for me and I was very excited. I have a 27 handicap. Some of the women I was playing with called me a sandbagger.

What is a sandbagger? In most cases in life you want people to believe you are better. Your weight is lower, your test score was higher, you know what I'm talking about. Not golf.

If your scores are higher then that leads to a higher handicap.

If you have a higher handicap you get more strokes when playing competitively.

Therefore you have a better chance of winning if your handicap is higher than it really should be.

By definition, a sandbagger is a person who pads a handicap or acts as if she is at a lower skill level than she actually is so she can achieve better during competition than she's handicapped.

People can do this by padding the scores they put in the handicap system or not putting in their low scores, only their high ones.

So, sandbagging is another word for cheating. Just be honest. Do we really think any of us are going to go pro?

Oh, and you can look at my scores and know the only thing consistent about my game is its inconsistency. By the way, February 7 I had foot surgery and by the time I get back I will be back in the 100s.