

World Handicap System

The way golfers around the world will calculate their handicaps is set to be transformed by a new system developed by the USGA and The R&A, with key features designed to provide all golfers with a consistent measure of playing ability.

The new World Handicap System, to be implemented in 2020, follows an extensive review of systems administered by six existing handicapping authorities: Golf Australia, the Council of National Golf Unions (CONGU) in Great Britain and Ireland, the European Golf Association (EGA), the South African Golf Association (SAGA), the Argentine Golf Association (AAG) and the USGA.

The new system will feature the following:

- Flexibility in formats of play, allowing both competitive and recreational rounds to count for handicap purposes and ensuring that a golfer's handicap is more reflective of potential ability
- A minimal number of scores needed to obtain a new handicap; a recommendation that the number of scores needed to obtain a new handicap be 54 holes from any combination of 18-hole and 9-hole rounds, but with some discretion available for national or regional associations to set a different minimum within their own jurisdiction
- A consistent handicap that is portable from course to course and country to country through worldwide use of the USGA Course and Slope Rating System, already successfully used in more than 80 countries
- An average-based calculation of a handicap, taken from the best eight out of the last 20 scores and factoring in memory of demonstrated ability for better responsiveness and control
- A calculation that considers the impact that abnormal course and weather conditions might have on a player's performance each day
- Daily handicap revisions, taking account of the course and weather conditions calculation
- A limit of Net Double Bogey on the maximum hole score (for handicapping purposes only). Example: A Playing Handicap of 18 receives one stroke per hole for 18 holes; the player's max score is triple bogey on any hole, which equals a Net Double Bogey.
- A maximum handicap limit of 54.0, regardless of gender, to encourage more golfers to measure and track their performance to increase their enjoyment of the game.