

## What is the purpose of the Handicap System?

The purpose of the **RCGA Handicap System**<sup>®</sup> is to make the game of golf more enjoyable by enabling golfers of differing abilities to compete on an equitable basis. It also enables you to measure your golf ability and performance relative to others. The RCGA Handicap System is the best method we've found to give you the opportunity to compete fairly with any golfer, on any golf course.

The system is only as fair as the golfers who use it, however, and assumes that you will be honest, try to make the best possible score on every hole, and submit every acceptable score for peer review.

## What is an RCGA Handicap Factor?

The **RCGA Handicap Factor**<sup>®</sup> is a numerical measure of your *potential* golfing ability that enables you to compete equitably with golfers of differing ability. It travels with you wherever you play and you will usually "play to your handicap" about one in five times.

Every time you play golf, your Handicap Factor is converted to a **Course Handicap**<sup>®</sup>, which is simply your handicap adjusted for the difficulty of the course and tees played and represents the number of strokes you will receive for that round. Consult the **RCGA Course Handicap Tables** provided by your club to do the conversion.

RCGA Handicap Factors can only be calculated and issued by authorized provincial golf associations and RCGA Member golf clubs in accordance with the requirements of the RCGA Handicap System. Only RCGA Handicap Factors will be accepted for entry into RCGA or provincial golf association tournaments.

## How is an RCGA Handicap Factor calculated?

At most RCGA Member golf clubs, an RCGA Certified handicap calculation software program is in use so members can accurately calculate Handicap Factors. To ensure your software has been certified, look for the following symbol on the main screen of the software:



Your RCGA Handicap Factor is calculated by averaging the lowest 10 of your last 20 **Handicap Differentials**<sup>®</sup> (a Handicap Differential is your adjusted score minus the course rating, multiplied by 113, divided by the Slope Rating rounded to one decimal place) and then multiplying by 0.96. All digits after one decimal place are dropped.

An RCGA Handicap Factor can be calculated with less than 20 acceptable scores. When less than 20 acceptable scores are available, refer to the following chart:

Number of Acceptable Scores	Differentials To Be Used
5 or 6	Lowest 1
7 or 8	Lowest 2
9 or 10	Lowest 3
11 or 12	Lowest 4
13 or 14	Lowest 5
15 or 16	Lowest 6
17	Lowest 7
18	Lowest 8
19	Lowest 9

## Adjusting your scores for ESC

For handicapping purposes, **Equitable Stroke Control (ESC)**<sup>®</sup> sets a maximum number that a

player can post on any hole depending on your **Course Handicap**. The purpose of adjusting scores is to prevent exceptionally bad holes from artificially increasing your handicap. There is no limit to the number of holes on which you can adjust your score. Adjust your gross, or total, score downward using the following chart:

Course Handicap	Hole Limit
0 or plus .....	max 1 over par
1 through 18 .....	max 2 over par
19 through 32 .....	max 3 over par
33 and over .....	max 4 over par

For handicapping purposes, all scores, including tournament scores, are adjusted for ESC.

## How many strokes do I get?

The number of strokes you will receive or give for the round depends on the type of game played, who you are playing and the tees played.

Different types of competitions (stroke or match play, four-ball, best-ball, foursome match play, etc...) are treated differently in the interests of equity and fairness. Refer to Section 9 of the RCGA Handicap System manual for more information on the assignment of strokes and handicap allowances.

For regular matches between two players from the same tees, the higher handicapped player receives the difference between the Course Handicaps of the two players and the lower handicap player plays from scratch. For example, a player with a Course Handicap of 17 receives four strokes from a player with a Course Handicap of 13. The higher handicap player consults the score card to determine which holes he or she will receive the strokes on, indicated in the row marked "Handicap Strokes", "HDCP" or other similar designation. In this example, the strokes will be applied to the four lowest numbered handicap-stroke holes, i.e.

stroke holes 1 through 4 as indicated on the score card. These are the holes where the higher handicapped golfer most needs an additional stroke to equalize the abilities of the two players.

When you are playing a match against someone playing from a different set of tees, the golfer playing from the tees with the higher Course Rating receives extra strokes equal to the rounded-off difference between the Course Rating of the two tees played. For example, if player A plays from the forward tees with a Course Rating of 70.9 and player B plays from the middle tees with a course rating of 72.1, player B's Course Handicap increases by one stroke.

## Your responsibilities as a golfer

- ◆ Always carry an RCGA Membership card with your most current RCGA Handicap Factor certified by a club official on the reverse.
- ◆ Know your RCGA Handicap Factor so you can convert it to a Course Handicap before playing.
- ◆ Know the number of handicap strokes you are entitled to for the course and tees played.
- ◆ Legibly record your hole-by-hole scores on the score card
- ◆ Properly adjust your score for ESC before posting.
- ◆ Post a score for every acceptable round as soon as possible after completion of the round so your RCGA Handicap Factor is current.
- ◆ Contact a representative of your Handicap Committee when you have problems
- ◆ Enjoy golf

## How Course Ratings affect your Handicap

As stated earlier, a Course Handicap is your Handicap Factor adjusted for the difficulty of the course and tees played, which is indicated by the **Course Rating**<sup>®</sup> and **Slope Rating**<sup>®</sup>.

The Course Rating represents the playing difficulty of the golf course for the scratch golfer, while the Slope Rating is a measure of the difficulty for higher handicap golfers (relative to a scratch golfer). A course with a Slope Rating of 113 is considered to be of “standard”, or average, difficulty. On courses with a Slope rating below 113, players receive fewer strokes than their Handicap Factor but more strokes on courses with a Slope Rating higher than 113. Slope Ratings range from 55 to 155.

## What Scores Should I Post?

Fair handicapping is only possible when players submit full and accurate scoring information for all rounds played. Golfers should post the following scores for handicap purposes:

- ◆ Scores from 9 and 18 hole rounds, or when 13 or more holes (7 holes for 9-hole rounds) are played
- ◆ Scores made in an area during its “active season” (most provinces in Canada have an active season running from April to October. Consult your provincial golf association.)
- ◆ Scores from all forms of competition including Stroke and Match Play
- ◆ Scores made at home, away, or out-of-country on courses with a valid Course and Slope rating
- ◆ Scores made under the Rules of Golf

If you start but do not finish a hole (e.g. you picked up, were given a putt or were conceded a hole) record the score you would most likely

have made. This is the number of strokes, including penalty strokes, taken to that point plus the number of strokes it will likely take to finish the hole.

When you don't play a hole (e.g. you stop playing after 13 or more holes) record par plus any handicap strokes to which you are entitled for the remaining holes (based on your Course Handicap).

An “X” should precede the score on the score card for unfinished holes or holes not played.

## Where Can I Learn More?

To learn more about the RCGA Handicap System visit the FAQ and Handicap sections of the RCGA Web site at [www.rcga.org](http://www.rcga.org). Alternatively, you can contact representatives of your club's Handicap Committee, your provincial amateur golf association, or the RCGA.

Copies of the RCGA Handicap System manual can be purchased by calling 800-263-0009.



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## The RCGA Handicap System

### All You Need to Know

