

30-Minute WHS Presentation Notes

Slide 1 – None

Slide 2 - None

Slide 3

You can see by the map that the USGA Handicap System is the primary system being used today around the world – but there are six systems representing 15 million golfers in 80 countries who currently maintain a golf handicap. Each system aims to achieve the same thing – measure a golfer’s ability and provide equity for play – but with differing results that don’t translate very well from one to the other. Handicapping is a fragmented market right now.

A collaborative process – USGA, R&A, Council of National Golf Unions (CONGU), European Golf Association, Golf Australia, Argentine Golf, South African Golf. Each of the existing handicap authorities have representation on the World Handicap Operations Committee. Along with the World Handicap Authority, they've helped developed the new World Handicap System.

Future landscape (2020) – click for animation:

- A unified WHS will enable golfers of different ability to play and compete on a fair and equitable basis, in any format, on any course, anywhere around the world.
- So it will be portable around the world and provide a single measure worldwide for determining a player’s ability.
- When adopted, the World Handicap System will be governed by the USGA and The R&A and administered by national and multi-national associations around the world. Safeguards are included to ensure consistency as well as adaptability to differing golf cultures.

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The USGA and The R&A currently govern the game with a global set of playing rules, equipment rules, and rules of amateur status– and in 2020, another piece of the governance puzzle will be added by implementing the World Handicap System which consists of the Rules of Handicapping and the Course Rating System.

The entry form for the U.S. Amateur currently requires players applying for entry to have an up-to-date Handicap Index of 2.4 or “a handicap issued from the international body of golf that would be equivalent to a USGA Handicap Index within the prescribed limit.” However, beginning in 2020, if the limit is 2.4, the limit for everyone is 2.4.

The Course Rating System is the same system we use today, which will be implemented around the world so each golf course is rated the same way– and it’s really the foundation of the WHS that will allow handicaps to be truly universal and portable from course to course and country to country.

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Show responsibilities and hierarchy for the World Handicap System.

The USGA and The R&A

Together, the USGA and The R&A are responsible for writing and interpreting the Rules of Handicapping and the Course Rating System (based on the recommendations received from the World Handicap Operations Committee).

National Association (USGA)

An authorized National Association has the exclusive rights to implement and administer the World Handicap System within its jurisdiction, including the issuance of a Handicap Index. An authorized National Association may delegate some of its responsibilities to a Regional Golf Association – and the USGA delegates many of these responsibilities to the Allied Golf Associations.

Regional Golf Association (Allied Golf Association within the U.S)

A Regional Golf Association has specific responsibilities within the World Handicap System and may be delegated additional obligations by its National Association.

Golf Club/Handicap Committee

A Handicap Committee is established by a golf club and is responsible for ensuring compliance with the golf club's specified obligations and responsibilities under the Rules of Handicapping.

Player

A player submits scores to provide reasonable evidence of their demonstrated ability, plays by the Rules of Golf, and reviews the scores and Handicap Index of fellow players.

The full rights and responsibilities of each stakeholder are outlined in Appendix A in the Rules of Handicapping.

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The World Handicap System includes the Rules of Handicapping and the Course Rating System. Its purpose is to enable 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 recreationally, with anyone else on a fair and equal basis.

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Cap

A reduction or limit on the increase of a player's Handicap Index over a rolling 12-month period, measured against the player's Low Handicap Index within that period of time. There are two forms of cap:

Soft cap – a reduction in the rate of upward movement of a Handicap Index

Hard cap – a maximum limit on the upward movement of a Handicap Index.

Playing Conditions Calculation (PCC)

A procedure used to evaluate if course and/or weather conditions on the day of play deviate from normal playing conditions to the extent that they have a significant impact on players' performance.

Low Handicap Index

The lowest *Handicap Index* achieved by a player during the 12-month period preceding the most recent score on their *scoring record* (see Rule 5.7). This is used in the calculation to see if a cap must be applied.

Exceptional Score Reduction

A *score differential* which is at least 7.0 strokes better than the player's *Handicap Index* at the time the round was played (see Rule 5.9).

Net Double Bogey

Replaces ESC and sets a maximum score for a hole based on the par and the strokes given or received.

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The Course Rating System is what will allow a Handicap Index to be portable from course to course and country to country under the World Handicap System. Golf courses are rated in the US by Allied Golf Associations.

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Currently, the USGA Handicap System requires five 18-hole scores before a player can be issued a Handicap Index.

An overarching theme of the World Handicap System is to become more inclusive – and this feature will hopefully encourage golfers who only play sporadically to establish and maintain a Handicap Index.

It will be strongly recommended that a player's initial three scores should be submitted hole-by-hole to enable clubs to better assess the player's potential.

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Although the current number of golfers in the U.S. that are at or above the current maximums of 36.4 and 40.4 is relatively small, many golfers who currently play but don't have a handicap would be at or above those numbers

By encouraging more novice golfers to get a Handicap Index and learn about the WHS, we can incentivize golfers to improve their games and utilize pace of play provisions such as picking up at their maximum score.

It's important to note that clubs will still have the discretion to implement a lower maximum limit for certain competitions through a condition of the competition. Committee's will also be able to restrict Course/Playing Handicaps to 54.

Once again, this is in an effort to be more inclusive and welcoming to all golfers – and to increase the number of golfers with a Handicap Index.

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This is the most significant change for golfers in the U.S. Under the USGA Handicap System, Course Handicap represented the number of strokes needed to play to the Course Rating for the tees being played. The benchmark is now par, which may be intuitive to many, but will generate questions starting in January 2020 because golfers' Course Handicaps will change as a result of the new calculation.

By applying a Course Rating minus Par adjustment, the process for setting up multi-tee events will be simplified – as this will eliminate the Section 3-5 adjustment. There is often confusion that comes along with the 3-5 adjustment, so this will be a welcomed change for many golfers out there.

AGAs will have the responsibility of adjudicating par – since par will be used in the Course Handicap calculation and impact the score posted for Net Double Bogey and Net Par.

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Note animation next to player: $15 \times .85 = 13$

There will need to be an adjustment when players compete from tees where Par is different – but this will happen much less frequently than players competing from tees with a different Course Rating.

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This presents a significant change to golfers in the U.S., where we are moving from the current Equitable Stroke Control procedure to Net Double Bogey. The principle is the same, but the procedure is different.

While significant in the U.S., it is not a change for most of the rest of the world – because many parts of the world use Stableford scoring. Net Double Bogey is the equivalent to zero points in Net Stableford.

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Read through the example.

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The procedure for posting a score for a hole not played remains the same with a new name. Par plus is now called net par.

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This does not present a change for golfers in the U.S.

Note that 9-hole scores are combined in the order they are received.

The minimum number of holes required for an 18-hole score will be 14, rather than the current number of 13 which presents minimal change.

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Emphasize the importance of posting as soon as possible after play. This will ensure the accuracy of a player's Handicap Index on the next day and allow for the score to contribute to the data pool which determines if an adjustment for abnormal playing conditions should be made.

More on the Playing Conditions Calculation will be covered later in the presentation.

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Overall, there are five significant changes to the Handicap Index calculation that you'll see in 2020. We'll get into each one individually, but keep in mind that the overall goal of the calculation is to be inclusive, modern and consistent – all while making the lives of handicap committees and golf administrators a little easier.

- Minimum number of scores required to get a handicap – three 18-hole scores.
- Using 8 differentials out of 20 to calculate the Handicap Index.
- The introduction of a Playing Conditions Calculation to account for variations in weather and course set up.
- There's a new Exceptional Score Reduction that looks at all posted scores.
- Lastly, the introduction of a Soft Cap and Hard cap to limit extreme upward movement of a Handicap Index.

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While we are being more inclusive to new golfers by reducing the minimal number of scores from 5 to 3, a third column was added that includes a downward adjustment. This happens when there are 3, 4, or 6 scores in a player's scoring record. The adjustment reappears at 6 because that's when an average of the lowest two scores is used.

This is done for a couple reasons:

First, with limited scoring information available, a downward adjustment is necessary to project the player's ability. A player typically plays to their ability one out of every five rounds. When only three scores exist, it's possible that the player hasn't yet played to their potential. Second, the adjustment takes place as a safeguard. We're using less data to calculate the player's Handicap Index, so we want to be sure to protect the field whose handicaps are calculated using a more robust scoring record.

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So how will a score differential be calculated under the WHS?

Many of the same parts are still used: Slope Rating, Adjusted Gross Score, Course Rating™, and the standard Slope Rating® of 113 – but the Playing Conditions Calculation has been included in the formula.

We'll get into PCC in detail in a little bit – but if there is no PCC on a given day – the adjustment will be zero – and this should be the case on most days.

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We'll be reducing the number of score differentials that are used in the handicap calculation – by moving from a 10 best out of 20 system that includes a 96% bonus for excellence to an 8 best of 20 system in 2020.

An 8 of 20 system, which rounds to the nearest tenth, will allow for greater responsiveness to good scores and will eliminate the need for a bonus for excellence– which is often difficult to explain and confuses people on how the calculation works. Considering higher handicap players typically have more fluctuation within their scoring records, using 8 of 20 will allow their best scores to weigh more heavily and create for more equity throughout the full range of handicaps.

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Golf is an outdoor sport, and sometimes playing conditions can cause scores to be abnormally high or low on a given day. A score of 80 on a rainy, windy day or on a day where the course is set up more difficult than normal may be more impressive than a 79 on a calm day with normal course conditions.

The PCC will account for this and adjust Score Differentials to better reflect the player's actual performance. Any adjustment will be clearly identified in the player's scoring record for transparency. As noted on the slide, adjustments will be applied conservatively and will be in integer values; you won't see an adjustment of +1.45.

The calculation will be automatic through the computation service. Also, the calculation will be purely data driven. The more posted scores which are above or below what is expected based on Course/Slope Ratings and Handicap Index of players, the more likely an adjustment will take place.

This feature is one of the more modern features of the system.

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The Exceptional Score Reduction (ESR) is a procedure that will essentially replace the current 10-3 reduction process and will simplify the automatic reduction altogether.

ESR considers all scores, rather than just tournament scores, so that any time a player demonstrates ability that is significantly better than their Index suggests, a simple automatic adjustment is made.

If a player posts a score that produces a *Score Differential* 7.0 strokes or better than their *Handicap Index* at the time the score was submitted, an automatic adjustment is made using the displayed table.

When an Exceptional Score is posted, a -1 or -2 adjustment will be applied to each of the previous 20 *Score Differentials* in a player's *scoring record*. The net result will be a 1.0 or 2.0 stroke reduction in their *Handicap Index*. Also note that, while not expected to be common, multiple ESR adjustments in the *scoring record* will be cumulative.

Subsequent scores posted will not contain the -1 or -2 adjustment, which allows the impact of the *ESR* to diminish as new scores are posted.

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A Low Handicap Index is established once a player has at least 20 acceptable scores in their scoring record. It is re-evaluated every time a new acceptable score is submitted.

Where a Committee applied adjustment increases the Handicap Index, the Low Handicap Index should be set at that level to prevent the golfer from receiving a soft or hard cap which will be covered shortly.

Where a Committee applied adjustment reduces a player's Handicap Index, the adjusted Handicap Index resets the Low Handicap Index at that level unless a lower Handicap Index is still eligible.

A player's scoring record must display their Low Handicap Index.

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The soft cap and hard cap will be implemented to ensure that a temporary loss of form does not cause a player's Handicap Index to move too far from a level consistent with their demonstrated ability; i.e. their Low Handicap Index.

The caps also serve as anti-abuse safeguards and will aid in minimizing the potential for handicap manipulation. The Handicap Committee at the club will still play a key role and have the ability to allow a player's Handicap Index to exceed the hard cap if special circumstances such as an injury exist.

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It's referred to as daily revisions – but we want to make it clear that a revision only takes place after a day where a player posts a score, or a Committee adjustment was applied.

Revisions will take place at midnight following the submission of a score.

This is not a real-time revision. In other words, if someone plays twice in one day, their Handicap Index will still only update once on the following day.

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This is not change for golf clubs or golfers in the U.S. Penalty scores can either be equal to the highest or lowest score differential in the scoring record, determined by the Handicap Committee and on a case-by-case basis.

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We'll now go through the role of the Committee in charge of the competition.

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The Competition Committee determines who is eligible to compete as well as the handicap a player may use for their event.

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Go through example.

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The AGA will be active in adjudicating questions of hole par.

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Using Course Rating data provides an objective method and allows for a more consistent allocation table. It will be able to accommodate both match and stroke play competitions.

Each set of tees will produce independent rankings, but it's recommended, as it is today, that each course has one stroke allocation based on the tees played most often by each gender.

The recommendation will be to make sure that the #1 and #2 stroke holes are in the middle cluster– so they don't come in to play too early or too late.

This recommended allocation will be given to clubs when they are rated by an AGA.

The final allocation will still ultimately be determined by the Handicap Committee at the club.

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This is not a change for facilities in the U.S. – but a good reminder for clubs to contact the AGA when they are considering making changes.

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Slide 41 – None