

Minthis Hills Committee

The EGA Handicap System (European Golf Association: www.ega-golf.ch)

This information sheet should tell you most of what you need to know about handicaps. e.g. how to obtain one, how to keep it current, what the disadvantages are of not keeping it up to date etc.

The purpose of the EGA Handicap System is to enable golfers of differing abilities, men and ladies alike, to take part in various forms of competitions on as equitable and fair a basis as possible.

Handicapping is not an exact science but rather a statistical approximation of playing ability in time. The accuracy of the handicap relies heavily on the number of scores returned within a specified time frame. The higher the number of scores the better the confidence that the handicap reflects the player's ability. In fact the biggest problem in maintaining a representative handicap is the number of scores presented for handicap adjustment. This applies particularly where a player presents fewer than ten scores for handicap consideration.

The EGA Handicap System is based on the following two fundamental principles:

- Every player will endeavour to make the best score he can at each hole during a qualifying round.
- Every player will return a sufficient number of scores to provide reasonable evidence of his/her playing standard. The EGA has accepted four scores per year as a minimum requirement. However, every score above that minimum will improve the accuracy of the handicap substantially.

One of the obligations of a player is to endeavour to comply with the intent and purpose of the fundamental principles of the EGA Handicap System at all times.

If you join Minthis Hills and already have a handicap from another golf club, then, depending on how long ago that handicap was last validated, you should be able to obtain an EGA handicap more or less straight away. If your old handicap was an EGA or USGA one the new handicap will be the same; if it was a CONGU handicap your new EGA handicap will be based on that plus the result of three games played under handicap conditions.

If you do not have a handicap from another club, or if it is out-of-date, you will have to play three games of golf under handicap conditions, have your scorecard marked by a player who does have an EGA handicap and hand each of these scorecards in to the Pro-Shop, for the attention of the Club Professional. He will then use these scores as the basis for allocating you an EGA exact handicap. Before you commence these rounds you must inform the Pro-Shop of your intention to submit the scorecard for handicap purposes, as with an extra day card (see later).

Once you have a handicap the best way to keep it current is to play in the qualifying medal and stableford competitions each month. If you play sufficiently well to exceed your "buffer zone" (this varies according to handicap category) your handicap will be reduced, if you play within your stableford buffer zone it will stay the same, if you play worse than this your handicap will increase by 0.1 (or 0.2 for high handicap players). Depending on how many people play within or better than their buffer zone in a particular competition the buffer zones may change for that competition.

Handicap Category	Exact Handicap	Buffer Zone Stableford	Below BZ Add:	Above BZ Subtract:
1	Plus – 4.4	35 – 36	0.1	0.1 x diff
2	4.5 – 11.4	34 – 36	0.1	0.2 x diff
3	11.5 – 18.4	33 – 36	0.1	0.3 x diff
4	18.5 – 26.4	32 – 36	0.1	0.4 x diff
5	26.5 – 36.0	31 – 36	0.1	0.5 x diff
6	37.0 – 54.0	none	none	1.0 x diff

If for some reason you cannot (or do not wish to) play in the qualifying competitions, then there is the option of "Extra Day Scores/Cards", which is the subject of the next section.

EXTRA DAY SCORES

Each year, usually in January, there is an “Annual Handicap Review” (AHR) at which all of the qualifying scores for each of the Minthis Hills members since the previous AHR are analysed and the player's handicap is adjusted accordingly. If fewer than 4 qualifying scores are returned in the period between AHRs the handicap will automatically become inactive. The consequences of this are:

- The player will be ineligible to enter the coming year's knockout competitions;
- The player will be ineligible to enter CGF competitions and probably competitions run by other clubs;
- The player will be ineligible to win a net prize in any competition, this includes a score based on stableford scoring;
- If the player enters a team “fun” competition (e.g. a “Texas Scramble”) that team will be ineligible to win a net prize.

The handicap committee is conscious of the fact that, while there are a large number of competitions throughout the year that are qualifying for handicapping purposes, some players struggle to return a sufficient number of scores to maintain a handicap that reflects their playing standard. This may be due to: injury or illness; work or family commitments preventing participation in competitions; difficulty in playing at certain times or on specific days; a declining desire to play regular competition golf.

The system of Extra Day Scores/Cards (EDS) has been designed to provide a format to supplement scores from qualifying competitions for handicapping purposes and is intended to augment the sometimes sparse information from competition golf and to enable every player to meet their obligation to return a sufficient number of scores to provide reasonable evidence of their playing standard.

Up to twice a month a player can partake in a social game of golf with friends, without the pressures and time constraints of a formal competition, and put forward their stableford score in that game as a qualifying score for handicap purposes. There are some provisos however, which are:

- Before the game you must ask in the Pro-shop for the “Extra Day Score” book and sign it to agree that the card will be handed in after the game for David McKibben, the Club Professional, to input into the EGA handicapping system;
- You must play the game strictly according to the R&A Rules of Golf for a stableford competition, e.g. no “gimmes”, no accepting advice on how to play a shot or make a putt, no rolling the ball out of a divot on the fairway etc.;
- You must have your card properly marked and signed, both by the marker, who must have a current EGA handicap and yourself. The gross score on each hole must be recorded, if it is a stableford “blob” then you may indicate the gross score by a minus (“-”) sign;
- You must hand in your card (for the attention of of the Club Professional) at the end of the round, no matter how you played. If it is not handed in it will be deemed to be a “No Return”. Hopefully you played better than your current handicap, in which case it will be adjusted down, but if unfortunately you played worse by more than your buffer zone you will be adjusted upwards.

The committee hopes that by pointing out this additional way of returning scores that qualify for handicapping purposes players will make use of it to satisfy their obligation to provide reasonable evidence for their playing standard.

PLAYING HANDICAP

Introduction

One of the main differences between the EGA handicapping system and CONGU, which is used in the UK, is that with EGA your playing handicap changes according to how difficult the course is rated from the tees selected, whereas with CONGU your playing handicap is the same no matter which course you play. In general, the par for a course has no bearing on how difficult that course is. Competing on an easy PAR 72 municipal course in the UK a 17.5 handicapper will receive 18 strokes, exactly the same number he would receive playing a much more difficult course, such as The Old Course at St. Andrews.

Course and Stroke Rating

The EGA has adopted the USGA Course Rating System. The Course Rating (CR) is a measure for the playing difficulty for a “scratch player”, whereas the Slope Rating (SR) measures the playing difficulty for a “bogey player” relative to a “scratch player”. The playing handicap is computed using these two indices thus equalising the difference in playing difficulty and making scores from different courses and from different tees comparable.

For the purpose of course rating, a male “scratch player”, is defined as a player with a scratch handicap who hits his drive 250 yards and can reach a 470-yard hole in two shots, while a lady “scratch player” has a scratch handicap, can hit her drive 210 yards and can reach a 400-yard hole in two shots.

A male “bogey player” is defined as a player with an exact handicap of 17.5 to 22.4 who, under normal situations can hit his tee shot 200 yards and can reach a 370-yard hole in two shots. A lady “bogey golfer” has an exact handicap of 21.5 to 26.4, can hit her tee shot 150 yards and can reach a 280-yard hole in two shots.

The rating indices for the three tees at Minthis Hills are:

TEES	PAR	CR	SR
RED	71	71.6	119
YELLOW	71	68.4	121
WHITE	71	70.9	123

Calculation of Playing Handicap

By comparing the Course Ratings (CR) it is obvious that a scratch lady golfer playing from the Red tees would find the course more difficult to play than a scratch male golfer playing from the Yellow tees, since she would on average take 71.6 strokes, while he would go round on average in 68.4 strokes, a difference of 3.2 strokes. However, the EGA Playing Handicap Formula takes care of this. The formula is:

$$\text{PLAYING HANDICAP} = \text{EXACT EGA HANDICAP} \times (\text{SR} / 113) + (\text{CR} - \text{PAR})$$

This would mean that the lady would have a playing handicap of 0.6 (rounded to 1), while the man would have a playing handicap of -2.6 (rounded to -3).

It is not necessary to remember this formula to calculate your playing handicap as you go from course to course, since each golf club should display the EGA Playing Handicap Tables for each set of tees on their course, so that you can easily look-up your playing handicap given your EGA Exact Handicap.

Your Golf Committee