

EGA

European Golf Association

HANDICAP SYSTEM

2016 – 2019




ROLEX

EGGA

European Golf Association

Handicap System

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(this version supersedes all previous versions)

EGA

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This is the fourth edition of the EGA Handicap System, since its inception in 2000. The EGA Handicapping and Course Rating Committee is delighted to present a revised System, which clearly recognizes the handicapping traditions of Europe, but also looks to the future by addressing the handicapping demands of a golfing population that is becoming increasingly diverse. The revised system seeks uniformity where this is considered essential for the integrity of European handicapping, but at the same time acknowledges that the varied golfing cultures within the EGA must be allowed to operate as independently as possible. For this reason, this edition of the EGA Handicap System gives the national associations considerable scope for “configuration” of the main features, ensuring that the system provides them with the means to grow the game of golf, add to the enjoyment of playing, and to cater to the needs of different player profiles.

Handicap Committee members and others who refer to this manual will notice that there are few changes in form from the previous version – the structure of the book and the presentation of the clauses has served our purpose well in the past and will continue to do so. The core elements of the system also remain substantially unchanged; USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating; an incremental handicap algorithm; a modified version of CBA; buffer zones; handicap categories; procedures for reviewing players’ handicaps for the purpose of ensuring accuracy (also improved). However, there are significantly extended discretionary powers given to national associations which will allow them to determine how, and to what extent, these core elements are allowed to interact with each other and with other aspects of the system. This represents a significant change in basic principle, but one that we believe is necessary in a modern handicap system.

The extensive work leading up to the 2016-2019 edition of the EGA Handicap System is very much a collaborative effort, reflecting a continued, and very successful, process of evolution and innovation through consultation between the EGA and you, the 37 national associations that have implemented and utilised the system. It is with fond memories and gratitude that we look back at the Committee’s interactions with players, officials and handicappers – at the many letters, e-mail correspondence and intense discussions we have had over the past years. We sincerely hope that this edition of the EGA Handicap System will serve you and the golfers in your country in the best possible way.

On behalf of the EGA Handicapping and Course Rating Committee,



Hans Malmström
Chairman

This is a general overview of principal changes and does not include wording alterations.

Manual Structure

The number of Appendices has been reduced and the manual content is complemented with online information regarding decisions and revised technical procedures such as the handicap review and CBA.

Parts 1 – 3

- EGA Handicap designation: term “exact” removed (Definitions).
- CBA: added discretion for national associations to suspend the application of CBA for all or certain handicap categories, and to permit this discretion to be applied by affiliated clubs on an individual competition basis (Clauses 3.1.11, 3.7.9).
- Handicap eligibility restrictions: discretion for national associations and/or affiliated clubs to impose eligibility restrictions for competition entry based on an EGA Handicap, removing mandatory designation (active/inactive) (Clauses 3.1.18, 3.3.3).
- 9-hole qualifying scores: extended to handicap category 2, added possibility to play more than one 9-hole qualifying competition per day (Clause 3.6.1 c.).
- EGA Playing Handicap Formula: added handicap category 6 playing handicap formula for 18 and 9-hole rounds (Section 3.9).
- Maximum EGA Handicap: maximum EGA Handicap changed to 54 (Clause 3.11.2).
- Handicap categories: added handicap category 6, in substitution of Club handicap (Clause 3.12.6).
- Handicap increases: 0.1-increase extended to handicap category 5 (Clause 3.12.6).
- Initial handicap allotment: number of scores required for handicap allotment reduced; changed procedures to accommodate new handicap category 6 (Section 3.11).
- Handicap review and general play: extended discretion to handicap committees (Sections 3.15, 3.16).

System Options

- System configuration options: discretion for national associations to configure the system (Appendix Z).
- Discretionary options: extended discretion for national associations regarding CBA, 9-hole qualifying scores, and EDS (Clauses 3.1.11, 3.7.9, 3.6.1, 3.8.4).

Gender

Throughout the manual, reference to the masculine gender includes the feminine unless stated otherwise.

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents lists the principal elements of the EGA Handicap System 2016-2019 and provides an outline for how the manual is structured. Most of the time, it should be possible to identify the relevant section simply by reference to the Table of Contents.

Know the Definitions

Whenever a word or expression is used that is defined in Part 1, the word or expression is printed in italics. A good knowledge of the defined terms is necessary for the correct application and interpretation of the EGA Handicap System.

Understand the Words

The EGA Handicap System 2016-2019 is written in a deliberate fashion. Please note the following differences in word use:

“may” = option

“should” = strong recommendation

“must” = instruction/obligation

Supplementary Information

In order to provide enhanced explanation and understanding and to facilitate correct application of the EGA Handicap System, certain sections in the manual have been supplemented with explanatory text (Explanatory Notes - EN) and advisory text (Guidance Notes - GN). Such supplementary information is separated from the rest of the text to mark its special status.

The EGA Handicap System 2016-2019 is further complemented with online information available from the European Golf Association www.ega-golf.ch

Delegations and Optional Clauses

Certain aspects of the EGA Handicap System are optional or can be implemented at the discretion of the national association. This is further detailed in Appendix Z.

(IV) EGA HANDICAP POLICY

The EGA is the governing authority of the EGA Handicap System. The EGA Executive Committee has delegated the task to develop, maintain and monitor the correct application of the EGA Handicap System to the EGA Handicapping & Course Rating Committee.

Purpose

The purpose of the EGA Handicap System is to:

- enable as many golf players as possible, men and women, to obtain a handicap;
- achieve equity and uniformity of handicapping throughout Europe;
- incorporate flexibility in order to accommodate diverse golfing cultures;
- produce fair handicaps that reflect the scoring potential of the players and enable players of differing abilities to take part in various forms of competitions on a fair and equitable basis;
- provide flexibility in returning scores from multiple forms of play (as recognized by the EGA Handicap System), i.e. 9 or 18 holes, qualifying competitions and qualifying rounds, under conditions that truly reflect the player's scoring ability;
- provide portability of handicaps from course to course, as well as from one set of tees to another on the same course;
- provide playing handicaps that are adjusted in relation to the relative playing difficulty (Course and Slope Rating) of the course being played;
- enable players to monitor their own golfing development over time; and
- aim for a balance between precision and flexibility of implementation, for players and administrators.

Application

In order to maintain supervision of golf handicaps, the system may only be used for members of a club affiliated to an EGA Handicap System-licensed national association, or individual players registered to a national association. The system is subject to quadrennial review, and only the current version may be implemented.

Rights and Obligations

The European Golf Association (EGA) has overall jurisdiction over the administration of the EGA Handicap System in Europe. The EGA has delegated the jurisdiction for the administration of the EGA Handicap System within a country to the national association. A national association must obtain a renewable license agreement from the EGA in order to use the EGA Handicap System and must ensure the integrity of the EGA Handicaps issued under its jurisdiction. The EGA may withdraw the licence if, in its opinion, a national association fails to comply with the obligations and regulations of the system.

Policies of national associations and affiliated clubs issuing EGA Handicaps must be consistent with the fundamental principles and regulations of the EGA Handicap System and the Rules of Golf as approved by R&A Rules Limited.

In order to achieve uniformity in the application of the EGA Handicap System, a national association may not amend the regulations of the system other than as provided by the specific options in some clauses in Part 3, and as provided by Appendix Z. Handicaps issued by a national association, or an affiliated club, not in full accordance with the EGA Handicap System, may not be called "EGA Handicaps" and may not be identified as such on handicap cards or elsewhere. The EGA Handicapping & Course Rating Committee has the right to obtain any information related to handicapping from a national association at any time.

Translation, Trademark and Legal

Only national associations holding a license from the EGA are permitted to translate the EGA Handicap System from English into their own language. The translation must, in all respects, communicate and acknowledge the underlying principles and purposes of the EGA Handicap System. The system in its translated form must be called "EGA Handicap System" and the handicaps must be called "EGA Handicaps".

In other respects, the translation does not need to be literal and the national association may use the terminology that is commonly used in its own country. In the interest of manifest uniformity, the numbering of parts, sections and clauses must be maintained. However, a national association may provide detail under particular sections exercising its right to choose options in the system in the form of a specific regulation in the existing note(s) or in additional notes at their discretion. National associations must send a copy of its translation to the EGA for reference purposes, and must provide the EGA with documentation detailing the discretions exercised under the system (see in particular Appendix Z). National associations must also obtain written authorization from the United States Golf Association (USGA) in order to use the USGA Course Rating System.

The term "EGA Handicap System" is a registered trademark owned by the EGA in several countries, as listed on the EGA website www.ega-golf.ch, under reference EGA Handicap System Licence Holders. Organisations that are not authorised national associations or area authorities, clubs that are not affiliated clubs and individual golf players who are not members of an affiliated club or, for handicapping purposes, not registered by a national association, may not use this trademark or any part of the EGA Handicap System, except that they may provide products or services to authorised national associations, area authorities or affiliated clubs for the limited purpose of applying the EGA Handicap System.

This section sets out the basic principles of the EGA Handicap System and provides the overall context of implementation.

Purpose

The main purpose of a handicapping system is to enable golf players of differing abilities, men and women alike, to compete on a fair and equitable basis, whilst enabling players to monitor their own golfing development over time. All handicapping systems establish and maintain a measure of playing ability, expressed as the number of strokes that the player is entitled to use to adjust his gross score.

Scores

All handicaps relate to, and are derived from, a player's current and historical scores. The player's round-by-round scores returned over time are used to adjust that handicap. A handicap based on many recent scores is typically more reliable as a reflection of a player's playing ability than a handicap based on fewer or dated scores.

Even for a correctly handicapped player, scores will be spread over a range distributed about the mean. Generally, the lower the handicap, the smaller will be the difference between best and worst scores and the tighter the distribution about the mean score. Typically, as handicaps increase, the mean gross score increases, as does the spread of the scores around the mean.

Handicap

The category structure of the EGA Handicap System reflects different scoring profiles. The frequency with which players play to their handicap or better is not the same across the handicap range; this is one fundamental way in which the system provides equity for all players. For example, it is likely that a handicap category 1-player plays to, or better, than his handicap in about 35% of rounds, whereas a correctly handicapped category 4-player would achieve handicap, or better, performance in only about 10% of rounds. An improving player will play better than his handicap more frequently than a correctly handicapped established player of the same handicap, until such time as his scoring profile becomes the same as others with a similar handicap. Likewise, an opposite pattern would be observed with a player whose general performance is declining.

Measurement of Performance

Measurement of performance against a standard is fundamental to establishing an EGA Handicap. Scores are made on golf courses under varying conditions. Golf courses may be situated in many different geographical areas and their designs differ substantially. It follows that one course may be more difficult than another and that scores must be adjusted to reflect this before being used to measure player performance.

The USGA Course Rating System provides the necessary standard and is the main adjustment mechanism in place. The system measures the difficulty of a golf course under normal conditions for scratch and bogey players, providing a USGA Course and Slope Rating respectively. A second adjustment mechanism is available to account for exceptional weather and course conditions that vary significantly from normal; this is the Computed Buffer Adjustment (CBA).

Course and Slope Rating

In order to calibrate the characteristics of a golf course, the EGA Handicap System has adopted the USGA Course Rating System. The Course Rating (CR) is a measure of the playing difficulty for a scratch player whereas the Slope Rating (SR) measures the playing difficulty for the bogey player relative to the scratch player. The playing handicap is computed by means of the CR and SR, thus equalising the difference in playing difficulty and making scores from different courses comparable. This feature makes handicaps portable across all of the national associations that have adopted the EGA Handicap System and from one set of tees to another on the same course.

Computed Buffer Adjustment

The USGA Course Rating Manual states: "The USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating must reflect conditions normal for the season(s) when most rounds are played". However, sometimes rounds are played when neither the weather nor the course conditions are normal and yet, within the EGA Handicap System, these rounds directly affect handicaps. The Computed Buffer Adjustment (CBA) calculation has been developed to determine those occasions when the conditions deviate so far from normal that, for handicapping purposes, an adjustment must be made to compensate.

Handicap Review and General Play

Handicapping is not an exact science, but rather a statistical approximation of playing ability over a time frame. The system is robust for players with stable handicaps who return scores on a regular basis. However, as this may be true for only a section of the golfing population in any given national association, the Handicap System includes two features designed to safeguard proper handicapping of players: the Handicap Review (typically available in categories 1 – 5, with some discretions granted to the national association) and General Play adjustment. The former allows the handicap committee to conduct a review of handicaps, at least annually, and make decisions regarding the application of any recommended handicap adjustment. The latter is a feature that may be used at the committee's discretion in the period between handicap reviews in cases where a handicap review has not been requested or is not possible for some reason.

Fundamental Principles

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

- Every player will endeavour to make the best score he can at each hole during a qualifying round.
- Every player will return as many qualifying scores per year as possible, to provide reasonable evidence of his playing ability.
- Every affiliated club or handicapping authority will provide conditions for players to return qualifying scores, either in qualifying competitions, or as Extra Day Scores, and maintain the handicaps, strictly in accordance with the system.

The objective of the system is to produce handicaps that are portable not only from club to club, but also from national association to national association. This can best be achieved if all parties – national association, affiliated clubs, and players – honour their obligations to the best of their knowledge and ability.

THE EGA HANDICAP SYSTEM

Throughout the EGA Handicap System, whenever a word or expression is used that is defined within the definitions section, the word or expression is printed in italics. The definitions are arranged in alphabetical order. For definitions in relation to the USGA Course Rating System, see: www.usga.org.

Affiliated Club

An “*affiliated club*” is a golf club affiliated to a *national association*, *area authority* or to any other organisation affiliated to or recognised by the *national association* or *area authority* as a *handicapping authority*.

Note: No body other than an *affiliated club*, an *area authority*, or a *national association* may administer the *EGA Handicap System*.

Area Authority

An “*area authority*” is an authority appointed by a *national association* to act on behalf of that *national association* for the purposes of the *EGA Handicap System* within a specified geographic area.

Bogey Golfer

A “*bogey golfer*” is a player who can play to the *Bogey Rating* from any set of tees. For handicapping purposes, it is defined as a player with an *EGA Handicap* of approximately 20 (male) or 24 (female).

Bogey Rating

The “*Bogey Rating*” (*BR*) is the *USGA* designation that indicates the evaluation of the playing difficulty of a course for *bogey golfers* under normal course and weather conditions. It is expressed as strokes taken to one decimal place, and is based on the extent to which yardage and other obstacles can affect the scoring ability of a *bogey golfer*.

Buffer Zone

The “*buffer zone*” is the range of *Stableford* scores within which the player’s *EGA Handicap* remains unchanged. A *Stableford* score is within a player’s *buffer zone* when it is within the following ranges for his *handicap category* (without *computed buffer adjustment*):

Handicap Category	Buffer Zone (Stableford points)	
	18-hole Scores	9-hole Scores
1	35 – 36	not applicable
2	34 – 36	35 – 36
3	33 – 36	35 – 36
4	32 – 36	34 – 36
5	31 – 36	33 – 36
6	-	-

Note 1: *Buffer zones* for 9-hole scores are different from *buffer zones* for 18-hole scores in order to make them comparable for handicapping purposes.

Note 2: Special provisions may apply for the *buffer zones* of *handicap categories* 4 and 5, at the discretion of the *national association* (see Appendix Z).

Computed Buffer Adjustment (CBA)

The “*computed buffer adjustment*” (*CBA*) is an additional adjustment factor to account for other than normal playing conditions; *CBA* is applied to the *buffer zone* of a player’s *handicap category* following each round of a *qualifying competition*.

Note 1: The *CBA* (if applicable, see Appendix Z) is calculated for handicapping purposes by following the procedure set out in the online *CBA Appendix*.

Note 2: A *CBA* is not calculated for a 9-hole qualifying competition or *EDS*.

Course Rating; USGA Course Rating

The “*Course Rating*” (*CR*) is the designation that indicates the evaluation of the playing difficulty of a course for *scratch golfers* under normal course and weather conditions. It is expressed as strokes taken to one decimal place, and is based on the extent to which yardage and other obstacles can affect the scoring ability of a *scratch golfer*.

Distance Point

A “*distance point*” is the point on a tee from which the length of the hole is measured and it must be indicated by a visible and permanent marker. Unless otherwise specified by the *national association*, the *distance point* should be placed centrally, but at least four metres from the back of the tee.

EGA

“*European Golf Association*”

EGA Handicap

An “*EGA Handicap*” is an index issued under the jurisdiction of a *national association* and attained and adjusted in accordance with the provisions of the *EGA Handicap System*. The *EGA Handicap* is the *EGA*’s designation of the relative golfing ability of a player, on a course of standard relative playing difficulty (*Slope Rating* of 113). It is expressed as a number taken to one decimal place, for *handicap categories* 1 – 5, and as a whole number in *handicap category* 6, to a maximum value of 54.

EGA Handicap System

The “*EGA Handicap System*” is the method approved by the *EGA* to evaluate the scoring potential of golf players and to enable players of differing abilities to take part in various forms of competitions on a fair and equitable basis.

EGA Handicapping & Course Rating Committee (HCRC)

The “*EGA Handicapping and Course Rating Committee*” is the body appointed by the *EGA Executive Committee* to develop, maintain and monitor the correct application of the *EGA Handicap System* for the *national associations* affiliated to the *EGA*.

EGA Playing Handicap (= Playing Handicap)

The “*EGA Playing Handicap*” is the number of *handicap strokes* a player receives for a specific set of tees at the course being played. The *playing handicap* is calculated from the *EGA Handicap* using the *EGA Playing Handicap Formula* or as indicated in the *playing handicap table*.

The *playing handicap* is expressed as a whole number (0.5 rounds upwards, “plus” 0.5 rounds upwards to scratch, and “plus” 1.5 to “plus” 1).

Note 1: A player with a “plus” *playing handicap* gives *handicap strokes* to the course, commencing at stroke index 18.

Note 2: The *playing handicap* is considered to be the handicap referred to in Rule 6-2 of the Rules of Golf.

EGA Playing Handicap Differential (= Playing Handicap Differential) (New)

The “EGA Playing Handicap Differential” is used in the EGA Playing Handicap Formula for handicap category 6. For 18 holes, it is calculated as the *playing handicap* for an EGA Handicap of 36.0 at the course being played, minus 36. For 9 holes, it is calculated as the *playing handicap* for an EGA Handicap of 36.0 at the 9 holes being played, minus 18.

Example:

According to the EGA Playing Handicap Table, a player with an EGA Handicap of 36.0, playing 18 holes from a designated set of tees, has a *playing handicap* of 39. The EGA Playing Handicap Differential when playing from that set of tees is: $39 - 36 = 3$.

EGA Playing Handicap Formula (= Playing Handicap Formula)

An “EGA Playing Handicap Formula” converts EGA Handicaps into *playing handicaps*.

The EGA Playing Handicap Formula for handicap categories 1 – 5 is:

$$\text{Playing HCP}_{\text{CAT 1-5}} = \text{EGA HCP} \times \frac{\text{SR}}{113} + (\text{CR} - \text{PAR})$$

Note: “Plus” handicaps must be expressed as negative values.

The EGA Playing Handicap Formula for handicap category 6 is:

$$\text{Playing HCP}_{\text{CAT 6}} = \text{EGA HCP} + \text{Playing HCP Differential}$$

A handicap category 6 EGA Playing Handicap is determined by adding the EGA Playing Handicap Differential of the set of tees being played to a player’s EGA Handicap, taking gender into account.

Example:

The EGA Playing Handicap Differential from a designated set of tees is 3 for men and 5 for women.

Amen’s EGA Handicap of 38 converts to an EGA Playing Handicap of 41 ($= 38 + 3$). A women’s EGA Handicap of 41 converts to an EGA Playing Handicap of 46 ($= 41 + 5$).

EGA Playing Handicap Table (= Playing Handicap Table)

An “EGA Playing Handicap Table” is a table used for converting an EGA Handicap to a *playing handicap* based on the Course Rating, Slope Rating, and Par for a specific set of tees.

Extra Day Score (EDS)

An “extra day score” (EDS) is a Stableford score returned under *handicap conditions*, other than in a *qualifying competition*, in accordance with the specifications set out in Section 3.8.

General Play

“General play” is a procedure to adjust the player’s EGA Handicap other than resulting from a *qualifying score* in the period between *handicap reviews* to take account of a significant change in playing performance.

Handicap Allowance

A “handicap allowance” is the number of *handicap strokes* a player receives in a handicap competition. It is the percentage of the *playing handicap* determined by the Committee.

Note 1: A player with a “plus” *playing handicap* gives *handicap strokes* to the course, commencing at stroke index 18.

Note 2: *Handicap allowances* vary for different forms of competition, see Appendix C.

Note 3: The *handicap allowance* in a *qualifying round* of individual play is: 100% of the *playing handicap*.

Note 4: The *handicap allowance* is considered to be the “number of strokes received” referred to in Rule 6-2 of the Rules of Golf.

Handicap Category

EGA Handicaps are grouped within the following “handicap categories”:

Handicap Category	EGA Handicap
1	Plus – 4.4
2	4.5 – 11.4
3	11.5 – 18.4
4	18.5 – 26.4
5	26.5 – 36.0
6	37 – 54

Handicap Committee

The “handicap committee” is the body appointed by an *affiliated club* to administer the EGA Handicap System within the club.

Handicap Conditions

“Handicap conditions” are the prerequisite conditions under which *qualifying scores* may be returned for handicapping purposes.

Handicap conditions are in place when:

- the round is played over a *measured course* with a measured length of not less than 2750 metres over 18 holes, or 1375 metres over 9 holes;
- the course being played has been rated by the *national association* or *area authority* in accordance with the USGA Course Rating System;
- the length of the course played does not vary from the length of the *measured course* by more than 100 metres over 18 holes, or 50 metres over 9 holes;
- the tee-markers used to designate the teeing ground (see the Rules of Golf, Definitions) are placed on the tees in accordance with Clause 2.7.5;
- the round is played in accordance with the Rules of Golf (including the Conditions of Competition) as approved by R&A Rules Limited;
- the form of play is either stroke play, Bogey/Par or Stableford, provided that Bogey/Par and Stableford are played with full *handicap allowance* (100% of the *playing handicap*); and
- the score is marked by an approved marker.

Handicap Review

The “handicap review” is a procedure, performed at least once a year, which requires the *handicap committee* to review the performance of any player under its jurisdiction against the player’s current handicap. The *handicap committee* then decides whether to confirm or adjust the handicap, as considered appropriate.

Handicap Stroke

A “handicap stroke” is a stroke that a player is entitled to deduct from his gross score.

Note: A player with a “plus” *playing handicap* adds strokes to his gross score.

Handicap Stroke Index

A “*handicap stroke index*” on the score card indicates the order of holes at which *handicap strokes* are to be given or received. A *handicap stroke index* must be published for each course (Rule 33-4 of the Rules of Golf).

Note: A player with a “plus” *playing handicap* gives *handicap strokes* to the course, commencing at stroke index 18.

Handicapping Authority

The “*handicapping authority*” for a player is his *home club* or his *national association*. For players who are not members of an *affiliated club*, the *national association* or *area authority* may assume the responsibility as *handicapping authority* as directed by the *national association*.

Home Club

A player’s “*home club*” is an *affiliated club* of which the player is a member, and which is responsible for the administration of his handicap.

Note: If the player is a member of more than one *affiliated club* he must nominate one as his *home club*.

Measured Course

A “*measured course*” is any course that has been measured according to the *USGA Course Rating manual*.

National Association

A “*national association*” is any national golf organisation affiliated to the *EGA* and authorised to act on behalf of the *EGA* for the administration of the *EGA Handicap System* within its own country.

No Return (NR)

“*No Return*” (*NR*) denotes any round that is not completed and/or for which no score card is returned, and additionally, in stroke play only, when no score is returned on one or more holes.

Period for Preferred Lies

The “*period for preferred lies*” is the period of time, determined by the *national association*, during which *handicap conditions* will apply notwithstanding the application of a Local Rule for “*preferred lies*” as a result of adverse playing conditions. *National associations* must determine the *period for preferred lies* in their own country as they deem to be necessary on account of climatic or other conditions.

Playing Handicap (See EGA Playing Handicap)

Playing Handicap Differential (See EGA Playing Handicap Differential)

Playing Handicap Table (See EGA Playing Handicap Table)

Qualifying Competition

A “*qualifying competition*” is any competition in which *handicap conditions* prevail.

Note: If applicable, the *CBA* must be calculated at the conclusion of each round of a *qualifying competition*.

Qualifying Round

A “*qualifying round*” is any round in a *qualifying competition* or a round played with the intention to return an *EDS*.

Qualifying Score

A “*qualifying score*” is any score returned in a *qualifying competition*, including a *NR*, or a score adjusted under Clauses 3.6.2 or 3.10.3 or any *EDS*.

Scratch Golfer

A “*scratch golfer*” is a player who can play to the *Course Rating* from any set of tees. For handicapping purposes, it is defined as a player with an *EGA Handicap* of 0.0.

Slope Rating

“*Slope Rating*” (*SR*) is the *USGA* designation that indicates the relative playing difficulty of a course for players who are not *scratch golfers* relative to the *Course Rating* (i.e. compared to the difficulty of the course for *scratch golfers*). *Slope Rating* is computed from the difference between the *Bogey Rating* and the *Course Rating*. A golf course of standard relative playing difficulty has a *Slope Rating* of 113.

USGA

“*United States Golf Association*”



2.1 COURSE RATING

- 2.1.1 All courses in a country must be rated by a *USGA*-licensed *national association* or *area authority*, if so delegated, according to the *USGA Course Rating System* (*USGA Course Rating manual*; www.usga.org).
- 2.1.2 The *USGA Course Rating System* is the property of the *USGA*. *National associations* must obtain written authorization from the *USGA* in order to use the system. They must follow all of the procedures in exactly the way the *USGA Course Rating manual* prescribes. No alterations are allowed. All interpretations are made by the *USGA*.
- 2.1.3 For handicapping purposes an *affiliated club* must only use *Course Ratings* and *Slope Ratings* issued by the authorised *national association* or the *area authority*, if so delegated.

EXPLANATORY NOTE: PRINCIPLES OF COURSE AND SLOPE RATING

The *Course (CR)* and *Slope Rating (SR)* values are used to relate the degree of difficulty of the course to the score and, consequently, the handicap of the player. The ratings are determined by a trained rating team in accordance with the rating manual of the *USGA* under normal course and weather conditions. Firstly, all holes are measured from the *distance point* to the centre of the green. These measurements are adjusted for the influence of roll, wind, elevation, altitude, doglegs, and lay-ups to effective playing lengths. Shot lengths are defined for scratch players and bogey players, men and women. Apart from distance, the playing characteristics of a course are influenced by obstacle factors. These are topography (e.g. side hill lies), fairway width, green target properties, recoverability and rough, protection by bunkers, out of bounds and extreme rough, water hazards, trees (size and density) and green surface. All factors are evaluated per hole for men and women and for both the scratch and the bogey player. The system provides tables with values and correction factors based on extensive data gathered by the *USGA*. The *Course Rating* is established from the effective playing lengths and obstacle factors over 18 holes. The number is expressed in strokes to one decimal point and represents the score that may be expected from a *scratch golfer*. The *Bogey Rating* is established in the same way. It represents the score expected from the bogey player on that particular course. As one course may differ from another in the degree of difficulty presented to the bogey player, the player should receive more strokes on the more difficult course. The relationship between course and *bogey rating* is called the *Slope Rating*. It is a measure of the relative playing difficulty for the non-scratch player compared to the *Course Rating*. A golf course that is regarded as having the same relative difficulty for scratch and bogey players has a *Slope Rating* of 113.

2.2 COURSE MEASUREMENT

Each hole must be measured along a horizontal plane from the *distance point* on each tee to the centre of the green according to the instructions in the *USGA Course Rating Manual* (Section 6 “Measuring Golf Courses”).

2.3 ALTERATIONS TO COURSES

When permanent alterations have been carried out to a course increasing or decreasing its length or playing difficulty, the *affiliated club* or another entity responsible for the golf course in question must request a new *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* from the *national association* or *area authority*, if so delegated.

2.4 TEES

- 2.4.1 All courses must have at least one set of tees rated for each gender. Where it is appropriate, it is recommended that tees should be rated for both men and women.
- 2.4.2 There may be additional tees providing reduced playing length to accommodate different groups of players or tees providing increased length and challenge for highly skilled players. The table below shows an example of ratings and possible tee designations.

Course Rating and Slope Rating				
Tees	Men's CR	Men's SR	Women's CR	Women's SR
Championship (Black)	74.9	136	-	-
White	73.9	130	-	-
Yellow	72.1	128	79.0	140
Blue	67.9	125	73.7	134
Red	67.3	120	72.7	128
Orange	64.5	104	68.0	125

Note 1: The colours suggested in the table are recommended only and other designations may be used if it is consistent with the golfing culture of the country.

Note 2: It is recommended that all tees are rated for men if it is practical. For women, a rating is usually unnecessary if the total course length from the tee in question exceeds 5800 metres.

- 2.4.3 All tees must be of sufficient size to provide a teeing ground which satisfies the Rules of Golf. Each set of tees must have a *distance point* which should be placed centrally, but at least four metres from the back of the prepared teeing area. The *distance point* must be visible at all times.

GUIDANCE NOTE: JUNIOR GOLF

Rating tees for men and women provides an excellent way of adapting the course to the abilities of junior players, boys and girls. Because age is a determining factor, especially for distance, special junior tees or family tees may be installed. Rating these tees for men and women should provide ample possibilities to attain an *EGA Handicap* for all age groups and to move from one set of tees to another as the playing standard develops.

2.5 PAR

- 2.5.1 Par reflects the score that a *scratch golfer* would normally be expected to make for a given hole.
- 2.5.2 The Par figure for each hole must be printed alongside each hole on the score card.
- 2.5.3 Par for each hole must be fixed by the *affiliated club*, or another entity responsible for the golf course in question (unless otherwise specified by the *national association*), in relation to the measured length and the playing difficulty of each hole and must be within the following distance ranges given in metres, from the standard tees:

Par	WOMEN	MEN
3	- – 200	- – 235
4	185 – 385	220 – 450
5	350 – +	415 – +

Example: The length of a hole with a dogleg is 430 metres. Depending upon its “effective playing length” and its average playing difficulty the hole may be allotted Par 4 or 5 (for men).

Note: Only in exceptional circumstances (following authorisation from the *national association*), may Par deviate from the table above.

EXPLANATORY NOTE: RELEVANCE OF PAR

Par is not a very good measure of the playing difficulty of a golf course. Two courses having the same Par may vary substantially in length and design of the holes. For example, courses A and B were constructed in similar terrain and with the same relative playing difficulty.

Course A: Four Par 3 holes of 125 metres and fourteen Par 4 holes of 270 metres. Total length is 4280 metres, Par 68.

Course B: Four Par 3 holes of 200 metres and fourteen Par 4 holes of 360 metres. Total length is 5840 metres, Par 68.

It is obvious that the *scratch golfer* would find course B much more difficult to play. Both have a Par of 68 but the *CR* numbers could be in the order of 63.0 and 71.0.

As scoring is recorded against Par, the *playing handicap* would be adjusted by (*CR-Par*), for course A by (– 5) and for course B by (+3).

- 2.5.4 The Par figure for the course must not be taken as the difficulty for a *scratch golfer*. The difficulty is defined by the *Course Rating*.

2.6 PERIOD FOR PREFERRED LIES

- 2.6.1 During the *period for preferred lies* as determined by the *national association*, *handicap conditions* will apply notwithstanding the application of a Local Rule for “Preferred Lies”. Outside the *period for preferred lies*, *handicap conditions* will not apply when a Local Rule for “Preferred Lies” is in operation unless the consent from the *national association* or *area authority* has been obtained.
- 2.6.2 Adopting “preferred lies” requires a detailed Local Rule that allows the player relief as set out in the Rules of Golf.
- 2.6.3 A Local Rule allowing preferred lies on a section of holes may be adopted by the Committee when more localised conditions so determine.

GUIDANCE NOTE: PREFERRED LIES

The purpose of “Preferred Lies” (sometimes referred to as “Winter Rules”) is to allow qualifying scores to be returned when playing conditions would otherwise not allow proper play due to adverse conditions of the course such as extreme wetness and mud.

The period for preferred lies is meant to allow handicapping conditions notwithstanding the application of a Local Rule for “Preferred Lies” automatically in some parts of Europe where such adverse conditions occur every year, particularly during the winter months.

National associations may determine the period for preferred lies in their own country as they deem to be necessary on account of climatic or other conditions, e.g. from 1 November to 30 April inclusive. Several options exist for the Local Rule but preferred lies must not be made obligatory and the Local Rule should be in operation only when the conditions warrant. It is a widely held misconception that preferred lies are to protect the course. Rather, the opposite is true as the player may move the ball to the best turf from which he subsequently takes a divot. Remember that Preferred Lies conflict with the fundamental principle of playing the ball as it lies. Indiscriminate use of preferred lies should be avoided.

2.7 PERMITTED ADJUSTMENT TO A MEASURED COURSE

- 2.7.1 Each *affiliated club* or another entity responsible for the golf course in question must endeavour to maintain the length of its *measured course* at all times in order to provide ample opportunity for players to play under *handicap conditions*.
- 2.7.2 *Handicap conditions* will only prevail if a *measured course* has a measured length of not less than 2750 metres over 18 holes, or 1375 metres over 9 holes.
- 2.7.3 *Handicap conditions* do not prevail when the length of the course played varies from the length of the *measured course* by more than 100 metres over 18 holes, or 50 metres over 9 holes.
- 2.7.4 In order to maintain the *Course Rating* characteristics of the course, and subject to the provisions of Clause 2.7.3, the tee-markers used to designate the teeing ground (see the Rules of Golf, Definitions) must, normally, not be placed more than 10 metres in front or 10 metres behind the relevant *distance point*.
Note: Only in exceptional circumstances may this 10 metre range be exceeded. This is only to be accepted if maintenance reasons (or extreme weather conditions) force the club or another entity responsible for the golf course in question to move the tee markers outside this range. Nevertheless, the maximum 100 metre deviation in Clause 2.7.3 cannot be exceeded. If so, *handicap conditions* do not prevail.
- 2.7.5 Placement of the tee markers should be balanced so that the length of the course played is approximately equal to the measured length from day to day. This is done by using both front and back sections of the tees according to course conditions.
- 2.7.6 The use of one temporary green per nine holes of a course is allowed, provided that the length of the course played does not vary more than allowed (see 2.7.3).

2.7.7 The club or another entity responsible for the golf course in question must notify the authorised *national association* when permanent changes are made to the course. Permanent changes to the course require the *national association* to review the current *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* and to determine whether a re-rating is necessary.

GUIDANCE NOTE: COURSE SET-UP AND MAINTENANCE

A golf course is rated on its effective playing length and its playing difficulty under normal conditions that should prevail on average in mid season when most rounds are played. If length and/or playing difficulty changes, scores will be affected and handicaps distorted.

The objective of the course committee and greenkeeping staff should be to maintain rating conditions as constant as possible throughout the season. The following points are worth consideration:

- Vary the difficulty of hole locations, i.e. six easy, six average, six difficult.
- Vary the set-up of the teeing grounds while maintaining the measured length.
- Maintain the parameters of the rating, most importantly length, rough height, width of the landing zones, and green speed.
- Consider applying for a temporary rating, rather than declaring the course non-qualifying if major repair or reconstruction work is planned. This situation might occur when a hole has to be shortened considerably, temporary tees are in use, bunkers are reconstructed and taken out of play or the length of the course has to be reduced by more than 100 metres. Contact the national association for advice.

CBA has been designed to compensate when conditions deviate so far from normal that effectively “normal conditions” do not apply. For instance, heavy rainfall or very long dry spells may have an effect on roll conditions on a golf course. Such conditions may make a course play effectively longer or shorter. Also it may have an effect on maintenance. Heavy rain may not allow the rough to be cut as usual, long dry spells may lead to a situation where there is no rough to be cut at all. The USGACourse Rating System Manual, Section 15, provides good detailed advice on maintenance of rating parameters and the potential impact on Course and Slope Rating values.



3.1 RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

A national association:

- 3.1.1 Has the jurisdiction for the administration of the *EGA Handicap System* within its own country, subject to the overall jurisdiction of the *EGA*.
- 3.1.2 May not change or deviate from the regulations and specifications of the *EGA Handicap System* unless it is stated that a certain aspect of the *EGA Handicap System* is at the discretion of the *national association* (see Appendix Z); the main reason being to achieve uniformity of application across *national associations*.
- 3.1.3 Must appoint a committee, the National Handicap Committee, to administer the *EGA Handicap System* within its own country.
Note: The National Handicap Committee may be combined with the National Rules Committee or body with similar regulatory functions.
- 3.1.4 May delegate any part of its jurisdiction to an *area authority*.
- 3.1.5 Must ensure that all courses approved by the *national association* for handicapping purposes have *Course* and *Slope Ratings* determined according to the *USGA Course Rating System*.
- 3.1.6 Must obtain a license from the *EGA* in order to use the *EGA Handicap System*.
- 3.1.7 Must ensure the integrity of the *EGA Handicaps* issued under its jurisdiction.
- 3.1.8 May assume the responsibility as *handicapping authority* at its discretion.
Note: If a *national association* assumes the responsibility as *handicapping authority* it should also perform the obligations set out in Sections 3.3 and 3.4, if applicable.
- 3.1.9 Has the right to obtain any information related to handicapping from *area authorities* and/or *affiliated clubs* at any time.
- 3.1.10 Must settle any dispute or doubtful point referred to it. Its decision is final. If the *national association* cannot come to a decision, it must refer the dispute or doubtful point to the *EGA Handicapping & Course Rating Committee*, whose decision is final.
Note: When exercising its powers, the *national association* must recognise and apply the correct legal procedures.
- 3.1.11 May at its discretion suspend the application of *CBA* for all or certain *handicap categories* and permit *affiliated clubs* to apply this discretion on an individual competition basis (see Section 3.7 and Appendix Z).
- 3.1.12 May determine limitations of 9-hole scores and *EDSs* as per Clause 3.6.1 c. and Section 3.8.
- 3.1.13 Must determine the procedure to register *EDSs*, if applicable.
- 3.1.14 Must determine the *period for preferred lies*.
- 3.1.15 May require a successful examination on the Rules of Golf (including etiquette) before allotting a player an *EGA Handicap*.

- 3.1.16 Must determine a procedure to adjudicate upon the suspension of *EGA Handicaps* according to Sections 3.13 and 3.14.
- 3.1.17 Must determine the appeal procedure to be made available to a player who is dissatisfied with a decision under Sections 3.13 and 3.14.
- 3.1.18 May at its discretion impose eligibility restrictions for competition entry based on an *EGA Handicap*.
- 3.1.19 Must audit the *EGA Handicap* of all players with an *EGA Handicap* of + 1.0 and better in order to control a fair entry into national and international championships which require a maximum *EGA Handicap*.

GUIDANCE NOTE: PURPOSE OF AUDIT OF LOW HANDICAP PLAYERS

The purpose of the audit of low handicap players is to provide assurance that their handicap records have been maintained in accordance with the *EGA Handicap System* and, in particular, that all away scores have been entered correctly. To facilitate the audit, handicapping authorities are required by the national association to provide, as part of the handicap review procedure, the handicap records for all low handicap players (the elite end of the very low handicap spectrum) identified by the national association, in accordance with Clause 3.1.19 and any additional players as so directed by the national association. The audit must be based on the comparison of these records with the official scores from a wide range of national and international competitions.

Experience has shown that players with incomplete handicap records tend to have lower handicaps than they are entitled to. Whilst this does not influence scratch stroke play competitions, it does have an important bearing on entry into prestigious tournaments and possibly the *CBA* calculation. Through auditing, the national association can better ensure a level playing field and avoid placing those players who honour their obligations at a disadvantage.

3.2 RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE AREA AUTHORITY

An area authority:

- 3.2.1 Must administer the responsibilities delegated by its *national association*.
- 3.2.2 Has the right to obtain information related to handicapping from *affiliated clubs* under its jurisdiction at any time.
- 3.2.3 Must appoint a committee to perform the duties as prescribed. This committee may be combined with another committee with similar regulatory functions if deemed appropriate.
- 3.2.4 May assume the responsibility as *handicapping authority* if the *national association* so directs.

3.3 RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE AFFILIATED CLUB

An affiliated club:

3.3.1 Is the *handicapping authority* for all members for whom it is the *home club* subject to the overall jurisdiction of the *national association*, and the *area authority* if so delegated.

Exception: A *national association* (or an *area authority* if such responsibility has been delegated) may, at its discretion, assume the responsibility as *handicapping authority* for the members of *affiliated clubs* under its jurisdiction.

3.3.2 Must ensure that the *EGA Handicap System* is correctly applied at the club. Failure to comply with this requirement would justify the *national association* withdrawing the club's right to act as a *handicapping authority* or imposing such conditions as the *national association* may consider appropriate.

3.3.3 May at its discretion impose eligibility restrictions for competition entry based on an *EGA Handicap*.

Note: Restrictions may apply to all competitions organised by an *affiliated club*, or to a single competition.

3.3.4 Must appoint a *handicap committee* to perform the obligations set out in Section 3.4, and to ensure the integrity of the *EGA Handicaps* issued by the club. This committee may be combined with another committee with similar regulatory functions if it is deemed appropriate.

3.3.5 Is responsible for ensuring that *EGA Handicaps* are maintained in accordance with the procedures laid down in the *EGA Handicap System* and in accordance with any specific procedure imposed by the *national association*.

Note: Any complaint regarding the application of the system, which cannot be resolved by the *affiliated club*, must be made to the *national association*, or the *area authority* if so delegated, which may, at its discretion, carry out such investigation as it considers appropriate. If, following such an investigation, it is found that the *affiliated club* is in breach of its responsibilities, the *affiliated club* should be directed by the *national association* or *area authority* to rectify matters. Failure to resolve the matter satisfactorily may justify the *national association* in declaring that handicaps at that *affiliated club* are not valid *EGA Handicaps*.

3.3.6 Must retain the handicap records of all members for at least the current and the previous calendar year, unless the *national association* assumes responsibility for keeping such records.

3.4 RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE HANDICAP COMMITTEE

The handicap committee:

3.4.1 Must maintain lists in which the names of players must be entered prior to any *qualifying round* and the *handicap committee* must have procedures to ensure that all score cards are returned to the *handicap committee*, including incomplete cards (*NRs*).

3.4.2 Must ensure that the *CBA*, if applicable, is calculated in accordance with Section 3.7 at the conclusion of each round of a *qualifying competition*. See also online *CBA Appendix*.

3.4.3 Must ensure that the *EGA Handicap* of each member is recorded as required by the *national association* and made available at all times.

3.4.4 Must ensure that all *qualifying scores* are recorded as soon as possible and that all *EGA Handicaps* have been correctly calculated in relation to scores recorded in chronological order.

3.4.5 Must, when a member changes his *home club*, inform the new *home club* of his current *EGA Handicap* and provide the *handicap committee* of that club with a copy of the player's handicap record for the current and previous year.

3.4.6 Must exercise the power to suspend handicaps as described in Sections 3.13 and 3.14 and the power to adjust handicaps described in Section 3.16 and must advise players accordingly.

Note: When exercising its powers, the *handicap committee* must recognise and apply the correct legal procedures.

3.4.7 Has the right, on the day of a *qualifying competition* and before the commencement of play, to declare a round of that competition as a *non-qualifying round* because of exceptionally bad weather and/or course conditions. See also Clause 3.6.2 i.

Note: The *handicap committee* should never deprive a competition of its status as *qualifying competition* only to circumvent the regulations of the *EGA Handicap System* and prevent scores from counting for handicapping. Such action is contrary to the spirit of the *EGA Handicap System*. The *handicap committee* should give players the opportunity to return as many *qualifying scores* as possible.

3.4.8 Must conduct a *handicap review* of the *EGA Handicaps* of all members at least once a year, as well as for any player upon request, as prescribed in Section 3.15. See also online *Handicap Review Appendix*.

GUIDANCE NOTE: THE PURPOSE AND COMPOSITION OF THE HANDICAP COMMITTEE

Administrative staff and club managers in an increasing number of clubs are charged with the day-to-day administration of handicaps. To assist them in their task, the 2016-2019 edition of the *EGA Handicap System* is supported by computer-assisted procedures and most functions can be run in an automated fashion.

Yet it remains important for the handicap committee to be responsible for the proper application of the clauses and, in particular, to be in charge of the handicap review. The final decision regarding which handicaps are to be adjusted under the handicap review, and the value of the adjustment, rests with the handicap committee.

The handicap committee has the ultimate authority to decide whether handicapping conditions are satisfied, but may delegate the task to the committee in charge of the competition. Knowledge of the system and its intent is a prerequisite requirement for handicap committee members and continuity of the capabilities within the committee should be safeguarded. The committee responsible for handicapping (possibly among other responsibilities) must consist of at least three members, preferably representing both genders.

3.5 RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE PLAYER

The player:

- 3.5.1 Must have only one *EGA Handicap*, which must be allotted and recorded by his *handicapping authority*. That handicap applies everywhere where the *EGA Handicap System* applies.
- 3.5.2 Must, if he is a member of more than one *affiliated club*, select one *affiliated club* as his *home club* and notify that club and the others of his choice.
- 3.5.3 Must not change his *home club* except by giving advance notice of the change, which can take effect only at the end of a calendar year unless he has ceased to be a member of his *home club* or both *affiliated clubs* agree to the change taking place at an earlier date.
- 3.5.4 Must ensure that before playing a *qualifying round* his entry is registered as required.
- 3.5.5 Must ensure that all *qualifying scores*, whether or not complete, are returned to his *handicapping authority*, if played at an *affiliated club* other than his *home club*. The player is obliged to report all these scores to his *home club*.
- 3.5.6 Must, prior to playing in any competition at any *affiliated club*, ensure that appropriate alterations of his *EGA Handicap* have been made.
- 3.5.7 Must apply the increase or reduction to his *EGA Handicap* where required after a *qualifying round* for a score not yet recorded on his handicap record. The adjustment should be made against the *CBA*, if known, and assuming it is applied. If the *CBA* is not known or not applied, it should be made against *CBA=0*.
- 3.5.8 Must enter his current *playing handicap* on all score cards returned after a *qualifying round* (Rules of Golf, Rule 6-2b). For handicapping purposes, the player should also enter his current *EGA Handicap* on the cards, even though the round may be a scratch competition.
- 3.5.9 Must endeavour to comply with the intent and purpose of the fundamental principles of the *EGA Handicap System* at all times.



3.6 QUALIFYING SCORES

3.6.1 To be acceptable for handicap purposes, *qualifying scores* have to meet the following requirements:

- a. The round must be played under *handicap conditions*.
- b. The round must be played on a course at an *affiliated club* or a course approved by the *national association* rated in accordance with the *USGA Course Rating System*. Alternatively, the round must be played in a country outside the jurisdiction of the *national association* on a course rated in accordance with the *USGA Course Rating System* or according to the CONGU (Council of National Golf Unions) Standard Scratch Score System.
- c. The round must consist of 18 holes and, for players in *handicap categories 2 – 6*, rounds consisting of 9 holes are also acceptable. A 9-hole score may not be part of an 18-hole score.

Note: The *national associations* have the discretion to restrict 9-hole *qualifying scores* to other *handicap categories*, and/or to restrict the number of 9-hole *qualifying scores* returned in any calendar year. Nevertheless, if *national associations* invoke these discretions, they are strongly recommended to allow 9-hole *qualifying scores* to the extent necessary for players, especially in *handicap categories 4 – 6*, to return a sufficient number of *qualifying scores*.

- d. The round must be either played in a *qualifying competition* run by: i) an *affiliated club*, ii) an *area authority*, iii) the *national association*, iv) other organisations approved by the *national association*, or the round is played as an *EDS* (see Section 3.8).
- e. Scores made outside the jurisdiction of the *national association* in a *qualifying competition* run by an *affiliated club* of another *national association*, or another organisation approved by the *national association*, must be returned.
- f. The scores must be converted to Stableford points.

3.6.2 Notwithstanding the requirements of Clause 3.6.1, a score is a *qualifying score* even if:

- a. The round is cancelled by the committee, in which case the round becomes “Reduction Only”.
- b. The *CBA* comes out as “Reduction Only”, if applicable.
- c. The player is disqualified for reasons acceptable for handicapping purposes as detailed below in the GN on “Scores acceptable for handicapping purposes in case of disqualification”.
- d. The round is played with a Local Rule for “*preferred lies*” in operation (see Section 2.6).
- e. The round is a single round in an aggregate or eclectic competition provided that players who are partners do not play in the same group.
- f. The player returns an incomplete score (a *NR*) that is in the *buffer zone* or better. See GN on *NRs*.
- g. The player fails to return a score or submits an incomplete score (“*NR*”) below the *buffer zone* and the committee decides not to accept the reasons for the *NR*. See GN on *NRs*.

- h. The round is played in a *qualifying competition* in which different groups start the round from different tees (e.g. shot gun).
- i. The competition is declared non-*qualifying round* in accordance with Clause 3.4.7, but the player decides to play an *EDS* in accordance with Section 3.8.

3.6.3 Notwithstanding the requirements of Clause 3.6.1 and Section 3.8 (*Extra Day Score*), a score is not a *qualifying score*, if:

- a. The round, other than an *EDS*, is played in a competition that is run by a third party not approved by the *national association*.
- b. The round is cancelled due to a committee decision and the score is below the *buffer zone* in *handicap categories 1 – 5*, or the score is below 36 Stableford points in *handicap category 6* (see Appendix Z).
- c. The player is disqualified for reasons unacceptable for handicapping purposes as detailed below in the GN on “Scores not acceptable for handicapping purposes in case of disqualification”.
- d. The round is played in any competition in which the player plays with one or more partners (exception aggregate, see 3.6.2 e.).
- e. The player decides to declare the round a *NR* and the committee decides to accept the reason for the *NR* (see the GN on *NRs*).
- f. The round is played as part of a Pro-Am Competition.

GUIDANCE NOTE: SCORES ACCEPTABLE FOR HANDICAPPING PURPOSES IN CASE OF DISQUALIFICATION

According to Clause 3.6.2 c., only certain qualifying rounds for which a player is disqualified will be acceptable for handicapping purposes. In general terms, this applies when a score can be established in spite of the disqualification for technical offences.

An adjusted score may have to be calculated. In order to apply a result obtained in accordance with a. to h. below for handicapping purposes, the handicap committee must carefully investigate all details.

Note: All penalty strokes must be taken into account as well as the correct handicap and hole-by-hole scores.

- a. Rule 3-4: Player refuses to apply a rule in stroke play (incl. Stableford and against Par), which affects the rights of another player.
- b. Rule 6-2b: The handicap marked on the score card is higher than that to which he is entitled. The correct handicap should be used to calculate the adjusted score.
- c. Rule 6-3: Player fails to tee-off at the time designated by the tournament committee, but nevertheless returns a score card.
- d. Rule 6-6b: Score card is not signed by the player or the marker, unless the marker has not signed the score card for a valid reason.
- e. Rule 6-6d: Recorded score is lower than actual score for any hole.
- f. Rule 6-7: Competitor unduly delays play, repeated offence.
- g. Rule 6-8: Competitor discontinues play.
- h. Rule 14-3b: Use of distance measuring device.

GUIDANCE NOTE: SCORES NOT ACCEPTABLE FOR HANDICAPPING PURPOSES IN CASE OF DISQUALIFICATION

Scores which have been disqualified for technical offences when it cannot be determined how much of an advantage the player may have gained by breaching a rule are not acceptable for handicapping purposes:

- a. Rule 1-2: Serious breach when taking deliberate action to influence the movement of the ball or to alter the physical conditions.
- b. Rule 1-3: Competitors agree to exclude the operation of a rule or to waive a penalty incurred.
- c. Rule 4-1, 4-2, 4-3 and 4-4: Use of a club(s) which is/are non-conforming or otherwise used in breach of the rules.
- d. Rule 5-1 and 5-2: Use of a ball that is non-conforming or otherwise used in breach of the rules.
- e. Rule 6-4 Use of more than one caddie (leading to disqualification).
- f. Rule 7-1b: Practice on the tournament course on the day of, and prior to, the tournament.
- g. Rule 11-1 or 14-3: Use of a non-conforming tee, use of an artificial device or unusual equipment (except a distance measuring device).
- h. Rule 22-1: Agreeing not to lift a ball that might assist any competitor.

GUIDANCE NOTE: NO RETURN

Every player who participates in a qualifying competition is expected to complete the round.

No Return (NR) denotes any round that is not completed and/or for which no score card is returned, and additionally, in stroke play only, when no score has been returned on one or more holes, for reasons at the discretion of the player.

All results achieved in a qualifying round or an EDS must be submitted, irrespective of whether they are complete or not. In the event of a NR for handicap purposes, the handicap committee should first consider whether the player was able to honour his commitment to return a score or not. If he was not, and this is due to an injury or exceptional course conditions, the score should be declared non-qualifying unless he had already scored to his buffer or better at the time of the incident. If the player was able to complete the round but chose not to do so, the handicap committee should either apply the actual number of strokes (adjusted score according to Clause 3.6.2 f.) or increase the handicap by 0.1, see Clause 3.6.2 g.

Since an incomplete card and a NR can have the effect of increasing the player's handicap, the handicap committee would be justified in deeming the score non-qualifying when the player was only able play a few holes. Sections 3.13 and 3.14 of the EGA Handicap System offer the possibility to consider disciplinary measures if the committee is convinced NRs are entered to unfairly manipulate the system. No score cards should be issued to players when it is evident that daylight conditions will be insufficient for the completion of a full round.

3.7 COMPUTED BUFFER ADJUSTMENT

- 3.7.1 At the conclusion of each round of a *qualifying competition*, and with the exception of a 9-hole competition, the *CBA* must be calculated following the procedure specified in the online *CBA* Appendix, if applicable (see Appendix Z).
- 3.7.2 Only players in *handicap categories* 1 – 4 are taken into account for the *CBA* calculation. The calculated *CBA* result (if applicable) affects players of *handicap categories* 1 – 5.
- 3.7.3 Possible *CBA* values are +1, 0, -1, -2, -2&RO (Reduction Only). When the calculation directs that the scores returned are -2&RO, a -2 *buffer zone* shift is applied to determine which scores lead to handicap reductions.
- 3.7.4 A *CBA* adjustment means shifting the *buffer zone* up or down by the number of points indicated by the *CBA* result. This has the effect of moving the player's tolerance zone up or down. Handicaps are adjusted according to Clauses 3.12.3 to 3.12.8 after applying *CBA*.

Example: A player of *handicap category* 1 enters a score of 33 points, and the *CBA* is calculated to be -2. His *buffer zone* would normally range from 35 to 36, but is now 33 to 34. His handicap remains unchanged.
- 3.7.5 For the purposes of *CBA*, the minimum number of players in the calculation is ten (10).
- 3.7.6 If a competition is scheduled over more than one day, separate *CBA* values must be calculated for each day.
- 3.7.7 Two competitions on the same day may be combined to calculate one *CBA* when the format of the competitions is comparable.

Example: Club championship stroke play competitions are conducted on the same day for men, women and juniors. The three competitions may be combined to calculate one *CBA*.
- 3.7.8 If the round is cancelled by the committee for any valid reason, *CBA* is 0 and the round becomes "Reduction Only" (see Clauses 3.6.2 a., 3.6.3 b.).
- 3.7.9 At the discretion of the *national association* (see Appendix Z), the *CBA* calculation can be suspended for all or certain *handicap categories*. The *national association* may permit this discretion to be applied by *affiliated clubs* on an individual competition basis.

EXPLANATORY NOTE: COMPUTED BUFFER ADJUSTMENT

Purpose

The USGA Course Rating Manual states: “The USGA *Course Rating* and *Slope Rating* must reflect conditions normal for the season(s) when most rounds are played”. However, sometimes rounds are played when either the weather or the course conditions are not normal and yet within the *EGA Handicap System* these rounds directly affect handicaps. The *CBA* calculation was developed to determine when the conditions deviate so far from normal that an additional allowance should be made to compensate, for handicapping purposes, bringing values closer to what they would have been under normal conditions.

Target Score

For *CBA* calculation, normal conditions are assessed by looking at the percentage of players that score in the *buffer zone*, per *handicap category*. The outcome is compared to what would be expected under normal conditions and a determination is made as to whether any compensation is necessary for the scores to be used in handicap adjustment. This can be an upwards or downwards adjustment and, when conditions are extreme, the competition is determined “reduction only”.

Buffer Zones

The compensation is achieved by shifting the *buffer zone*; the score of the player remains as it is. Shifting the *buffer zone* will influence the effect of the player’s score on his handicap when entered into the system.

Example: A *handicap category 3* player (*buffer zone 33 – 36*) scores 32 and the *CBA* = -1 (conditions worse than normal), so there is no adjustment of his *EGA Handicap* as the *buffer zone* becomes 32 – 35. If he had scored 36 he would have been reduced by 0.3

Significance of CBA

As *CBA* relies on a comparison of scores against expected results from players in *handicap categories 1 – 4*, it may be that a competition with a high proportion of improving players or under-handicapped players produces an unreliable outcome. This is one reason why higher *handicap category* players are not included in the calculations. For example, in the case of a competition with a large number of improving beginners, *CBA +1* may result, even though conditions were quite normal or even below standard. Under-handicapped players (sometimes termed ‘vanity’ handicaps) can cause the opposite effect, which runs contrary to what should happen, i.e. the upwards adjustment of their (‘vanity’) handicaps. These effects show that it is of paramount importance to correctly apply the *handicap review* (see Section 3.15) and handicap adjustment based on *general play* (see Section 3.16).

3.8 EXTRA DAY SCORES (EDS)

- 3.8.1 An *EDS*, subject to the provisions of Clauses 3.8.2, 3.8.3, 3.8.4 and 3.8.5, is a *qualifying score* for handicapping.
- 3.8.2 A *national association* must establish conditions to be imposed on playing an *EDS* (see Appendix Z) and may limit the number of *EDSs*.
- 3.8.3 Players may return an *EDS* only at such courses as the *national association* may direct. For example, the player may be restricted to the course of his *home club*. For handicapping purposes, a player can only return one 9-hole *EDS* score per day.

- 3.8.4 Only players with an *EGA Handicap* in *handicap categories 2 – 6* may return an *EDS* for handicapping.

Note 1: The *national association* may exclude any of the *handicap categories 2 – 6* from returning an *EDS* for handicapping purposes, although *national associations* are recommended to allow *EDSs* to the extent necessary for players to return a sufficient number of *qualifying scores*; this is particularly important in *handicap categories 4 – 6*.

Note 2: Notwithstanding the above restriction, a *national association*, which has imposed eligibility restrictions based on *EGA Handicaps* for competition entry, may allow a player so excluded to return a prescribed maximum number of *EDSs* necessary to make up the shortfall.

- 3.8.5 The player must register his name on the *EDS* entry list before starting the round. His entry must include details of which course and tees will be played and such other details as are required by his *national association*.
- 3.8.6 The player must record the same details as mentioned in Clause 3.8.5 on his score card and he must return the score card signed by the marker and himself.
- 3.8.7 If the player, after registration on the *EDS* entry list, does not return his score card, a *NR* will be recorded for handicap purposes.
- 3.8.8 A player’s *EGA Handicap* cannot be reduced to a *handicap category* that is excluded from returning an *EDS*.

Example 1: A player with an *EGA Handicap* of 4.7 returns an *EDS* of 41 Stableford points. His *EGA Handicap* will only be reduced by 0.2 to 4.5 and not by 0.7.

Example 2: Where a *national association* does not allow *EDS* for category 2 players, if a player with an *EGA Handicap* of 12.0 returns an *EDS* of 41 Stableford points. His *EGA Handicap* will only be reduced by 0.5 to 11.5 and not by 1.2.

EXPLANATORY NOTE: EXTRA DAY SCORES

The *EGA Handicap System* (as well as other handicap systems) is based on the premise that every player will return a sufficient number of scores to provide reasonable evidence of his playing standard. Although committees may consider that in the course of the season ample opportunity is provided to participate in golf competitions, experience has shown that many players struggle to return a sufficient number of scores to maintain a handicap that reflects their playing ability. This may be due to:

- work or family commitments preventing participation in competitions.
- difficulty in obtaining acceptable starting times on preferred days.
- a declining desire to play regular competition golf.

EDSs provide a format to supplement scores from *qualifying competitions* for handicap purposes. The intent is to augment the sometimes sparse information from competition golf and to enable players to return more *qualifying scores*, for handicapping purposes. Since the commitment to return the score, good or bad, is made before the round starts and *handicap conditions* must be in operation, the *EDS* round technically compares to a competition round. However, it is notable that the *CBA* procedure is not operational in connection with *EDSs*. It is unlikely that players setting out on an *EDS* round will purposely choose a typical *CBA -2* day.

3.9 EGA PLAYING HANDICAP; PLAYING HANDICAP

3.9.1 The *playing handicap* is the number of *handicap strokes* a player receives for a specific set of tees at the course being played.

3.9.2 If the *playing handicap* is negative, termed a “plus” *playing handicap*, the player must give *handicap strokes* to the course, commencing at stroke index 18.

3.9.3 A player’s *playing handicap* is determined by applying his *EGA Handicap* to the *playing handicap formula*:

a) The *playing handicap formula* for *handicap categories 1 – 5* is:

$$\text{Playing HCP}_{\text{CAT 1-5}} = \text{EGA HCP} \times \frac{\text{SR}}{113} + (\text{CR} - \text{PAR})$$

b) The *playing handicap formula* for *handicap category 6* is:

$$\text{Playing HCP}_{\text{CAT 6}} = \text{EGA HCP} + \text{Playing HCP Differential}$$

Note: The *playing handicap* is expressed as a whole number, 0.5 rounds upwards. This means -0.5 [= “plus” 0.5] rounds upwards to 0 [scratch] and -1.5 [= “plus”1.5] to -1 [= “plus”1].

3.9.4 For a 9-hole round, player’s *playing handicap* is determined by applying his *EGA Handicap* to the 9-hole *playing handicap formula*:

a) The 9-hole *playing handicap formula* for *handicap categories 2 – 5* is:

$$\text{Playing HCP}_{\text{CAT 2-5}} = \frac{\text{EGA HCP} \times \frac{\text{SR}_{9\text{Holes}}}{113}}{2} + (\text{CR}_{9\text{Holes}} - \text{PAR}_{9\text{Holes}})$$

Example 1: The *EGA Handicap* of a player is 11.8. He plays the front 9 holes of a course from the yellow tees.

	Yellow Tees Men		
	18 holes	Front 9-holes	Back 9-holes
Course Rating	72.4	35.8	36.6
Slope Rating	127	122	132
Par	72	35	37
Playing Handicap	14	7*	6*

**Playing handicaps* for two 9 hole-rounds, if added together, do not necessary equal the *playing handicap* for 18 holes. This is because the relationship between *Course Rating*, *Slope Rating* and *Par* can vary over each nine holes.

The number of *handicap strokes* he receives is:

$$\text{Playing HCP} = \frac{11.8 \times \frac{122}{113}}{2} + (35.8 - 35) = 7.1699 \text{ rounded to } 7$$

b) The 9-hole *playing handicap formula* for *handicap category 6* is:

$$\text{Playing HCP}_{\text{CAT 6}} = \frac{\text{EGA HCP}}{2} + \text{Playing HCP Differential}_{9\text{HOLES}}$$

Example 2: The *EGA Handicap* of a player is 40. He plays the same front 9-holes as used in example 1.

On this set of tees, the *playing handicap* for an *EGA Handicap* of 36.0 is 20, and therefore the *playing handicap differential*_{9-holes} (see Definitions) is 2 (20-18).

$$\text{Playing HCP} = \frac{40}{2} + 2 = 22$$

Note: The *playing handicap* is expressed as a whole number, 0.5 rounds upwards. This means -0.5 [= “plus” 0.5] rounds upwards to 0 [scratch] and -1.5 [= “plus”1.5] to -1 [= “plus”1].

3.9.5 A player’s *playing handicap* may also be determined by applying his *EGA Handicap* to a 9-hole or 18-hole *playing handicap table* (see Appendix B).

3.9.6 The *handicap allowance* is the number of *handicap strokes* a player receives (or gives) in a handicap competition. It is the percentage of the *playing handicap* determined by the Committee in charge of the competition.

3.9.7 *Handicap strokes* are allocated hole by hole according to the *handicap stroke index* indicated on the score card. Strokes in 9-hole rounds are taken according to the relevant *handicap stroke index*.

Example: When playing 9 holes to which the even stroke indices have been allocated, the player receiving seven strokes receives strokes at the holes with *handicap stroke index* 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14.

3.9.8 An *EGA Handicap* may convert to a *playing handicap* exceeding the maximum *EGA Handicap*.

EXPLANATORY NOTE: PLUS HANDICAPS

Originally, golf handicaps were derived for stroke play. They were assessed against the scratch player and were strokes to be taken off a player’s score. When it became necessary to handicap a player who had demonstrated that he was better than the national scratch player, rather than re-handicapping the scratch player and all other players upwards, the concept of adding strokes to a score was accepted and such handicaps were designated as “plus handicaps”. As a net score is determined by subtracting the player’s handicap from the gross score, mathematically the plus handicap becomes a negative number. Handicaps as low as plus 5 have been attained.

EXPLANATORY NOTE: 9-HOLE SCORES

There is a certain analogy to *EDS* in the reasoning for introducing 9-hole competitions and 9-hole *EDS*. Again, in response to the demands of working and family life or physical limitations, 9-hole scores have been introduced to provide additional opportunities to return *qualifying scores*.

Since its introduction in 2007, the 9-hole *qualifying round* has become very popular in several countries, sometimes amounting to 30% of all rounds for a particular group of players, such as senior players and participants in evening competitions with restricted daylight.

However, the traditional way for a round of golf, i.e. over 18 holes, is still considered to be the preferred format for handicapping.

3.10 STABLEFORD

3.10.1 For handicapping, all *qualifying scores* must be converted to Stableford points based on a *handicap allowance* of 100% of *playing handicap*.

3.10.2 For handicapping, the Stableford points are awarded in relation to the Par at each hole as follows:

Net score on a hole	Points
More than one over Par or <i>No Return</i>	0
One over Par	1
Par	2
One under Par	3
Two under Par	4
Three under Par	5
Four under Par	6

3.10.3 For 9-hole *qualifying scores*, 18 Stableford points must be added to the result achieved over 9 holes to obtain an adjusted *qualifying score*, which is recorded on the player's handicap record. 9-hole *qualifying scores* must be clearly identified on the player's handicap record (see Appendix A).

3.10.4 If applicable (see Appendix Z), the *CBA* must be calculated at the conclusion of each round of an 18-hole *qualifying competition* by following the procedure set out in the online *CBA Appendix*.

3.10.5 Any score in a Par/Bogey *qualifying competition* must be converted to a Stableford score by adding 36 points to the player's final result.

Example:

2 down	: - 2 + 36 =	34 Stableford points
5 up	: + 5 + 36 =	41 Stableford points
All square	: 0 + 36 =	36 Stableford points

3.10.6 In normal conditions, a player plays exactly to his handicap when he returns a score of 36 Stableford points.

EXPLANATORY NOTE: STABLEFORD

The purpose of applying the Stableford point calculation for handicapping is to reduce the impact of a particularly bad score on a hole which does not truly reflect a golfer's playing ability. Other handicap systems use similar measures for stroke control such as net double bogey adjustment.

This restricts the score on a bad hole for a total adjusted stroke play score for handicapping purposes. It also allows a *NR* on a hole in a stroke play competition to be converted to a score for handicapping purposes.

Stableford scoring is a measure of performance against Par; the system was designed so that a player playing to handicap scores 36 Stableford points over 18 holes. The *EGA Handicap System* adjusts handicaps by assessing performance against *Course Rating* so a stroke allowance is included in the *playing handicap formula* (*CR-Par*) to allow for any differences between *Course Rating* and Par.

3.11 ATTAINING AN EGA HANDICAP

3.11.1 An *EGA Handicap* may only be obtained by a member of an *affiliated club*, an individual member of a *national association*, or an individual player whose handicap is registered and administered by a *national association*.

3.11.2 The maximum *EGA Handicap* is 54 for both men and women.

An *EGA Handicap* may convert into a *playing handicap* exceeding this number.

Note: A *national association* may limit *handicap category* 6 to 45.

3.11.3 To attain an *EGA Handicap*, a player must submit at least one Stableford score over 18 holes or 9 holes. It is strongly recommended that the initial handicap attained under this Clause is monitored by the *handicap committee* and if necessary a *general play* adjustment following the procedures set out under Section 3.16 should be applied.

3.11.4 Scores to attain an *EGA Handicap* must be played under *handicap conditions* at the player's *home club* or any other course recognised by his *handicapping authority*. A player who is not a member of an *affiliated club* must play the rounds under *handicap conditions* on a course of an *affiliated club* or any other course recognised by the *national association* subject to any directions by the *national association*. Each score must be signed by a marker and countersigned by the player.

The number of *handicap strokes* the player receives during this round is:

$$HCP \text{ Strokes} = 54 + \text{Playing HCP Differential}$$

For a 9-hole round the number of *handicap strokes* a player receives is:

$$HCP \text{ Strokes} = \frac{54}{2} + \text{Playing HCP Differential}_{9\text{HOLES}}$$

This number can also be determined by applying the maximum *EGA Handicap* to the *playing handicap table* of the course being played.

3.11.5 The initial *EGA Handicap* must be calculated on the basis of the Stableford score returned. If the score was obtained over 9 holes, 18 points should be added to the Stableford score.

$$\text{Initial EGA HCP} = 54 - (\text{Points Scored} - 36)$$

3.11.6 The *handicap committee* may allot a player a lower initial *EGA Handicap* if it has reason to consider that a lower *EGA Handicap* is more appropriate to the player's ability. In exceptional circumstances, a higher *EGA Handicap* may be allotted than that indicated by the initial score.

3.11.7 The *national association* may, at its discretion, require that a player may only be allotted an *EGA Handicap* on condition that he has successfully passed an examination on the Rules of Golf and Etiquette.

3.11.8 A player without a handicap must not be allotted an *EGA Handicap* in *handicap category* 1 without the written authority of the *national association*, or *area authority* if so delegated.

GUIDANCE NOTE: ALLOTMENT OF HANDICAP

The rationale for allotting an *EGA Handicap* as soon as the player returns at least one Stableford score over 18 holes (or 9-holes) under the provisions of Section 3.11, is to make the handicap system accessible to as many players as possible, in the best interest of promoting golf. It also allows new players to begin monitoring the evolution of their golfing performance immediately.

The procedure set out under Clauses 3.11.4 – 3.11.5 is intended to establish an approximate value equivalent to, or lower, than the scoring of the single round. As players return additional scores it will then be possible to develop a better understanding of their golfing ability. The system provides discretionary authority to *national associations* to set eligibility restrictions for competition entries, based on an *EGA Handicap*, if so desired.

Handicap committees are recommended to monitor closely the scoring performance of players with a newly allotted handicap and to apply a *general play* adjustment, if necessary. When players have returned as many as eight scores, it is possible for the *handicap committee* to perform a *handicap review* (see Section 3.15).

From a statistical point of view, directly allotting an initial *EGA Handicap* based on eight scores together with the *handicap review* procedure set under Section 3.15 could provide initial handicaps already in line with the system. However, it is considered infeasible to request such a number of scores from a player who is keen to start using the *EGA Handicap System* as soon as possible.

It is worth noting that the *handicap committee* may allot an initial whole number *EGA Handicap*, other than that calculated based on Clause 3.11.5, if it has reasons to believe that such a handicap better fits the player's ability. Factors to consider include:

- Previous playing history and any lower handicap previously held at the *home club* or any other club. This is of paramount importance.
- Time of year and prevailing weather conditions when cards are submitted.
- Information from peers.
- A handicap held under another handicap system.
- Other relevant sporting achievement.
- The allotment of an initial handicap in *handicap categories* 2 or 3 may be an indication of previous experience where no other obvious evidence exists.

3.12 ALTERATION OF HANDICAPS

3.12.1 The recording of *qualifying scores* must be kept as Stableford points. The *handicap committee* must record the player's *qualifying scores* in chronological order.

3.12.2 A player's handicap record (example in Appendix A) must contain:

- a. the date of the round
- b. information on where the round was played
- c. the score and type (9-hole scores and 18-hole scores must be clearly identified)
- d. the *CBA*, if applicable (see Appendix Z)
- e. the qualifying Stableford score

f. the revised *EGA Handicap*

g. such other information as may be required by the *national association*, e.g. *Course Rating*, *Slope Rating*, *Par*.

Note: Adjusted (qualifying) scores are Stableford scores computed by the *handicap committee* based on the result of a 9-hole score, a disqualification or a *NR*, see Section 3.6.

3.12.3 If a player returns a *qualifying score* within his relevant *buffer zone*, his *EGA Handicap* remains unchanged.

3.12.4 If a player returns a *qualifying score* with fewer Stableford points than his *buffer zone* or records a *NR*, subject to review by the *handicap committee*, his *EGA Handicap* is increased by 0.1, in *handicap categories* 1 – 5.

Note: However, special provisions may apply if such a score is recorded by a player in *handicap categories* 4 or 5 (see Appendix Z).

3.12.5 If a player returns a *qualifying score* above his *buffer zone*, his *EGA Handicap* is reduced by an amount per Stableford point in excess of the *buffer zone*, the amount per point being determined by his *handicap category*.

Note: Handicap adjustments based on 18-hole competition scores (Clauses 3.12.3, 3.12.4 and 3.12.5) apply after the *buffer zone* has been adjusted in accordance with the *CBA* procedure described in the Section 3.7.

3.12.6 *EGA Handicaps* must be adjusted as described below.

Note: Special provisions may apply in *handicap categories* 4 or 5 (see Appendix Z).

Handicap Category	EGA Handicap	Buffer Zone		Stableford-points below the buffer zone: add only	Subtract for each Stableford-point above the buffer zone:
		18-hole Scores	9-hole Scores		
1	plus – 4.4	35 – 36	-	0.1	0.1
2	4.5 – 11.4	34 – 36	35 – 36	0.1	0.2
3	11.5 – 18.4	33 – 36	35 – 36	0.1	0.3
4	18.5 – 26.4	32 – 36	34 – 36	0.1	0.4
5	26.5 – 36.0	31 – 36	33 – 36	0.1	0.5
6	37 – 54	-	-	-	1*

* For *handicap category* 6, subtract one full stroke for each Stableford point above 36 points.

Example:

If a player playing off handicap 11.2 returns a Stableford score of 32 points, his *EGA Handicap* becomes 11.3. If he then returns a Stableford score of 42 points, his *EGA Handicap* is immediately reduced by $(42-36) \times 0.2 = 1.2$ and his *EGA Handicap* becomes 10.1.

3.12.7 When a player's *EGA Handicap* is to be reduced from a higher *handicap category* to a lower *handicap category*, it must be reduced at the rate appropriate to the higher category only so far as to bring his *EGA Handicap* into the lower category and the balance of the reduction must be at the rate appropriate to the lower category.

Example: If a player playing off handicap 19.1 (*handicap category* 4) returns a Stableford score of 42 points, his *EGA Handicap* is reduced as follows:

$19.1 - (2 \times 0.4) = 19.1 - 0.8 = 18.3$, taking him into *handicap category* 3, now the reduction is 0.3 per point giving $18.3 - (4 \times 0.3) = 18.3 - 1.2 = 17.1$

3.12.8 Increases and reductions of a player's *EGA Handicap* must be made and registered by the *handicapping authority* as soon as practicable.

Note: It is the responsibility of the player to apply the increase or reduction to his *EGA Handicap* where required after a *qualifying round* for a score not yet recorded on his handicap record (see Clause 3.5.7).

3.12.9 A player's *EGA Handicap* cannot be reduced by returning an *EDS* score to a *handicap category* that is excluded from returning an *EDS*.

3.12.10 A player's *EGA Handicap* cannot be reduced by returning a 9-hole *qualifying score* or by returning a 9-hole *EDS* score to a *handicap category* that is excluded from returning a 9-hole score.

3.13 SUSPENSION AND LOSS OF HANDICAPS

3.13.1 The *national association* or the *handicapping authority* of a player may suspend the player's *EGA Handicap* if, in its opinion, he has deliberately failed to comply with his obligations imposed by the *EGA Handicap System*.

3.13.2 If it is established to the satisfaction of the player's *handicap committee*, after due investigation, that a player has failed to report (away) *qualifying scores*, the *EGA Handicap* of the player may be suspended for such a period as the *handicap committee* considers appropriate to obtain the necessary information to reinstate and adjust the player's handicap.

3.13.3 The player must be notified of the period of suspension and of any other conditions imposed. No player's handicap may be suspended without first affording the player the opportunity of appearing before the *handicap committee* of his *handicapping authority*.

3.13.4 Subject to any directions to the contrary issued by the *national association*, disciplinary proceedings with respect to an alleged offence committed at a player's *home club* must be initiated and determined by his *home club*. In all other cases, the player's *handicapping authority* must hear and determine the issue.

3.13.5 If a player is a member of more than one *affiliated club*, a club which is not his *home club* may not suspend his *EGA Handicap*.

3.13.6 If a player is suspended from membership of his *home club*, his *EGA Handicap* must be suspended automatically until the membership is reinstated.

3.13.7 A player is not eligible to compete in or enter any golf event which requires an *EGA Handicap* whilst his handicap is suspended.

3.13.8 The suspension of a player's handicap applies at all *affiliated clubs* of which the player is, or becomes, a member during the period of suspension.

3.13.9 *National associations* must direct the appeal procedure to be made available to a player who is dissatisfied with a determination under Clause 3.13.1–3.13.8.

Note: When exercising its powers described in Clause 3.13.1–3.13.7, the *handicap committee* must ensure compliance with any relevant legal procedures.

3.13.10 Except when a player changes handicapping authorities, a player's *EGA Handicap* is immediately lost when the player ceases to be a member of any *affiliated club* or *national association*.

3.14 RESTORATION OF HANDICAPS

3.14.1 A player, whose *EGA Handicap* has been suspended under the provisions of Clause 3.13.1 and 3.13.2, can regain his *EGA Handicap* in such manner as the *handicap committee* of his *handicapping authority* decides subject to the provisions of Clause 3.14.3.

3.14.2 If the *EGA Handicap* of a player is to be reinstated within 12 months of the date on which the handicap was suspended or lost in accordance with Clause 3.13.6 or 3.13.10, it must be reinstated at the same handicap the player last held, except under exceptional circumstances. In all other cases the player will be allotted a new *EGA Handicap* after he has complied with the requirements of Section 3.11.

Note: If applicable, a *handicap review* should be carried out before the handicap is reinstated.

3.14.3 When allotting a new handicap to a player, the *handicap committee* must give due consideration to the handicap last held. A *handicap category* 1 handicap must not be allotted without the written approval of the *national association* or the *area authority*, if so delegated.

3.15 HANDICAP REVIEW

3.15.1 The *handicap committee* of a *handicapping authority* must perform a *handicap review* at least once a year, typically at the end of the year. All players in *handicap categories* 1 – 5 are to be included.

Note: In addition, a player may also request a *handicap review*, at any time, under the provisions of Clause 3.15.3 and subject to the configuration of the handicap system by the *national association*.

3.15.2 The *handicap review* is based on a minimum of eight eligible *qualifying scores* submitted over a 12-month period (see online Handicap Review Appendix).

Note: The period may be extended to 24 months for those players who have fewer than eight scores.

3.15.3 It is recommended that the *handicap committee* applies any appropriate handicap adjustments (up or down). However, adjustments are always ultimately at the discretion of the *handicap committee*.

Note 1: The *national association* or, if so delegated, the *area authority*, must ratify all adjustments recommended under the *handicap review* to the *EGA Handicap* of players in *handicap category* 1, or to the *EGA Handicap* of a *handicap category* 2 player if such an adjustment were to bring him into *handicap category* 1.

Note 2: The maximum handicap adjustment for a player is restricted relative to his *handicap category* (see online Handicap Review Appendix).

EXPLANATORY NOTE: HANDICAP REVIEW

The main objective of any *handicap review* is to assess whether the scoring performance of players in *handicap categories* 1 to 5 is representative of the players' ability as indicated by their current *EGA Handicap*. The *handicap review* is an essential procedure within the *EGA Handicap System*.

It is designed to check that players have handicaps that reasonably reflect their ability.

In order to assist *handicap committees* to make informed decisions, and with the aim of promoting consistency and uniformity, a *handicap review* report is available. The report identifies players whose scoring performance is outside the expected range of their current handicap. Handicaps of such players should be considered for adjustment. Other evidence regarding a player's ability may also be considered.

If all parties, particularly the *handicapping authority* and the players, fulfil their responsibilities, the vast majority of players require no adjustment under the *handicap review*.

3.16 GENERAL PLAY

3.16.1 The *handicap committee* may, at its discretion, adjust the *EGA Handicaps* of players outside the *handicap review* process on an individual basis; when exercising this discretion the *handicap committee* is strictly limited in its actions by 3.16.2–3.16.7.

3.16.2 When a player's *handicap committee* has significant evidence that a player's current *EGA Handicap* does not reflect his playing ability, then the *handicap committee* may adjust the *EGA Handicap* as it considers appropriate, but by no less than one whole stroke.

3.16.3 If the *handicap committee* considers that the *EGA Handicap* of a *handicap category* 1 player is to be reduced or that the *EGA Handicap* of a *handicap category* 2 player is to be reduced into *handicap category* 1, the *handicap committee* must refer the matter to the *national association*, or *area authority*, if so delegated.

3.16.4 When deciding whether to implement or recommend an adjustment of *EGA Handicap*, the *handicap committee* of the player's *handicapping authority* must consider all available information regarding the player's golfing ability. In particular:

- the frequency of rounds played;
- the frequency of rounds played in proportion to the number of *qualifying scores* returned;
- the number of *qualifying scores* recently returned, not only scores to and below his *EGA Handicap*, but also scores in the *buffer zone* or worse;
- the player's achievements in match play, four-ball (match play/stroke play) competitions and other non-*qualifying rounds*.

Note 1: The *handicap committee* should be particularly vigilant both of players whose general standard of play is known to be improving, and of players who have medical or other reasons, which may adversely affect their scoring ability.

Note 2: The *handicap committee* may use the *handicap review* report to help identify players whose *EGA Handicap* may need a *general play* adjustment and for the purpose of determining an appropriate (adjusted) *EGA Handicap*.

3.16.5 The *handicap committee* must advise the player of any change to his *EGA Handicap* under this Clause and the change becomes effective when the player becomes aware of the adjustment.

Note: If the player is dissatisfied with the committee's decision, he must be afforded the opportunity to appear before the committee. At that meeting, the player must also be informed of his rights and obligations imposed by the *EGA Handicap System*. When exercising the powers described in Clauses 3.16.1–3.16.4, the *handicap committee* must recognise and apply relevant legal procedures.

3.16.6 *National associations* must direct the appeal procedure to be made available to a player, who is dissatisfied with a determination under Clauses 3.16.1–3.16.5.

3.16.7 The *handicap committee* or the body organising a competition at a club which is not the player's *handicapping authority* may reduce his handicap, if it has valid reasons to conclude that his *EGA Handicap* is too high. Any reduction made under this clause applies only to the competition for which it is made. The player's *home club* must be notified and provided with full details.

GUIDANCE NOTE: GENERAL PLAY ADJUSTMENTS

The *handicap committee* should adjust the player's handicap between *handicap reviews* if there is compelling evidence that his handicap does not reflect his current playing ability.

It is important to note that one very good or very bad isolated score is not a valid argument to reduce or increase the handicap more than the system prescribes. A *general play* adjustment is a reduction or increase based on the general performance of the player. If there is a pattern indicating a mismatch of the handicap and actual scores, the committee would be justified to make the adjustment.

General play adjustments are reactions to situations that can occur during the year and should be made under the same basic criteria used in the *handicap review*.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A: HANDICAP RECORD SHEET

Player:		Mrs. P.A.R. Greenside			Code:		National Association code		
Home Club:		Up Hill Golf Club			M/F		Date of Birth		18.01.72
Date of event	Date of score entry	Round	Venue	Event	Score	Adjusted Qualifying score	CBA	(Shifted) Buffer Zone	Revised EGA HCP
	01.01.17			HR					18.1
15.09.16	15.09.16	1	H.G.C.	STP-18	93	33	+1	(34 - 37)	18.1
14.08.16	14.08.16	1	H.G.C.	STP-18	90	36	0	33 – 36	18.0
13.08.16	13.08.16	1	H.G.C.	SFD-18	32	32	0	33 – 36	18.0
01.07.16	01.07.16	1	Home Club	PAR-18	+1	37	0	33 – 36	17.9
18.06.16	18.06.16	1	H.G.C.	SFD-09	17	35	--	35 – 36	18.2
03.06.16	04.06.16	1	Home Club	EDS-18	31	31	0	33 – 36	18.2
23.05.16	26.05.16	1	H.G.C.	SFD-18	29	29	-2RO	(31 – 34)	18.1
11.05.16	11.05.16	2	Home Club	STP-18	92	35	-2	(30 – 34)	18.1
10.05.16	10.05.16	1	Home Club	STP-18	NR/DQ	33	+1	(34 – 37)	18.5
27.04.16	27.04.16	1	Home Club	STP-18	98	31	-1	(32 – 35)	18.4
15.04.16	18.04.16	1	H.G.C.	SFD-09	15	33	--	35 – 36	18.3
21.03.16	21.03.16	1	Home Club	SFD-18	34	34	0	33 – 36	18.2
	01.01.16			HR					18.2

Legend:

STP = Stroke Play competition

-09 = played over 9 holes

NR = No Return

SFD = Stableford competition

-18 = played over 18 holes

DQ = Disqualification

PAR = PAR competition

EDS = Extra Day Score

Recommendation:

Where practicable, it is recommended that individual players can access their own handicap record sheet.

Note:

The format and examples presented on the sample handicap record may be adapted according to the golfing culture of the country and the discretionary options taken by the *national association*.

EGA Playing Handicap Table

Sample Valley Golf Club

YELLOW TEES MEN			BLUE TEES MEN			BLUE TEES LADIES			RED TEES LADIES		
5714 Meters			5233 Meters			5233 Meters			4978 Meters		
PAR 72 CR 70.6 SLOPE 124			PAR 72 CR 68.5 SLOPE 120			PAR 72 CR 74.4 SLOPE 133			PAR 72 CR 71.8 SLOPE 125		
EGA Handicap		EGA Playing Handicap									
From	To		From	To		From	To		From	To	
+4,0	+3,8	+6	+4,0	+3,8	+8	+4,0	+3,4	+2	+4,0	+3,9	+5
+3,7	+2,9	+5	+3,7	+2,9	+7	+3,3	+2,5	+1	+3,8	+3,0	+4
+2,8	+2,0	+4	+2,8	+1,9	+6	+2,4	+1,7	0	+2,9	+2,1	+3
+1,9	+1,1	+3	+1,8	+1,0	+5	+1,6	+0,8	1	+2,0	+1,2	+2
+1,0	+0,1	+2	+0,9	+0,1	+4	+0,7	0,0	2	+1,1	+0,3	+1
0,0	0,8	+1	0,0	0,9	+3	0,1	0,9	3	+0,2	0,6	0
0,9	1,7	0	1,0	1,8	+2	1,0	1,7	4	0,7	1,5	1
1,8	2,6	1	1,9	2,8	+1	1,8	2,6	5	1,6	2,4	2
2,7	3,5	2	2,9	3,7	0	2,7	3,4	6	2,5	3,3	3
3,6	4,4	3	3,8	4,7	1	3,5	4,3	7	3,4	4,2	4
4,5	5,3	4	4,8	5,6	2	4,4	5,1	8	4,3	5,1	5
5,4	6,2	5	5,7	6,5	3	5,2	6,0	9	5,2	6,0	6
6,3	7,1	6	6,6	7,5	4	6,1	6,8	10	6,1	6,9	7
7,2	8,1	7	7,6	8,4	5	6,9	7,7	11	7,0	7,8	8
8,2	9,0	8	8,5	9,4	6	7,8	8,5	12	7,9	8,7	9
9,1	9,9	9	9,5	10,3	7	8,6	9,4	13	8,8	9,6	10
10,0	10,8	10	10,4	11,2	8	9,5	10,2	14	9,7	10,5	11
10,9	11,7	11	11,3	12,2	9	10,3	11,1	15	10,6	11,4	12
11,8	12,6	12	12,3	13,1	10	11,2	11,9	16	11,5	12,3	13
12,7	13,5	13	13,2	14,1	11	12,0	12,8	17	12,4	13,2	14
13,6	14,4	14	14,2	15,0	12	12,9	13,6	18	13,3	14,1	15
14,5	15,4	15	15,1	16,0	13	13,7	14,5	19	14,2	15,0	16
15,5	16,3	16	16,1	16,9	14	14,6	15,3	20	15,1	16,0	17
16,4	17,2	17	17,0	17,8	15	15,4	16,2	21	16,1	16,9	18
17,3	18,1	18	17,9	18,8	16	16,3	17,0	22	17,0	17,8	19
18,2	19,0	19	18,9	19,7	17	17,1	17,9	23	17,9	18,7	20
19,1	19,9	20	19,8	20,7	18	18,0	18,7	24	18,8	19,6	21
20,0	20,8	21	20,8	21,6	19	18,8	19,6	25	19,7	20,5	22
20,9	21,7	22	21,7	22,5	20	19,7	20,4	26	20,6	21,4	23
21,8	22,6	23	22,6	23,5	21	20,5	21,3	27	21,5	22,3	24
22,7	23,6	24	23,6	24,4	22	21,4	22,1	28	22,4	23,2	25
23,7	24,5	25	24,5	25,4	23	22,2	23,0	29	23,3	24,1	26
24,6	25,4	26	25,5	26,3	24	23,1	23,8	30	24,2	25,0	27
25,5	26,3	27	26,4	27,3	25	23,9	24,7	31	25,1	25,9	28
26,4	27,2	28	27,4	28,2	26	24,8	25,5	32	26,0	26,8	29
27,3	28,1	29	28,3	29,1	27	25,6	26,4	33	26,9	27,7	30
28,2	29,0	30	29,2	30,1	28	26,5	27,2	34	27,8	28,6	31
29,1	29,9	31	30,2	31,0	29	27,3	28,1	35	28,7	29,5	32
30,0	30,8	32	31,1	32,0	30	28,2	28,9	36	29,6	30,4	33
30,9	31,8	33	32,1	32,9	31	29,0	29,8	37	30,5	31,3	34
31,9	32,7	34	33,0	33,8	32	29,9	30,6	38	31,4	32,2	35
32,8	33,6	35	33,9	34,8	33	30,7	31,5	39	32,3	33,1	36
33,7	34,5	36	34,9	35,7	34	31,6	32,3	40	33,2	34,0	37
34,6	35,4	37	35,8	36,0	35	32,4	33,2	41	34,1	34,9	38
35,5	36,0	38				33,3	34,0	42	35,0	35,8	39
						34,1	34,9	43	35,9	36,0	40
						35,0	35,7	44			
						35,8	36,0	45			
Playing Handicap differential		+2	Playing Handicap differential		-1	Playing handicap differential		+9	Playing handicap differential		+4

1. Players Competing from Different Tees; or Men and Women Competing from the Same Tees

The *Course Rating* reflects the playing difficulty of the golf course for a *scratch golfer*. The *Course Rating* and the *Slope Rating*, together one of the foundations of the *EGA Handicap System*, reflect the playing difficulty of the golf course for players with a handicap other than scratch. The course with the higher *Course Rating* is more difficult. When players compete in the same competition, but play from different tees (men vs. women, but also men vs. men or women vs. women) or when men and women play from the same tees, the player playing from the set of tees with the higher *Course Rating* should receive additional *handicap strokes* equal to the difference between the *Course Ratings*. However, the formula of the *EGA Playing Handicap* (see Clause 3.9.3) compensates for that difference and automatically adjusts the *playing handicaps* accordingly.

Different tees may also have a different Par, but Par is not a standard of the difficulty of a golf course. Par is only included in the formula of the *playing handicap* because the *EGA Handicap System* is also based on Stableford scores for reasons of stroke control (see EN: Relevance of Par). This means that, in stroke play and match play handicap competitions, when players compete in the same competition but play from different tees, each with a different Par, the players playing from the set of tees with the higher Par receive additional strokes equal to the Par difference. First, the *playing handicap* should be determined and then the additional strokes are added to the *playing handicap* of the player(s) playing from the tees with the higher Par.

Example 1: If, in a stroke play or match play competition, men playing from the men's tees where the Par is 71 compete against women playing from the women's tees where the Par is 72, the women must add one stroke to their *playing handicap*.

Note: For handicapping calculations the additional stroke(s) must be disregarded.

Example 2: Mrs. A and Mr. B are partners in a mixed foursome competition (stroke play or match play only). The men play from the men's tees where the Par is 71 and the women play from the women's tees where the Par is 72. Mrs. A has a *playing handicap* of 21 and Mr. B of 7. Mrs. A must add one stroke to her *playing handicap*, so she will play off 22. The *playing handicap* of the team is: $50\% \times (22 + 7) = 29 / 2 = 14.5 \rightarrow$ rounded to 15

If less than full *playing handicaps* are recommended in such competitions (e.g. Four-ball stroke play), the percentage reduction in *playing handicaps* must also affect the adjustment for the difference between the Pars. The following procedure is recommended:

1. Determine the *playing handicaps*.
2. Apply the adjustment for the difference in Pars.
3. Apply the *handicap allowance* for the appropriate form of play (e.g. 90%).

Example 3: In a Four-ball stroke play competition, the men play from the men's tees where the Par is 71 and the women play from the women's tees where the Par is 72. Mrs. A has a *playing handicap* of 16. The *handicap allowance* for this competition is 90% of her adjusted *playing handicap*: $90\% \times \{16 + (72 - 71)\} = 90\% \times 17 = 15.3 \rightarrow$ rounded to 15.

Example 4: Mrs. A and Mr. B are partners in a mixed greensomes competition (stroke play or match play). The men play from the men's tees where the Par is 71 and the women play from the women's tees where the Par is 72. Mr. B has a *playing handicap* of 8 and Mrs. A of 21.

The recommended *handicap allowance* is 60% of the lower handicap + 40% of the higher handicap:

Mr. B receives 60% of 8 = 4.8 strokes.

Mrs. A receives 40% of her adjusted *playing handicap*: $40\% \times (21 + 1) = 8.8$ strokes.

The team receives $4.8 + 8.8 = 13.6 \rightarrow$ rounded to 14.

2. Handicap Allowances

The *EGA* recommends that the following *handicap allowances* apply in the following forms of play. A *national association* may at its discretion make the recommendations mandatory. The reference to handicaps in all cases refers to *playing handicaps*.

Match Play

Handicap strokes are to be taken according to the *handicap stroke index* (see Clause 3.9.7).

Singles:

The player with the higher handicap receives the full difference between the *playing handicaps* of the two players.

Foursomes:

The side with the higher sum of the *playing handicaps* of the partners receives 50% of the full difference between the aggregate handicap of each side (0.5 is rounded upwards).

Example:

Players A (*playing handicap* 11) and B (*playing handicap* 18) play a foursomes match against Players C (*playing handicap* 6) and D (*playing handicap* 12)

A and B receive: $50\% \times [(11 + 18) - (6 + 12)] = 50\% \times (29 - 18) = 50\% \times 11 = 5.5 \rightarrow$ rounded upwards = 6 strokes

Note: In mixed foursomes match play, *handicap strokes* are taken as assigned on the *handicap stroke index* for men.

Four-ball (Better-ball):

The player with the lowest *playing handicap*, who must play off scratch, must concede *handicap strokes* to the three other players based on 90% of the difference between the *playing handicaps*.

Note: In mixed four-ball match play, *handicap strokes* are taken as assigned on each player's respective *handicap stroke indices*.

Greensomes:

The partner with the lower *playing handicap* receives 60% of his *playing handicap* and the partner with the higher *playing handicap* receives 40% of his *playing handicap*. Both figures are added before rounding. The final figure (= the *playing handicap* of the side) is rounded (0.5 upwards). The side with the higher *playing handicap* receives the full difference between the handicaps of the two sides. If, in the above formats, players play from different tees with a different Par, see Section 1 in this Appendix.

Bogey, Par and Stableford Competitions

Handicap strokes are to be taken according to the *handicap stroke index* (see Clause 3.9.7).

Singles:

The player receives 100% of his *playing handicap*.

Foursomes:

The side receives 50% of the sum of the *playing handicaps* of the partners (0.5 rounded upwards).

Four-ball (Better-ball):

Each partner receives 90% of his *playing handicap*.

Greensomes:

The partner with the lower *playing handicap* receives 60% of his *playing handicap* and the partner with the higher *playing handicap* receives 40% of his *playing handicap*. Both figures are added before rounding. This final figure (= the *playing handicap* of the side) is rounded (0.5 upwards). *Handicap strokes* are to be taken according to the *handicap stroke index*.

Players with a “plus” handicap give one or more strokes to the course, commencing at stroke index 18.

Note 1: In a mixed foursome or greensome *handicap strokes* are taken as assigned on the *handicap stroke index* for men.

Note 2: In a mixed four-ball *handicap strokes* are taken as assigned on the player’s respective *handicap stroke indices*.

In the above formats, when players compete in the same competition but play from different tees with a different Par, no extra adjustment for the difference in Pars will be applied to their *playing handicaps* since the formula of the *playing handicap* (see Clause 3.9.3) compensates for that difference.

Stroke Play

Singles:

The player receives 100% of his *playing handicap*.

Foursomes:

The side receives 50% of the sum of the *playing handicaps* of the partners (0.5 rounded upwards).

Four-ball (Better-ball):

Each partner receives 90% of his *playing handicap*.

Handicap strokes are to be taken according to the *handicap stroke index*.

In mixed four-ball stroke play, *handicap strokes* are taken as assigned on each player’s respective *handicap stroke indices*.

Greensomes:

The partner with the lower *playing handicap* receives 60% of his *playing handicap* and the partner with the higher *playing handicap* receives 40% of his *playing handicap*. Both figures are added before rounding. The final figure (= the *playing handicap* of the side) is rounded (0.5 upwards).

In the above formats, when players compete in the same competition, but play from different tees with a different Par, see Section 1 of this Appendix.

Notes:

Note 1: *Handicap allowances* in a handicap competition must be laid down by the Committee in the conditions under which the competition is to be played (Rules of Golf, Rule 33-1).

Note 2: The committee in charge of a competition to be played over an extended period may provide, in the conditions of the tournament, that a player’s *EGA Handicap* may be changed during a competition.

Note 3: In handicap competitions over 36 holes, *handicap strokes* should be given or taken on a basis of two 18-hole rounds.

Note 4: Hole-by-hole play-off. When extra holes are played in handicap competitions, *handicap strokes* should be taken in accordance with the *handicap stroke index*.

Note 5: Players with a “plus” handicap give one or more strokes to the course, commencing at stroke index 18.

APPENDIX D: HANDICAP STROKE INDEX ALLOCATION

Rule of Golf 33-4 of the Rules of Golf requires Committees to “publish a table indicating the order of holes at which *handicap strokes* are to be given or received”.

To provide consistency at *affiliated clubs*, it is recommended that the allocation is made with the following considerations:

- It is an established fact that the stroke index allocation has virtually no influence on the Stableford result and therefore on handicap adjustments.
- It is of paramount importance for match play that the strokes to be received at all handicap differences are evenly spread over the 18 holes.
- This is best achieved by allocating the odd numbered strokes to the more difficult of the two nine holes, usually the longest nine, and the even numbers to the other nine.
- The degree of difficulty of a hole related to Par is a factor for the sequence of allocation.
- The degree of difficulty can be derived from the *bogey rating* or by comparing the average score of a group of club members to Par.
- Try to achieve one stroke index table for all tees, men and women.
- The player who is to receive strokes will generally need his equalizer starting on the most difficult Par 5 and subsequently on the most difficult Par 4 followed by the other Par 5s. Next in order are the Par 4s and finally the Par 3s.

A very difficult Par 3 may take priority over a Par 4. Difficult holes are generally a Par 5 not reachable in 3 or a Par 4 not reachable in 2 for the average player.

Allocating the stroke index numbers to the holes could be done in the following way:

- Split the 18 holes in 6 groups of 3; 1, 2, 3 then 4, 5, 6, etc.
- Stroke index 1 to 4 not on holes 1, 2, 3 or 16, 17, 18.
- The aggregate of the 6 groups of holes should be between 27 and 30.
- If index 1 is allocated to the first of the two nine holes, index 2 should be placed in the second.
- All odd indices on the first nine and all even on the second nine, or the other way round, is preferred, also in view of nine-hole rounds.
- Avoid index 1 to 6 on adjacent holes.

Example:

Assign index 1 to the most difficult of 7, 8, and 9. For 9 holes 4, 5, 6.

Assign index 2 to the most difficult of 13, 14, and 15.

Assign index 3 to the most difficult of 4, 5, and 6. For 9 holes 7, 8, 9.

Assign index 4 to the most difficult of 10, 11, and 12.

Assign index 5 to the most difficult of 1, 2, and 3.

Assign index 6 to the most difficult of 16, 17, and 18.

Allocate indices 7 to 12 to the six groups evenly, 7 does not have to fit in group 7, 8, 9.

Allocate indices 13 to 18 in the same way.

Result:

Holes 1, 2, 3	Index 5, 7, 15	Sum 27
Holes 4, 5, 6	Index 3, 11, 13	Sum 27
Holes 7, 8, 9	Index 1, 9, 17	Sum 27
Holes 10, 11, 12	Index 4, 12, 14	Sum 30
Holes 13, 14, 15	Index 2, 10, 18	Sum 30
Holes 16, 17, 18	Index 6, 8, 16	Sum 30

APPENDIX Z: SYSTEM OPTIONS FOR NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

(This appendix does not need to be translated by the *national associations*)

The purpose of this Appendix is to explain:

1. How the *EGA Handicap System* may be configured in different ways according to *national association* preferences;
2. The implementation steps to be considered for each configuration;
3. What discretionary options are available for all *national associations* implementing the system, whatever the configuration.

The *national association* must provide the *EGA* with documentation detailing their chosen configuration alternative as well as any discretionary options selected under the system. A template for reporting all of the above is available on the *EGA* website. The *national association* must 1) choose the relevant system configuration, 2) take necessary steps with regard to implementation and 3) select relevant discretionary options. This procedure is set out below.

1. System configuration

Different system configurations enable *national associations* to modify certain elements of the handicap system design. This would be done, for example, (i) to guarantee that appropriate precision could be maintained for those players who expect precision from the system whereas simpler system structures can be made available for those players who do not need it, or have no desire for it, and (ii) to cater for different golf playing practices within a country.

• Configuration 1

In this configuration, the system is implemented exactly as described in Parts 1 to 3 in this manual.

EGA Handicap Category	4	5	6
Handicap Range	18.5 – 26.4	26.5 – 36.0	37 – 54
Buffer Zone	As described in Parts 1 – 3		-
Included for CBA calc.			No
Affected by CBA			No
Upwards Adjustments			Not required (<i>general play</i>)
Handicap Review			Not required

• Configuration 2

In this configuration, amendments are made for *handicap category 5*, as summarized in this table and described below:

EGA Handicap Category	4	5	6	
Handicap Range	18.5 – 26.4	26.5 – 36.0	37 – 54	
Buffer Zone	As described in Parts 1 – 3		-	
Included for CBA calc.			No	No
Affected by CBA			No	No
Upwards Adjustments			By <i>handicap review</i> and <i>general play</i> only	Not required (<i>general play</i>)
Handicap Review			At least annually, and possibly more frequently	Not required

- **Configuration 3**

In this configuration, amendments are made for *handicap categories* 4 and 5, as summarized in this table and described below:

EGA Handicap Category	4	5	6
Handicap Range	18.5 to 26.4	26.5 to 36.0	37 to 54
Buffer Zone	-	-	-
Included for CBA calc.	No	No	No
Affected by CBA	No	No	No
Upwards Adjustments	By <i>handicap review</i> and <i>general play</i> only	By <i>handicap review</i> and <i>general play</i> only	Not required (<i>general play</i>)
Handicap Review	At least annually, and possibly more frequently	At least annually, and possibly more frequently	No

2. Implementation steps

- **Implementation steps for system configuration 1**

Under system configuration 1 no action needs to be taken, but discretionary options must be chosen (see section 3 of this Appendix).

- **Implementation steps for system configuration 2**

Under system configuration 2, the following substitutions need to be applied to the *EGA Handicap System*. In addition, discretionary options must be chosen.

Replace the corresponding tables and clauses under Parts 1 – 3 with the ones below (appropriate modifications to the clauses are underlined):

Buffer Zones (Definitions)

Handicap Category	Buffer Zone (Stableford points)	
	18-hole Scores	9-hole Scores
1	35 – 36	not applicable
2	34 – 36	35 – 36
3	33 – 36	35 – 36
4	32 – 36	34 – 36
5	-	-
6	-	-

3.6.3.b. The round is cancelled due to a committee decision and the score is below the *buffer zone* in *handicap categories* 1 – 4, or the score is below 36 Stableford points in *handicap categories* 5 – 6.

3.7.2 Only players in *handicap categories* 1 – 4 are taken into account for the CBA calculation. The calculated CBA result affects players of *handicap categories* 1 – 4.

3.12.4 If a player returns a *qualifying score* with fewer Stableford points than his *buffer zone* or records a *NR*, subject to review by the *handicap committee*, his *EGA Handicap* is increased by 0.1, in *handicap categories* 1 – 4.

3.12.6. *EGA Handicaps* must be adjusted as follows:

Handicap Category	EGA Handicap	Buffer Zone		Stableford-points below the buffer zone: add only	Subtract for each Stableford-point above the buffer zone:
		18-hole Scores	9-hole Scores		
1	plus – 4.4	35 – 36	-	0.1	0.1
2	4.5 – 11.4	34 – 36	35 – 36	0.1	0.2
3	11.5 – 18.4	33 – 36	35 – 36	0.1	0.3
4	18.5 – 26.4	32 – 36	34 – 36	0.1	0.4
5	26.5 – 36.0	-	-	-	0.5*
6	37 – 54	-	-	-	1*

* For *handicap categories 5 – 6*, subtract the corresponding value for each Stableford point above 36 points.

3.15.1 The *handicap committee* of a *handicapping authority* must perform a *handicap review* at least once a year, typically at the end of the year. All players in *handicap categories 1 – 5* are to be included.

Note: In addition, a player in *handicap category 5* may also request a *handicap review*, at any time, under the provisions of Clause 3.15.3.

• Implementation steps for system configuration 3

Under system configuration 3, the following substitutions need to be applied to the *EGA Handicap System*. In addition, discretionary options must be chosen.

Replace the corresponding tables and clauses under Parts 1 – 3 with the ones below (appropriate modifications to the clauses are underlined):

Buffer Zones (Definitions)

Handicap Category	Buffer Zone (Stableford points)	
	18-hole Scores	9-hole Scores
1	35 – 36	not applicable
2	34 – 36	35 – 36
3	33 – 36	35 – 36
4	-	-
5	-	-
6	-	-

3.6.3.b The round is cancelled due to a committee decision and the score is below the *buffer zone* in *handicap categories 1 – 3*, or the score is below 36 Stableford points in *handicap categories 4 – 6*.

3.7.2 Only players in *handicap categories 1 – 3* are taken into account for the *CBA* calculation. The calculated *CBA* result affects players of *handicap categories 1 – 3*.

3.12.4 If a player returns a *qualifying score* with fewer Stableford points than his *buffer zone* or records a *NR*, subject to review by the *handicap committee*, his *EGA Handicap* is increased by 0.1, in *handicap categories 1 – 3*.

3.12.6 EGA Handicaps must be adjusted as described below:

Handicap Category	EGA Handicap	Buffer Zone		Stableford-points below the buffer zone: add only	Subtract for each Stableford-point above the buffer zone:
		18-hole Scores	9-hole Scores		
1	plus – 4.4	35 – 36	-	0.1	0.1
2	4.5 – 11.4	34 – 36	35 – 36	0.1	0.2
3	11.5 – 18.4	33 – 36	35 – 36	0.1	0.3
4	18.5 – 26.4	-	-	-	0.4*
5	26.5 – 36.0	-	-	-	0.5*
6	37 – 54	-	-	-	1*

* For *handicap categories 4 – 6*, subtract the corresponding value for each Stableford point above 36 points.

3.15.1 The *handicap committee* of a *handicapping authority* must perform a *handicap review* at least once a year, typically at the end of the year. All players in *handicap categories 1 – 5* are to be included.

Note: In addition, a player in *handicap categories 4 – 5* may also request a *handicap review*, at any time, under the provisions of Clause 3.15.3.

2. Discretionary Options

There are a number of clauses in the *EGA Handicap System* providing options for which each *national association* must define directives to the *handicapping authorities*. The options are described in the relevant clause, or in a note to the clause. Rather than the note, the *national association* can insert the national policy under the same clause in its own translation or publication of the *EGA Handicap System*.

Part 1 Definitions

- Period for preferred lies to be determined by the *national association*. See also 2.6.1; 3.1.14

Part 3 Handicapping

- Clause 3.1.4 Delegate authority to the *area authority*
- Clause 3.1.8 Assume responsibility of *handicapping authority*, and define for what group of players
- Clause 3.1.11 Discretion to suspend the application of *CBA* for all or certain *handicap categories* and to permit *affiliated clubs* to apply this discretion on an individual competition basis, (see also 3.7.9)
- Clause 3.1.12 Determine limitations to application of 9-hole scores and *EDS*, see 3.6.1 c. and 3.8.1-5
- Clause 3.1.15 Require successful examination on the Rules of Golf before allotment of handicap
- Clause 3.1.18 Discretion to impose eligibility restrictions for competition entry based on an *EGA Handicap*, (see also 3.8.4)
- Clause 3.6.1 c Restrict application of 9-hole *qualifying scores* to specific *handicap categories* and to a maximum number per year
- Clause 3.8.2 Limit number of *EDSs* per year
- Clause 3.8.3 Designate course(s) for *EDSs*
- Clause 3.8.4 Exclude *handicap categories 2 – 6* from *EDS*
- Clause 3.11.2 Limit *handicap category 6* to 45
- Clause 3.12.2 Discretion to add requirements to a player's handicap record



THIS WATCH HAS SEEN TIMELESS TRADITIONS.
AND LEGENDARY EXCELLENCE.



OYSTER PERPETUAL DAY-DATE 40
IN PLATINUM



THE R&A
ST ANDREWS



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