

World Handicap System Explained

The basis of the system is that every player has a **Handicap Index** based on his or her personal form and ability. The Index is calculated from the scores for the most recent games played and is updated according to the scores submitted for any qualifying round (competitions, general play etc.). So, the WHS now allows golfers to register scores for handicapping purposes during a general play round. Acceptable scores include those played with friends, colleagues and in societies.

A player's Handicap Index enables a notional handicap that they are to play off to be obtained for whatever course they are about to play – anywhere in the world. The key figure for this is the **Slope Rating** for the course in question. Every course has a rating based on the perceived difficulty of the course in question. There should be a notice advising the Slope Rating for the course in question.

The **Course Handicap** is calculated from the formula:

$$\text{Course Handicap} = \frac{\text{Handicap Index} \times \text{Slope Rating}}{113}$$

As an example, a player with a Handicap index of, say, 16.9 playing off the white tees at Lutterworth which has a Slope rating of 130 will play their round off a Course Handicap of:

$$\frac{16.9 \times 130}{113} = 19.4$$

The good news is that you don't need to carry a calculator or slide rule to work the Course Handicap out because it will be shown, along with the course Slope Rating on a table in a prominent location near the first tee

Having established the individual's Course Handicap for the course in question, the next, and most important question, is "**How many shots do I get?**". This depends on the **Playing Handicap** which varies depending on the nature of the competition/game to be played according to the table below.

As an example, the player described above is playing in a midweek stableford. This is an Individual competition and it is seen from the table that this has a Mandatory Handicap Allowance of 95% for this type of competition and so his Playing Handicap is 95% of 19.4 i.e. 18.4 and so he will get 18 shots.

However, if he is playing in a 4 ball team match against, say, another club (Fourball Matchplay), he will have a Mandatory Handicap Allowance of 90% and so will have a Playing Handicap of 90% of 19.4 i.e. 17.5. So, if the lowest Playing Handicap of the four players is, say, 15, he will get 3 shots from that player.

Summary: Handicap Index x Slope /113 = Course Handicap

Course Handicap x Mandatory Handicap Allowance = Playing Handicap

PLAYING HANDICAP:

MANDATORY HANDICAP ALLOWANCES TABLE

FORMAT OF PLAY	TYPE OF ROUND	MANDATORY ALLOWANCES TABLE
STROKEPLAY	Individual	95%
	Individual Stableford	95%
	Individual Par/Bogey	95%
	Individual Maximum Score	95%
	Fourball	85%
	Fourball Stableford	85%
	Fourball Par/Bogey	90%
MATCHPLAY	Individual	100%
	Fourball	90%
STROKEPLAY	Foursomes	50% of combined team handicap
	Greensomes	60% low handicap + 40% high handicap
	Pinehurst/Chapman	60% low handicap + 40% high handicap
	Best 1 of 4 Stroke Play	75%
	Best 2 of 4 Stroke Play	85%
	Best 3 of 4 Stroke Play	100%
	All 4 of 4 Stroke Play	100%
	Scramble (4 players)	"25%/20%/15%/10% from lowest to highest handicap"
	Scramble (2 players)	35% low/15% high
	Total score of 2 match play	100%
	Best 1 of 4 Par/Bogey	75%
	Best 2 of 4 Par/Bogey	80%
	Best 3 of 4 Par/Bogey	90%
4 of 4 Par/Bogey	100%	