



World Handicap System – FAQs

Below are a series of FAQs to help your understanding of the new World Handicap System which will be launched on 2 November, 2020.

These are split into four categories:

- General questions on WHS
- Your index and how it works
- Golf club and committees
- Competing and general play

These will be part of a working document which will be regularly updated and available via our website www.Englandgolf.org

1) WHS general

Question	Response
Why are things changing?	There is one standard set of rules in golf so it makes sense to unify the six different handicapping systems currently in operation. This will make the game more inclusive and equitable across the world.
What is a slope rating?	The slope rating indicates the difficulty of a golf course for the 'bogey' golfer relative to the scratch player. The course rating indicates the number of strokes the scratch golfer is expected to take from a set of tees under normal playing conditions. The course is also rated for a 'bogey' golfer and it is the relationship between the two ratings which indicates the slope rating.



<p>Where can I get a copy of the WHS rules?</p>	<p>The Rules of Handicapping will be produced in the same format as the current Rules of Golf. Golf clubs will have printed and digital copies available.</p> <p>These will be available in the first half of 2020.</p>
<p>How do I find out more about WHS?</p>	<p>First point of reference should be our website and whs.com and then via workshops, club resource packs, social media etc</p>
<p>When will handicaps switch over to WHS?</p>	<p>The WHS launch date has been set as Monday, 2 November, 2020</p>
<p>How will WHS prevent handicap manipulation?</p>	<p>Event organisers still have responsibilities to manage and administer events which are fair to all competitors. Under WHS, if a player fails to submit a score the handicap committee will investigate and take appropriate action. The committee has the option to apply penalty scores, reset a handicap index, consider disciplinary procedures, or withdraw a handicap index for an agreed period (following relevant processes and procedures).</p>
<p>What is the range of the rating values?</p>	<p>Slope rating values range from 55 through to 155.</p>



2) Your index

Question	Response
If my handicap index is calculated to one decimal point, what will be my exact handicap?	A player's handicap index is calculated to one decimal place. When the course handicap is calculated it will be rounded to the nearest integer.
What is the maximum course handicap if the maximum handicap index is 54?	The course handicap will likely exceed 54.0 if playing a course with a slope rating of 114 or higher. There is no maximum course handicap.
If I think my handicap index is wrong what should I do?	First of all, speak with your club as they have the option to complete a handicap review if an index is not representative of playing ability.
Do I enter competitions using my handicap index or my course handicap?	Competition entry should be based on your handicap index. This will be clarified in the terms of competition.
Can I use my handicap index abroad?	Yes – you will be able to convert your handicap index to a course handicap for the tees you play from overseas. If pre-registered, these scores can be returned to your home club for handicap purposes
As a golfer who plays a very small number of competitions, I suspect I will not have 20 scores recorded over the last two years. Can I still have a handicap index?	Those players who do not have the full 20 scores at transition will have a handicap index allocated by the same process as an initial handicap would be allocated and developed. Moving forward you will be able to submit both social and competitive scores to build up a fully developed handicap record.



	<p>Players are encouraged to return sufficient scores during 2020, either in competitions or by supplementary scores, to reach the magic 20 scores. This will create a handicap index indicative of current playing ability.</p>
<p>I'm a member of an overseas club – where will my handicap be based/managed?</p>	<p>You will nominate a home club to administer your handicap as you do now. We recommend this is in the country of your main residence and where you play most golf.</p>
<p>For how long are my last 20 scores valid? And what happens if I have a break in membership?</p>	<p>Scores will not expire.</p> <p>Your handicap index will only be valid if you are a member of an affiliated golf club.</p>
<p>Do I have to be a member of a golf club to have WHS handicap?</p>	<p>Yes – a recognised handicap index is a benefit of being an affiliated member.</p>
<p>My current handicap is 11.6. What will be my new handicap index?</p>	<p>Your transition handicap will be dependent on your 'best eight from last 20' scores returned from the previous two years. During the late summer of 2020, golfers will be able to see their handicap index displayed alongside their current handicap and see how it varies with each score entry. A transition calculation is available for those with less than 20 scores in their handicap record.</p>
<p>What will happen to my handicap index if I have a really good round?</p>	<p>The score will very probably become part of the 'best eight calculation and you will likely see a reduction in your index.</p>



	An additional 'exceptional score' reduction may be applied depending on how good your score was compared to your current handicap index.
As a plus handicap golfer, how do I calculate my course handicap?	Your handicap index will have a minus value and the same calculations will be applied using the tables or other resources to find your course handicap.
Who is my best contact if I have a WHS or handicap index query?	The first point of contact will be your home club. They should be able to assist as they have been educated and provided with various WHS resources. They will have access to the county handicap adviser for further advice if needed.
How do I calculate my course handicap?	Clubs will either provide a relevant table or the golfer can use a free online calculator or app. Or you could do it manually using the formula: Handicap Index X (slope rating ÷ 113) = Course Handicap
How do I find out who sits on my club's handicap committee and what role they fulfil?	A handicap committee must consist of at least three people. The majority of the committee must be club members. A club secretary/manager can advise on names. It is their job to ensure WHS rules are followed and accurate handicap indexes are issued.
Will I use my full course handicap or are there allowances for different formats of play?	There will still be allowances for events which have been revised and are based on historical playing data. These revised allowances will provide for equity across all formats of play giving all participants the opportunity of success and are, within GB&I, mandatory for event organisers to follow.



I'm new to golf: How do I obtain a handicap index?	Score cards totalling 54 holes need to be returned to the handicap committee (3x18 holes, 6x9 holes or a combination of both). An initial handicap index will then be awarded.
I'm struggling to play to my current handicap from white tees. Will the new system make things even more difficult for me?	Not at all. With an averaging system, your handicap will be responsive to your current ability. You should also be encouraged to play from a shorter tee set (providing it has a rating value), as the system will calculate a course handicap from your handicap index for that set of tees.



3) Golf Clubs

Question	Response
Our club pro manages all the members' handicaps as we don't have a handicap committee: are we OK to still do this?	No – under terms of affiliation each affiliated club must have a handicap committee made up of at least three members. The majority on any committee must be golf club members. Your current situation needs resolving swiftly as it is in breach of current CONGU rules
We seem to struggle to get volunteers.	England Golf will support the club in the recruitment and retention of volunteers via its club support officers and volunteer manager.
As a club pro, can I have a handicap index?	Yes – following the same WHS Rules in returning scores for handicap allocation.
As a club we are keen to inform our members about WHS. Will England Golf provide additional WHS resources we can use?	Yes. Between now and transition to WHS England Golf will provide resources, information and workshops for club representatives. They will then be able and equipped to cascade information to their members.
What is a bogey golfer?	This is a term used when carrying out a course rating. It represents the ability of a golfer (20 handicap for men, 24 for women) on a course of average difficulty.
How will WHS affect the CSS value?	A daily Playing Conditions Calculation (similar to CSS) is calculated from all scores from all tees during that day. Scores must be returned as soon as possible and before midnight. The PCC is applied to the handicap calculations for all players, not just those playing from specific tees.



<p>As a club, do we need any special equipment or hardware for WHS?</p>	<p>Clubs must employ a system which allows golfers to register before play and return scores. Ideally, this should be via an online system. Conversion tables to allow a handicap index to be translated into a course handicap must be available in a prominent place.</p>
<p>As a competition secretary, do results need to be processed on the day of the event or can I do them later the next week?</p>	<p>Results should be processed promptly to ensure scores have been entered correctly. However, WHS does not rely on a competition being closed to update handicap records.</p>
<p>What are 'Terms of Competition'?</p>	<p>It is a rule of golf that every committee publishes terms of competition prior to their events. This will include dates, frequency, entry process, format of play, handicap allowance, tees used, process of deciding ties and other information. Full details are available in the Official Guide to the Rules of Golf, Committee Section 1B and 5A.</p>
<p>With WHS appearing to be much more automated, will there still be a need for handicap committees?</p>	<p>Handicap committees at every club are vital for the integrity of any handicap system. The requirements and responsibilities of a handicap committee are listed in the WHS rules.</p>
<p>How long will it take our committee to calculate handicap changes?</p>	<p>The system will automatically update at midnight. This is done on central software, not by the club. However, handicap committees will still be able to complete relevant reviews and communicate these to members.</p>
<p>Will golfers retain their current CDH number?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>



How do I calculate a score differential?	The system will complete the calculations. However, England Golf will provide further details of the actual calculation method as part of the WHS workshop roll-out.
Will we still be using Systems such as Handicap Master/ Club V1 and Intelligent Golf?	England Golf are in discussion with ISVs (Independent Software Vendors) about licensing under WHS. It is our aim that golf clubs will see little or no disruption to handicap services.



4) Competing/general play

Question	Response
For multi-round events such as a club championship, would a player use their initial handicap index for each round?	It is recommended that the handicap index at the start of the competition is used for each round of the event. This must be stated in the terms of competition. The final decision rests with the committee.
Will buffer zones still exist?	No - buffer zones will not be part of the World Handicap System.
Can players still N/R and gain a 0.1 increase?	There are no 0.1 increases under WHS. A hole that is started but not completed will be recorded as a net double bogey. Any holes not played will be allocated as a net par. The adjusted score is added to the player's record.
What formats of play are defined as acceptable for handicap purposes?	<p>Competition or social scores from medal, Stableford, par/bogey and max score – as a single golfer. Team and pairs formats are currently not acceptable. If other formats are played outside GB&I and are acceptable in the jurisdiction in which they were played, then they will also be acceptable for your handicap record.</p> <p>Please note: additional playing history from other formats/events may be used during annual reviews by the handicap committee.</p>
Can we continue to use Winter Handicaps outside our playing season?	No. From 2 November, 2020 WHS will be the handicap index used by all golfers at all times.



<p>What happens if I do not complete my round?</p>	<p>If you are playing a nine-hole round – then all 9 holes must be played for the score to be included in your record.</p> <p>If playing an 18-hole round you must complete at least 10 holes for the score to be returned. Any holes not played will be allocated a net par or net par plus one, before the score is processed.</p>
<p>Our club only offer qualifying events during the summer months. Will this still apply?</p>	<p>After the introduction of WHS, clubs may still have a recognised playing season. However, as long as the course is playing to its measured length and the rules of golf are followed, players will be able to return scores throughout the year from authorised formats.</p>
<p>What do I need to do when I arrive to play golf?</p>	<p>Register/sign in as normal.</p> <p>Utilise the resources available to determine your course handicap for the set of tees being used.</p> <p>Check the handicap allowance according to the terms of competition or format of play (i.e. full handicap, percentage of handicap) and calculate your playing handicap for that event. Once play is complete, return your score for processing in the system.</p>
<p>Do I have to record all scores?</p>	<p>Players should submit all singles competition scores and have the ability to pre-register and submit scores from social games played in accordance with the rules of golf. Accuracy of a player’s handicap index will be improved the greater the number of scorecards submitted.</p>



When playing other courses can I submit a score card to my home club?	Yes – you can record all pre-registered scores that follow the rules of golf and are authorised formats of play.
How can my work/pub golf society access and use the WHS calculations?	In short, they can't. WHS handicap indexes will only be available to affiliated golf club members. However, if an individual playing in a society outing is also a member of a golf club that person can pre-register with his club an intent to hand in a card from an event played according to the rules of golf.