

USGA Handicap Recommendations

http://www.usga.org/playing/handicaps/survival_kit/responsibilities_glance.html

The USGA says golf associations should send an annual notice to club members (or even hold a seminar!) before the start of the season.

The notice should include information specific to your club, such as where scores are to be returned, how handicap cards or labels are issued, when handicaps are revised, and which scores are going to be designated as tournament scores.

In addition, the notice should explain **every player's fundamental responsibilities** in the USGA Handicap System:

- How to adjust a gross score for handicap purposes
- How to know if an adjusted score is acceptable for posting
- How to post an adjusted score for all acceptable rounds including tournament rounds
- How to post an away score

It should also include:

- A list of all the Handicap Committee's policies
- Handicap adjustment powers of the Handicap Committee
- Penalties for players failing to return scores

The annual notice may be supplemented with copies of the booklet entitled Uncle Snoopy Wants YOU to Know How to Use Your Handicap. Both are written especially for the player and cover score recording, adjusting and posting. Copies of the brochures are available at a nominal cost from your authorized golf association or the USGA Order Department.

Display Tables, Ratings, and Handicap Lists

Course Handicap Tables — A player needs to consult a Course Handicap Table in order to convert his or her USGA Handicap Index to a Course Handicap for the tees being played. The Tables, which are based on USGA Slope Ratings, are issued to golf clubs by authorized golf associations. The Committee is responsible for posting these Tables in the clubhouse and displaying copies on or near the first tee of every course at the club.

USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating of the Club —The USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating from every set of tee markers should be printed on the club's scorecard

and posted in a prominent place at the club, preferably by means of a poster certified by the authorized golf association. A player needs to know these Ratings in order to post a score. The Ratings, the date of play, the player's name or identification number and the adjusted score (including the correct score type designation) constitute a complete score entry for handicap purposes. The Ratings should also be easily retrievable on the screen of a computer used for score posting.

Handicap Lists and Scoring Records — Each time USGA Handicap Indexes are revised, a list of Handicap Indexes along with current scoring records of all players in the club must be available for all members to see. It is preferable for one Committee member or club employee to be responsible for players' records and keeping Handicap Indexes up to date. Any errors or omissions in these lists can be identified to the Handicap Committee for appropriate action.

Faithfully Apply the System

An important job of the Handicap Committee is to ensure that all acceptable scores for handicap purposes are posted and available for peer review.

Make Score Posting Easy

Generally, the place for returning scores from all courses, home and away, should be convenient to make it as easy as possible for players to record every round played. The posted scores must be readily accessible to all members for peer review. The Handicap Committee may adopt a policy to accept scores returned by mail, facsimile, internet, or e-mail. If a policy to accept scores by mail, facsimile or e-mail is accepted, the Handicap Committee must designate an official(s) at the club who is authorized to receive these scores.

Scores returned by mail, facsimile, internet, or e-mail must be exposed to the same peer review as scores posted in person at the club. Scores may not be returned verbally over the telephone.

Take Action in Case of Failure to Post

A USGA Handicap Index shall be adjusted up or down if the player does not turn in all acceptable scores or otherwise does not observe the spirit of the USGA Handicap System. The Handicap Committee determines the amount of adjustment.

It is equitable to enter the score and/or a penalty score when a player fails to post a score. A penalty score is a score with the corresponding Ratings equal to the lowest handicap differential in the player's scoring record used to compute his or her last USGA Handicap Index. If the omitted score is unusually high, a penalty score should equal the highest differential in the player's scoring record.

The manual explains these discretionary remedies. In case of a player's repeated failure to comply with the USGA Handicap System, the Committee may withdraw the player's Handicap Index.

Cooperate with Other Committees

The Handicap Committee should provide guidance to club officials and other club committees on

- The allocation of handicap strokes to each hole on the course according to USGA guidelines
- Determination of par
- Course set-up
- Maintaining the playing difficulty of the course
- Determining which scores are to be identified as tournament scores for handicap purposes

Also, the Handicap Committee should examine the results of competitions and take appropriate action if net scores appear out of line.

There are many other responsibilities and recommended procedures of the Handicap Committee. They are discussed in detail in The USGA Handicap System manual.