



GHIN Handicapping

GHIN is a computation service which provides calculations to member clubs of an authorized golf association who elects to use the GHIN service for their calculations. As such, any questions regarding the computations or other specifics of the GHIN service in Hawaii must be directed to the HSGA. GHIN does not deal directly with individual clubs or individual golfers. The USGA sets handicap policy, but gives clubs the latitude to administer those policies. With more than 19,000 clubs using the USGA Handicap System, the USGA cannot directly control each case.

The club is the cornerstone of the USGA Handicap System. A Handicap Index are issued by clubs which can be one of three types. A handicap committee is required to oversee the handicap system for all types of golf clubs. The Handicap Committee needs to oversee the scoring records of their members and it is one of the most important bodies at the club level, accountable for ensuring the game is played on a fair and equitable basis.

The basic premise of the USGA Handicap System is that every player will try to make their best score and will post every acceptable round for peer review. The system does not contemplate clubs failing to protect the integrity of the system. Should any club fail to fulfill their responsibilities, the USGA Handicap System will not be efficient. Further, if a facility does not have the ability to monitor the individual scores, the club should take action and perhaps find some new folks for the Handicap Committee who are willing to take a more proactive approach. If a player at any club posts incorrect scores, the Handicap System does not apply but the player must deal with his own faults.

That being said, if there are a few players in the field that are not following the Handicap System to the letter and are sporting a Handicap Index that are questionable, this is the fault of the player's Handicap Committee, not the USGA Handicap System. If a player has a Handicap Index that does not indicate their potential, the Handicap Committee should step in and 1) make sure that the player follows the Handicap

System correctly and/or 2) adjust the Handicap Index as per Section 8-4 of the *USGA Handicap System* manual to reflect the player's true potential. The USGA Handicap System, when followed correctly by all, will produce near equity every time.

A Tournament Committee is encouraged to insert a condition of competition for their events allowing the Tournament Committee to modify the Course Handicap of any contestant during the competition. This must be stated prior to the competition in a notice to competitors or on the entry form. This would enable the Committee to adjust a player's Course Handicap in extreme cases. For example, the Committee may allow one exceptionally low score, but would give the Committee authorization to ensure that other rounds would not result in a low net score. It is also important to realize that only a Handicap Committee issuing a Handicap Index to a player has the ability to modify the Handicap Index. A Tournament Committee can only modify a Course Handicap for any competitor in their event.

You may ask yourself, what is a golf handicap and how is it calculated? No it is not a disability, but a golf handicap is derived from a handicap system and the USGA Handicap System is the most widely recognized handicap system in the United States.

USGA Handicap System

The purpose of the USGA Handicap System™ is to make the game of golf more enjoyable by enabling players of differing abilities to compete on an equitable basis. The System provides a fair [Course Handicap](#) for each player, regardless of ability, and adjusts a player's [Handicap Index](#) up or down as the player's game changes. At the same time, the System disregards high scores that bear little relation to the player's potential ability and promotes continuity by making a [Handicap Index](#) continuous from one playing season or year to the next. A [Handicap Index](#) is useful for all forms of play, and is issued only to individuals who are members of a licensed [golf club](#).

Two basic premises underlie the [USGA Handicap System](#), namely that each player will try to make the best score at every hole in every round, regardless of where the round is played, and that the player will post every acceptable round for [peer review](#). The player and the player's [Handicap Committee](#) have joint responsibility for adhering to these premises.

Each player locates the [Handicap Index](#) on the appropriate [Course Handicap Table](#) and finds the corresponding [Course Handicap](#). A [Course Handicap Table](#) can be found in the clubhouse or near the first tee of a golf course. There will be a [Course Handicap Table](#) for each set of tees used by men and by women. The number of strokes a player receives ([Course Handicap](#)) is based upon the relative difficulty ([Slope Rating](#)) of the course.

What is a handicap index?

A "[Handicap Index](#)" is the USGA's service mark used to indicate a measurement of a player's potential ability on a course of standard playing difficulty. It is expressed as a number taken to one decimal place (e.g., 10.4) and is used for conversion to a *Course Handicap*. A [Handicap Index](#), issued by a *golf club*, is a number that represents the potential ability of a player on a course with a [Slope Rating](#) of 113. The [Handicap Index](#) is updated and reissued at established revision dates set by [authorized golf associations](#). A player is responsible for knowing the [Handicap Index](#) issued to the player at the most recent

revision. A player must convert a [Handicap Index](#) to a [Course Handicap](#). For example, a [Handicap Index](#) of 16.2 would convert to a [Course Handicap](#) of 20 at a course with a [Slope Rating](#) of 140. A handicap index is the result of a mathematical calculation based on scores returned.

A [Handicap Index](#) compares a player's scoring ability to the scoring ability of a [scratch golfer](#) on a course of standard difficulty. A player posts scores along with the appropriate [USGA Course Rating](#) and [Slope Rating](#) to make up the [scoring record](#). A [Handicap Index](#) is computed from no more than 20 scores plus any [eligible tournament scores](#). It reflects the player's potential because it is based upon the best [handicap differentials](#) posted for a given number of rounds, ideally the best 10 of the last 20 rounds. A [Handicap Index](#) is portable from course to course, as well as from one set of tees to another set of tees on the same course. A player converts a [Handicap Index](#) to a [Course Handicap](#) based on the [Slope Rating](#) of the tees played.

What is a course handicap?

A [Course Handicap](#) is the number of handicap strokes a player receives from a particular set of tees at the course being played. To convert a [Handicap Index](#) to a [Course Handicap](#), a player takes the [Handicap Index](#) to a [Course Handicap Table](#) to find the corresponding [Course Handicap](#). Each set of rated tees will have a different [Course Handicap Table](#) for men and women based on its [Slope Rating](#). It is the player's responsibility to determine the correct [Course Handicap](#), and to know the holes at which handicap strokes are to be given or received. A player's [Course Handicap](#) is determined by multiplying a [Handicap Index](#) by the [Slope Rating](#) of the course played and then dividing by 113. The resulting figure is rounded off to the nearest whole number (.5 or more is rounded upward). A player who has a [net score](#) that is equal to the [USGA Course Rating](#) for the tees played "has played to that player's handicap." In general, this will occur about once every four or five rounds. A [Course Handicap Table](#) is designed to determine a [Course Handicap](#). It is for use only with the [USGA Handicap System](#) by an [authorized golf association](#) and a [golf club](#) that has a valid [USGA Course Rating](#) and [Slope Rating](#).

For more information on the USGA Handicap System you may visit the USGA website ([click here](#)) or you may purchase a copy of this manual from us here at the HSGA.