

# Women's Handicapping

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Since the USGA's adoption of a new Golf Handicap System last December, the Women's Committee has received numerous inquiries as to whether it applies to women. At present the system applies to men only.

We are, however, now forming a special committee to determine whether a separate course rating procedure for women could be established feasibly and if it would make handicaps more equitable.

Our present handicap system for women is based on women's par. In computing women's par, the yardage figures recommended are not arbitrary, because some allowance should be made for the configuration of the ground and any other difficult or unusual conditions. Further, the severity of the hazards should be considered, especially on a hole where the par is doubtful. These provisions have made it possible to add a *full* stroke to par on an unusually difficult hole.

However, under the men's new system, which is based on the playing ability of a theoretical scratch golfer, each hole is rated on a *fractional* basis. The rating is the average score the golfer should make for every ten times he plays the hole. Ratings are made in tenths of a stroke.

This part of the system appeals to me inasmuch as it gives flexibility to course rating.

For the sake of discussion, let us take a 185-yard hole with a small green, severely trapped, and with a prevailing crosswind. Under our present women's system we would have to call it either a par 3 or a par 4. Par 3 probably would be too low and par 4 too high. But under the principles of the men's new system, we could rate it 3.5. Using this procedure for the entire 18 holes, we would arrive at, I feel, a more accurate course rating.

After determining the course rating, we would then take a player's ten best scores over a year or a full season and apply the *total* of them to a special table for stroke play handicaps designed for use only with such a system of course rating. Under the



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men's system, the ten best scores should be selected from a period of play covering at least 50 rounds.

Using a player's ten best scores, instead of five as under our present women's system, also appeals to me as it would seem to give a better picture of the player's ability.

As we handicap players for the purpose of establishing a fair basis of competition when players of different abilities compete, I would heartily endorse any system that would bring us closer to that objective.

However, much study should be given the subject, and we propose to examine it thoroughly this season, meanwhile continuing our present women's system. If we are to change later, we must be sure of full cooperation from all women's golf associations. Without this, it would be most difficult to introduce a new system successfully.