

# Changing to USGA Handicap System

By WILLIAM O. BLANEY

CHAIRMAN, USGA HANDICAP COMMITTEE

We have been asked many times what is the best method for a club to change over to the USGA Handicap System from some other system. Unless we know what the other system is or how the previous scoring records have been kept, our answer must be limited to generalities. Briefly, the following steps should be taken:

1. The club should have its course rated according to USGA methods as outlined in the USGA booklet "Golf Handicap System". It is preferable that this rating be done by a rating committee from the local golf association to which the club belongs so that the rating will conform to the standards used in rating neighboring courses. If the local association does not have a rating committee, the club should strongly urge the association to establish one. Failing this, the rating should be done by the club professional and two or three of the best member players after careful study of "Golf Handicap System".

2. An enlarged copy of Handicap Table A should be obtained from the USGA and posted prominently in the clubhouse as near as possible to the place where the handicap and scoring records are kept. Red lines should be drawn on either side of the handicap column under the course rating figure assigned to the course. This makes locating the proper handicap a quicker and more nearly certain process.

3. If existing club records include the last 50 or more scores for members, or if it is known that members have played 50 or more rounds during the past year or two and a record is available covering the lowest 10 scores, then the total of the lowest 10 scores for each such player should be applied to Handicap Table A and new USGA basic handicaps assigned to said players.

If scoring records do not contain sufficient information to carry out the sug-

gestions in the preceding paragraph, there are several satisfactory ways of establishing new USGA basic handicaps for club members. Two of the better methods are:



(a) Start the season with the handicaps produced under the former handicap system. When a player has recorded 10 consecutive scores, assign him a temporary USGA basic handicap by applying the average of the lowest 20% of his total number of scores to Table A. For example, if 13 consecutive scores have been recorded, the average of the lowest 3 (the nearest whole number to 2.6) should be used. If the 3 lowest scores average 79, Table A will show that a handicap of 10 should be assigned to the player on a course rated 70. If 22 scores have been recorded, the average of the lowest 4 (the nearest whole number to 4.4) should be used. These temporary handicaps should be adjusted frequently until 50 scores have been turned in, at which time permanent handicaps can be assigned according to the regular formula.

(b) For clubs having each player's 5 lowest scores recorded under a previous handicap system, add 5 scores equal to the highest of the five lowest scores and apply the total to Table A. For example, if a player's five lowest scores are 76, 77, 78, 79 and 80, add thereto five scores of 80, making a total of 790, which when applied to Table A will give the player a handicap of 10 if his course is rated 70. When 20 to 30 scores have been recorded for the

current season, check the handicap produced by the above method with one produced by applying the average of the lowest 20% of the player's total number of scores to Table A. If there is any difference, the lower of the two handicaps should apply.

Both of the above methods assume that every player has turned in all of his scores.

#### How To Obtain Scores

4. Several suggestions have been received on how to induce players to turn in all their scores. Rather than recommend any particular method, the best of these suggestions are briefly outlined below:—

(a) Have the man in charge of the scoreboard collect from every player completing a round either (1) his score card, or (2) his actual score. A golf manager, starter, caddie-master, or any other employee constantly on duty near the first tee or 18th green can do this task. This plan, of course, will not work at clubs having no regular employee on duty near the course.

(b) Have the caddie-master keep a list of every member who tees off. Alongside the entrance to the locker room, keep a pad of forms on which a member can write his name, score and the date, and put it in a Handicap Box provided for the purpose. Check the scores turned in with the starter's sheets, and for anyone not turning in a score and not having a valid excuse (such as not playing a full round), use for the missing round a score equal to the lowest score already posted on the player's record. (This method will upset the accurate scoring records of the players unless these fictitious scores are circled or otherwise marked to show they are not actual scores.)

(c) Have the man in charge of the golf shop or bag-room where players keep their clubs maintain a chart on which he is to record the dates on which each player takes out his clubs. Each week-end check the

chart against the scores actually turned in and apply a penalty to players not turning in all their scores. This penalty, for use in club tournaments only, might call for a reduction of 3 strokes from the handicap of players turning in less than 75% of their scores, 2 strokes for those turning in 75% to 84% of their scores, 1 stroke for those turning in 85% to 94%, and no strokes for those turning in 95% or more of their scores. This method is a bit complicated and will not be 100% perfect if some sets of clubs are kept at players' homes or in their lockers.

None of the above suggestions are perfect, all having some "out" about them. Perhaps a combination of two or more would prove satisfactory, and probably no one system will work perfectly at all clubs. We will, however, continue to entertain ideas on how to obtain all scores and will pass along the best of them through the pages of this JOURNAL.

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#### Every Golfer His Own Referee

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front of the markers and do numerous other things that are violations of the code and which give them a definite advantage over those who will not do such things.

These are only a few instances of violations that will only lead eventually to embarrassment. Get a copy of the Rules and study them. They are easily available. Unfortunately, most professionals instruct in the mechanics of the game, not the Rules. Few players in any sport read the Rules for themselves. They depend upon their coaches, and golf professionals could render a great service here.

If one does not have the time or desire to read the Rules, follow the Golden Rule. Every person wants to be treated squarely by others. Why not try the same treatment on others?

If every golfer played the game according to his own knowledge of right and wrong, he would, when in doubt, carefully avoid doing the wrong thing, and then he could be sure he was right.

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