The New USGA Handicap System

By WILLIAM O. BLANEY
CHAIRMAN, USGA HANDICAP COMMITTEE

After several years of research by the Handicap Committee, the United States Golf Association has adopted a new handicap system which will produce both Basic and Current Handicaps.

A *Basic Handicap* is designed to show an individual's inherent ability to play the game of golf, or, in other words, how well he can play when shooting his average best game.

A *Current Handicap* is designed to show the at-the-moment state of a player's game at any time during the season. It will tend to go up when he is "off" his game and down when he is "on" his game.

Heretofore the Association has recommended Basic Handicaps only. However, many golfers prefer Current Handicaps, and so the USGA Basic Handicap methods have been coordinated with the Current Handicap Methods of the Chicago District Golf Association to produce the new USGA system. We record our sincere appreciation of the cooperation of the Chicago Association, especially of its Handicap Committee Chairman, Thomas G. McMahon, who is also a member of the USGA Handicap Committee.

The new combination system will be published as soon as possible in booklet form. The following is a preliminary outline of the system:

Both types of handicap will be determined from a new style of handicap chart, to be known as the Handicap Differential Chart, shown on page 7. The term "Handicap Differential" as used in this system signifies the difference between a player's lowest ten scores and a figure equal to ten times the rating of the course on which the scores were made. Example:

10-Score total on course rated 72 950
Ten times course rating, or 72 720

HANDICAP DIFFERENTIAL 230

The new chart is designed to streamline and simplify handicap computation and eliminate the need for a large handicap chart covering ten or more different course ratings. It can be used at any course, irrespective of the course rating.

The chart is designed for use *only* at courses that have been rated in accordance with USGA recommendations. (Present ratings and methods of both the USGA and the Chicago District Golf Association will be acceptable for the time being.)

Methods of Computation

USGA Basic Handicaps are computed as follows: Total the lowest 10 of a player's last 50 scores and deduct from this 10-score total a figure equal to ten times the rating of the course on which the scores were made. Apply the resulting Handicap Differential to the USGA Handicap Differential Chart to determine the player's Basic Handicap.

When less than 50 scores have been posted, use a 10-score total equal to ten times the average of the lowest 20 per cent of all his available scores. No Basic Handicap will be issued unless a player has posted 6 scores.

USGA Current Handicaps are computed as follows: Total the lowest 10 of a player's last 15 scores and deduct from this 10-score total a figure equal to ten times the rating of the course on which the scores were made. Apply the resulting Handicap Differential to the USGA Handicap Differential Chart to determine the player's Current Handicap.

When less than 15 scores have been posted, use a 10-score total equal to ten times the average of all available scores except the five highest. No Current Handicap will be issued unless a player has posted 6 scores.

Each player should post or turn in to the proper authorities a score for every

Officers for the Coming Year

The officers of the USGA for 1953 are, from the left, John D. Ames, of Chicago, Secretary; Isaac B. Grainger, of New York, Vice-President; Totton P. Heffelfinger, of Minneapolis, President; Richard S. Tufts, of Pinehurst, N. C., Vice-President; Charles L. Peirson, of Boston, Treasurer. Their election took place during the annual meeting in January.

round of golf he plays, whether it be over the weekend or in the middle of the week.

Scores Off Home Course

Scores made on courses other than the player's home course also should be posted or turned in, but only after adjusting them for the difference between the ratings of the two courses.

Basic Handicaps should be revised three or four times a season or year, depending upon the length of the playing season.

When fewer than 50 scores have been posted, it is recommended that handicap revisions be made after each 5 additional scores have been posted until the required 50 have been reached.

Current Handicaps should be revised at least twice a month, or every two weeks.

When fewer than 15 scores have been posted, handicaps should be revised every time a new score is added. Such handi-

caps will be provisional until 15 scores are posted.

Persons who have played as many as 15 games at their home clubs and have not turned in all scores for posting are not qualified for provisional handicaps.

In all handicap computations, either Basic or Current, only scores made during the present and the last previous playing seasons, or years, shall be used.

Irrespective of which type of handicap is being used, scoring records at each club should be kept in such a way as to make available all necessary information to compute both Basic and Current Handicaps in case some members desire to compete in an event requiring the other type of handicap.

Choice of Type of Handicap

Each participating club and association will be free to decide whether to use Basic or Current Handicaps within its sphere of jurisdiction. In events involv-

ing players from more than one club or association, participating clubs and associations should decide *in advance* the type of handicap to be used. Both types of handicaps definitely should not be used in the same event, as the results will not be equitable. When the type of handicap to be used has been decided, participating clubs and associations should agree to maintain accurate and up-to-date records for that type.

Basic Handicaps can be used most successfully to determine eligibility for, and by participants in, national, inter-district and other large championships, tournaments and team matches.

Current Handicaps can be used most successfully in events within a single district, area or club.

Examples

Examples of handicap computation (for simplification, all examples below are based on a course rating of 72):

BASIC HANDICAP COMPUTATION

1. If lowest 10 of player's last 50 scores total 950, deduct 10 times course rating, or 720. This leaves a Handicap Differential of 230. Apply 230 to chart (it falls in 219 to 231 bracket) and find player's handicap at right of 19.

2. If lowest 10 of player's last 50 scores total 709, deduct 10 times course rating, or 720. This leaves a Handicap Differential of -11. Apply -11 to chart (it falls in -18 to -7 bracket) and find his handicap at right of 0.

3. If only 35 scores are posted and the average of the lowest 7 (20% of 35) is 86.2, multiply this average by 10 and get 862. Deduct 10 times course rating, or 720. This leaves a Handicap Differential of 142. Apply 142 to chart and get a handicap of 12.

CURRENT HANDICAP COMPUTATION

4. If lowest 10 of player's last 15 scores total 817, deduct 10 times course rating, or 720. This leaves a Handicap Differential of 97. Apply 97 to chart (it falls in 94 to 106 bracket) and find player's handicap at right of 9.

5. If only 9 scores are posted, deduct 5 highest. If average of remaining 4 is 97, multiply this average by 10 and get 970. Deduct 10 times course rating, or 720. This leaves a Handicap Differential of 250. Apply 250 to chart and get a handicap of 21.

USGA Handicap Differential Chart

To be used in computing both Basic and Current Handicaps under the new USGA Handicap System.

Locate the bracket within which the player's Handicap Differential falls. His handicap, either Basic or Current, will then be found in the handicap column at the right.

HANDICAP DIFFERENTIALS		HANDICAP
From	To	
- 56	- 44	+ 3
- 43	- 32	+ 2
- 31	- 19	+ 1
- 18	- 7	0
- 6	+ 6	1
+ 7	+ 18	2
19	31	3
32	43	4
44	56	5
57	68	6
69	81	7
82	93	8
94	106	9
107	118	10
119	131	11
132	143	12
144	156	13
157	168	14
169	181	15
182	193	16
194	206	17
207	218	18
219	231	19
232	243	20
244	256	21
257	268	22
269	281	23
282	293	24
294	306	25
307	318	26
319	331	27
332	343	28
344	356	29
357	368	30
369	381	31
382	393	32
394	406	33
407	418	34
419	431	35
432	443	36

NOTE: *If club handicappers desire to eliminate the step of deducting ten times their course rating from players' 10-score totals, they may create a handicap chart for their own course based on 10-score totals by adding ten times the course rating to the above Handicap Differentials.*