

# THE FALLACY IN SOME HANDICAP CONTROLS

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**H**ANDICAPS MUST be the result of actual performance on the golf course.

Beginners, players with physical handicaps and those of advanced age should have handicaps sufficient to protect their pride and sense of economics.

Some individuals, not athletically inclined, take a greater beating than we realize. If their handicaps are not high enough, no one wants them as a partner and they suffer the humiliation of being thrown up for grabs on the first tee every-time they play. Practical ostracism can be the result of our failure to provide them with handicaps to fit their ability.

Yet some golfers feel that a strokes-per-hole control, or limitation, on hole scores is necessary for handicap purposes. This is largely because they do not recognize the value of the controls in USGA Golf Handicap System for Men.

It is unfortunate that those who favor strokes-per-hole controls sometimes indulge in extravagant misrepresentation by saying that many miss shots intentionally for the sole purpose of obtaining higher handicaps. This is a serious indictment of those who play a gentleman's game.

What is the value of a strokes-per-hole control where players turn in improper total scores for handicaps?

However, we do not share that lack of faith in our golfing fraternity. The handicap viewpoint must assume the highest moral principles.

## **Control No. 1**

Our present general controls involve using the average of the lowest ten scores of the last fifteen rounds played. This eliminates the five highest scores from handicap computation.

This is done because the five highest may not, for many reasons, represent an



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individual's average ability. If six scores were listed that did not reflect one's average ability, only one score could enter the computation.

This form of control makes all handicaps approximately two strokes, on the average, lower than they would be if all of the last fifteen scores had been used.

The steady golfer's reduction in handicap would naturally be somewhat less than two strokes, in some cases nearer to one stroke. The erratic type of golfer, however, would experience a greater reduction as a result of not using the five highest scores of his last fifteen scores posted; in some cases this reduction would be nearer to three strokes.

## **Control No. 2**

For many years it has been a custom to reduce handicaps for match-play competition, but experience gained by extensive

statistical investigation has proved that this practice has been unnecessary where handicap systems with adequate controls are used.

Higher scores and higher handicaps provide the greatest opportunity for improvement and consequently require more adequate controls. Therefore, in the development of a handicap chart such as the new USGA Handicap Differential Chart, controls are set up to take care of the greater improvement potential among beginners and those who finally decide to take lessons and practice.

This additional control is built into the present chart. Here are some comparisons:

Differential	Handicap	Plus or Minus
44	36	-8
40	33	-7
36	30	-6
30	25	-5
24	20	-4
18	15	-3
13	11	-2
11	10	-1
5	5	0
2	3	+1
0	1	+1

Many golfers who would limit hole scores to two over par seem to be unaware of the fact that these controls are more equitable and simple.

The placing of a scratch man on the same two-over-par score per hole limit as a 36 handicap man is so obviously inequitable it does not merit discussion. However, the following should show how unfair that procedure is to high-handicap golfers:

Assuming course rating and par are both 72—

If he averaged two over par or more on all eighteen holes,

the differential would be 36

the maximum handicap would be 30

\* If he averaged one over par on five holes and two or more over par on the other holes per round,

the differential would be 31

the handicap would be 26

If he averaged one over par on five holes and two pars per round with the balance two or more over par,

the differential would be 27

the maximum handicap would be 23

Limiting a 36 handicap man to two over par on each hole, which equals 36 over par on 18 holes, with a resulting all time *maximum* handicap of 30, is the same as limiting an 18 handicap man to one over par on each hole, or 18 over par on 18 holes, with a resulting all time *maximum* handicap of 14, or limiting a scratch man to par on each hole or par on 18 holes, with a resulting all time *maximum* handicap of 1.

### Control No. 3

A further control lies in the fact that handicap chairmen are required to reduce handicaps two strokes as often as is necessary to assure themselves that neglect or refusal to enter all scores is satisfactorily adjusted.

If this does not correct the condition, of course, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors.

If further controls are necessary, which is doubtful, they can easily be applied.

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Incidentally, there is no point at all in complaining that one's handicap is too low while accepting conceded putts. The following was copied from the score card of the Canterbury Golf Club, in Cleveland:

"No player has the right, privilege or authority to concede any putt or other advantage to himself or to any other player whose score is to be entered in the handicap or event records of this club."

Unnecessary strokes which create unwarranted high scores are null and void and automatically expose offenders to two-stroke handicap penalties at clubs which impose handicap penalties.

Day in and day out friendly competition should be both match and stroke play handicap.

All scores should be recorded immediately after play on a score sheet or score board placed in a conspicuous and convenient location.