

Using the EWGA Golf Life Management System – Using Your Handicap Index

On the scorecard for every course, each hole is assigned a handicap stroke allocation number. (This can vary depending on the set of tees you play so be sure you find the stroke allocation for the tees you are playing.) The hole allocated as handicap-stroke hole number “1” is the hole where a player is most likely to need a stroke; the hole allocated as handicap-stroke hole “18” is the hole where a player is least likely to need a stroke.

As an example, let’s say that my frequent playing partner Nancy Hersey and I are going to play a friendly game from the Women’s Red Tees at Winston Trails Golf Club. Prior to playing I look up the Course in the EWGA GLMS Course database and see that the Slope for the Women’s Red Tees at Winston Trails is 119. I also look up Nancy in the GLMS Players lookup and find that her handicap index is 16.5 and from my Home Page I see that my index is 11.5. Using the GLMS Course Handicap Calculator I determine that my Course Handicap at this course is 12 and hers is 17. Now we have what we need to be ready to compete.

Because my Course Handicap is 5 strokes lower than hers I will need to “give” Nancy a total of 5 strokes when we play to see who wins our friendly competition. Nancy and I like to keep up with the holes each person wins (Match Play) and our overall score (Stroke Play).

In our Match Play competition, we first look at the score card and determine on which holes I must “give” Nancy a stroke. Since I have to “give” her 5 strokes, we note on the scorecard the Handicap-stroke holes numbered 1,2,3,4, and 5. On these holes, Nancy will get to subtract one stroke from her score before comparing her score on that hole to my score to see who wins the hole.

In our Stroke Play competition, each of us will simply subtract our Course Handicap from our total gross score to see who has the lowest “net” score. Given that we are playing two different kinds of competitions, it is possible that one of us will win the Match Play competition and the other could win the Stroke Play competition.

There are many different kinds of competitions where Handicap Indexes can be used, e.g., Singles Match Play, Singles Match Play vs. Par or Bogey, Four-Ball Match Play, Four-Ball Match Play vs. Par or Bogey, Best-Ball–of-Four Match Play vs. Par or Bogey, Foursome Match Play, etc. Each one has its own method of determining how Course Handicap allowances are used to score the competition. For information on how to use handicap allowances in different types of competitions, visit the Handicap section of the USGA website, www.usga.org. All of these scoring rules are designed to create equitable head-to-head competition among players of different playing levels.

To take advantage of this great opportunity to level the playing field no matter what your golfing ability, be sure to accurately establish and maintain your USGA Handicap Index!

For questions on how to activate or use your EWGA GLMS account, please send an email to Sara Hume, Palm Beach County Chapter Handicap Chair, at slhume@comcast.net, For more information on your USGA Handicap Index, visit the Handicaps section of the USGA website, www.usga.org.