Summary of SAGA Handicap Manual

01/04/2014

The following is a summary of important sections of the SAGA Handicapping Manual.

Definitions

**Exceptional score**
An exceptional score is highlighted on the players scoring records when the particular differential is 3 or more, less than a player’s handicap at the time the round was played.

**Forward Tees and Front Tees**
Forward Tees and Front Tees are Provincial Union rated tees which may be used by golfers who do not hit the ball far and or for those who would prefer to play a shorter course. Where a course has a forward tee and wishes to also rate the Womens tees for men these tees should be referred to as the Front Tee.

**Gross Score and Adjusted Gross**
A Gross Score is the sum of the scores achieved on each hole played. An adjusted gross score is a player’s gross score adjusted as per the SAGA Handicap System procedure for unfinished holes, conceded strokes, holes not played or not played under the Rules of Golf or adjusted maximum score on any hole.

**Handicap**
A “handicap” is the number of strokes a player receives to adjust their inherent scoring ability to the common level of scratch or zero-handicap golf. A player is eligible for an official SAGA Handicap provided he or she is a member of a club affiliated to the SAGA, WGSA and their relevant Provincial Unions, and has paid the annual affiliation and handicap fee. In addition the player shall be able to be identified through the membership profile entered on the SAGA Handicap System by the club which shall include his or her identity number or passport number. The players Identity or Passport number will only be accessible to the players nominated handicap club and the player.

A “plus handicap” is the number of strokes a player gives to adjust their scoring ability to the common level.

**Handicap Differential**
A “handicap differential” is the difference between a player’s adjusted gross score and the Standard Rating of the tee from which the player played.

**Junior golfers**
Golfers up to the age of 13 are classified as Junior Golfers. Male junior golfers are handicapped off the Men’s Tees, but should be permitted to play off the Forward or Front Tees where these are available.
No Return (N/R)
An N/R must be entered in the system where a round was not acceptable for handicap purposes. Examples:
a) When the score cannot be ratified by a playing partner or competitor.
b) When the types of clubs are limited (as in a competition in which only iron clubs are allowed).
c) When the round played includes the use of “Mulligans”.
d) Competition match Play Rounds.
e) When more than one ball is used.
f) When the course is not officially rated.
g) When the player uses non-conforming clubs, balls or tees, or with respect to Rule 14-3 (Rules of Golf) where an artificial device is used in the execution of stroke or when equipment is used in an unusual manner during the execution of a stroke.

Standard Rating (SR)
Is the standard rating for a course, or set of tees, and is a whole number derived from a combination of the standard length rating and applied difficulty factors. It represents the typical score a scratch golfer is expected to achieve, above or below the par for the course or set of tees. The Standard Rating is calculated by the Provincial Union to which the Club is affiliated to.

SCORES ACCEPTABLE

All scores
Scores must be entered on the SAGA Handicapping System for all 18-hole and 9-hole rounds except for rounds not acceptable as detailed in section listed above under “No Return”.

Adjusted Gross
For handicap purposes an Adjusted Gross must be submitted to the SAGA Handicap System. An Adjusted Gross is obtained by applying the below rules to adjusting the score achieved on each hole.

Maximum score on any hole
The maximum score on a hole for handicap purposes is 2 over par except where a player has two handicap strokes on a hole, in which case the maximum score allowed is 3 over par for that hole. Players should, where possible, complete every hole regardless of their partner’s or their opposition’s score. Where a player does not complete a hole they should record their most likely score.

Where a player is unsure of how to adjust the gross on each hole, the player may enter the scores achieved on each hole using the SAGA Handicap Terminal function “Hole-by-Hole” scoring, and the system will adjust the players actual score to the maximum allowed per hole and a total Adjusted Gross for the round.

Incomplete Holes and rounds
A player who starts but does not finish a hole or is conceded a stroke must record the most likely score they would have achieved. The number of strokes most likely to have been achieved should not exceed the maximum allowed on each hole as detailed above.

Scores on all Courses
Scores on all courses, at home and away, should be reported by the player, together with the Standard Rating. This includes rounds played outside Southern Africa, where terminology may use Rating or CSS instead of Standard Rating.
HANDICAP DIFFERENTIALS

How to Determine Differentials
A “handicap differential” is the difference between a player’s adjusted gross score and the Standard Rating (SR) of the course on which the score was made.

HOW TO COMPUTE HANDICAPS

Period of validity
Only scores (differentials) posted within the last 60 months are to be considered valid for handicap computation, irrespective of the number of scores available in a player’s scoring history.

Valid Differentials
All rounds entered with Adjusted Gross or Hole-by-hole scores are treated as differentials that can be used for the computation of an SAGA Handicap. All rounds posted as Non-Return (or Not-played) or those flagged by the system as “Auto closed” will not count as valid differentials.

Considered Differentials
Whenever a handicap is computed or re-computed by the SAGA Handicap System, the differentials considered for inclusion in that computation will be indicated in a different colour (currently red). Those differentials actually used in the calculation will be underlined as well.

Approximate calculation
The handicap computation is complex and will be managed by the SAGA Handicap Server. Those players wishing to perform an approximate check may do so as follows:

   a) Provided that there are at least 20 valid differentials, select the lowest 10 of these.
   b) Average these 10 to obtain an intermediate handicap accurate to one decimal place.
   c) Apply the Bonus of Excellence (currently 0.96) factor applicable to the intermediate handicap. This result is known as the exact handicap.
   d) The exact handicap should then be rounded to the nearest whole number as a playing handicap. Decimal values of 0.1 – 0.4 round down and 0.5 – 0.9 round up.

Where a player records two or more exceptional scores in the player’s last 20 rounds, then the player’s handicap will be calculated using a fewer number of their best scores, currently 8, instead of the standard 10.

A player’s handicap will be immediately recalculated when a second exceptional score is entered on the system and for any additional exceptional scores for as long as there are 2 or more in their last 20 scores.

Maximum Handicap Permitted
The maximum handicaps permitted by the SAGA Handicap System are as follows:

   Men         36 Handicap
   Women       36 Handicap

Less than 20 differentials available
   a) Fewer than 5 Scores: No handicap
   A Handicap shall not be issued to a player who has returned fewer than 5 valid differentials. Similarly, a player’s handicap shall be withdrawn when the number of valid differentials reduces to less than 5. This will be reflected by the system as a handicap of “n/a”.


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b) 5 to 19 Differentials

When at least 5, but fewer than 20 differentials are available, the handicap will automatically be computed by the SAGA Handicap System as follows:

a. Determine the number of differentials to be used from the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differentials Available</td>
<td>Differentials to be used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lowest 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 7</td>
<td>Lowest 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 – 9</td>
<td>Lowest 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 11</td>
<td>Lowest 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 – 13</td>
<td>Lowest 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 – 15</td>
<td>Lowest 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 17</td>
<td>Lowest 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – 19</td>
<td>Lowest 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Average the lowest differentials to be used (Column 2)
c. Multiply the average of the differentials to be used by 96%.
d. Rounding of the handicap will now take place as detailed above.

SCORING RECORDS

Scores
Scores should be returned at any SAGA Handicap Terminal every time a player completes an 18 or 9 hole Stroke Play round, no matter where it is played, provided such round may be verified by a playing competitor. Where it is not possible to enter a score at an SAGA Handicapping Terminal, alternative means are permissible, which include:

a. Having the score entered by the player’s home club
b. Entering the score on the www.handicaps.co.za website.
c. Entering the score through a cellular phone application (when available).

Fair handicapping depends upon full, accurate information of a player’s ability as reflected by his scores. All golfers interested in fair play should make sure that their scores, good and bad, are recorded. Incomplete records lead to unfair handicaps. Proper handicap records, maintained by the SAGA Handicap System, are essential to the correct computation of an SAGA Handicap.

Should a player fail to return a score on the handicap system he shall have a penalty score applied in accordance with the description below. Should a player persist in this practice, disciplinary measures as described in this Handicapping Manual should be applied.

Time limit on entering scores
A score should be returned within 72 hours of the completion of a round. The period of 72 hours is taken from 21:00 on the day of play to 21:00 three days later. Scores not returned during this period, will result in a penalty score being entered on the player’s behalf. Such scores are not to be deleted or modified by the player’s home club, unless exceptional circumstances warrant such action.

Penalty Scores
A penalty score is the lowest differential of the player’s last 20 recorded scores added to the Standard Rating of the course played, or such penalty as the club handicapper may decide, based on the circumstances around the failure of the player to enter the score. Where the late entered score is equal to or lower than the players lowest of their last 20 differentials, the system will allocate 1 penalty stroke for handicaps below 4, and 20% of the players handicap for
handicaps above 4 to a maximum of 4 strokes, and email the details to the club for the handicapper to review and adjust where necessary.

Each time a penalty score is allocated, either by the computer system, or the club handicapper, a test will be made according to Interim Revision rules.

**Nine Hole Score Entry**

9 hole scores are to be entered on the SAGA Handicap System where 9 or more holes have been completed but less than 18. The system will use the players adjusted gross for the 9 holes played and then add par for the other nine plus 50% of the player’s handicap rounded down for 0 – 36 handicaps and up for plus handicaps. This percentage may be changed by the SAGA Handicap Committee from time to time depending on statistical analysis.

For incomplete 18 hole rounds, 9 hole scores must be entered if at least 9 holes were completed. If fewer than 9 holes were played before leaving the course the score must be captured as N/R.

In the event of an 18 Hole / 9 Hole competition in which the entire field does not complete 9 Holes, the Tournament committee should decide if all rounds should be reflected as N/R or not.

**Scores used to compute a Handicap**

Scores for the automatically computed month-end handicap run will include all scores from the 1st of the month until the last day of the month both days inclusive. Where an interim revision or penalty score allocation causes a player’s handicap to be recomputed, all scores up to and including the one that caused the calculation will be used to compute a player’s new handicap. Where the handicap reduces because of this calculation, the reduction will become immediate. In cases where the player might have been granted an increase, such increase will not be granted until the next month end recalculation confirms the increase.

**Player belonging to More Than One Club**

a) A player may only receive a handicap at one club nominated by him, at which he has full playing privileges and is an affiliated member of either the SAGA or WGSA.

b) The player shall return all scores, achieved at any course, together with Standard Ratings and dates.

**Player changing his nominated handicap Club**

When a player changes the club which he nominates as his handicap club, he should first request his new club to register the request on the handicap system and then ensure his previous club approves the transfer. Once approved, the player’s full handicap profile and history will be automatically transferred by the system.

**FORWARD TEES**

**Development and Rating of Forward tees**

Clubs are encouraged to develop a set of Forward Tees using a combination of the front of existing Men’s Tees and the back of some Ladies Tees, and to have this set of “Forward Tees” rated by their Provincial Union, with an official SR rating then entered on to the handicap system. These Forward Tees can then be used by shorter hitters and older players, and allow them to record handicap scores, in the same manner as the other tees.

**Use of Forward Tees in Club Competitions**

Where a club has a set of officially rated Forward Tees, clubs are encouraged to allow senior and junior players to compete off the Forward Tees in club competitions by adjusting their handicaps downwards by the difference in the Standard Rating of the Forward Tee and the Standard Rating of the tee from which the club competition is taking place.
Example: Player handicap, 18. SR of Club Tee for competition 73, SR of Front Tee 70. Player would reduce his handicap for the competition by 3 shots, SR 73 – SR 70 = 3 so the Player’s handicap for the competition would be 18 – 3 = 15 strokes.

The player would record his adjusted gross score on the system using the SR of the Forward Tee as per normal.

Explanation Note: Handicaps are calculated using the differential between the Gross Score and the SR of the tee from which the player recorded an adjusted gross score, while competition scores are calculated using the Par of the course.

**Front Tees**
Where Clubs have had their Provincial Union rate the Ladies Tees using the men’s rating formula, these tees should be called Front Tees.

For further information and the complete handicap manual please visit [www.handicaps.co.za](http://www.handicaps.co.za) or contact your Club Administrator.