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WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM (WHS)

TOOLKIT - OCTOBER 2020

01 Golfer Toolkit

Contents



Overview

- 04 What is the WHS?
- 05 Why has the WHS been created?
- 06 How does the WHS work?

WHS Key Features

- 08 Course Rating & Bogey Rating
- 09 Slope Rating
- 10 Handicap Index
- 12 Course Handicap
- 13 Course & Slope Rating Table Example
- 14 Playing Handicap
- 15 Mandatory Allowances Table Example
- 16 General Play & Competition Rounds
- 18 Authorised Formats of Play Table Example
- 19 Resources Summary

Additional Information

- 22 WHS Challenge
- 23 WHS Gurus
- 24 The England Golf WHS Platform
- 25 Glossary of Terms
- 26 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- 28 Key Contact Details

Click on the name of the section to be taken directly to the relevant pages.



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OVERVIEW

What is the WHS?

What is the new World Handicap System?

The new World Handicap System (WHS) is designed to:

- Attract more players to the game
- Make handicapping easier to understand
- Give all golfers a Handicap Index that can be transferable from club to club

Developed by The R&A and USGA in collaboration with existing handicap authorities, the benefit of the WHS over the current system is it combines the Rules of Handicapping and the Course Rating System.

The key timings to be aware of in the build up to the new system going live are as follows:

- **14th July 2020:** WHS Toolkit 1.0 from England Golf is made available to all golf clubs in England ✓
- **15th July 2020:** England Golf launches 'Know the Score' WHS campaign ✓
- **W/C 19th October 2020:** England Golf WHS Platform launched ✓
- **2nd November 2020:** WHS adopted at all golf clubs across England



IMPORTANT

WHS comes into play on 2nd November 2020 in Great Britain and Ireland and will replace the current CONGU handicapping system. It will be part of a system used by over 15 million golfers in 80 countries worldwide.

Why has the WHS been created?

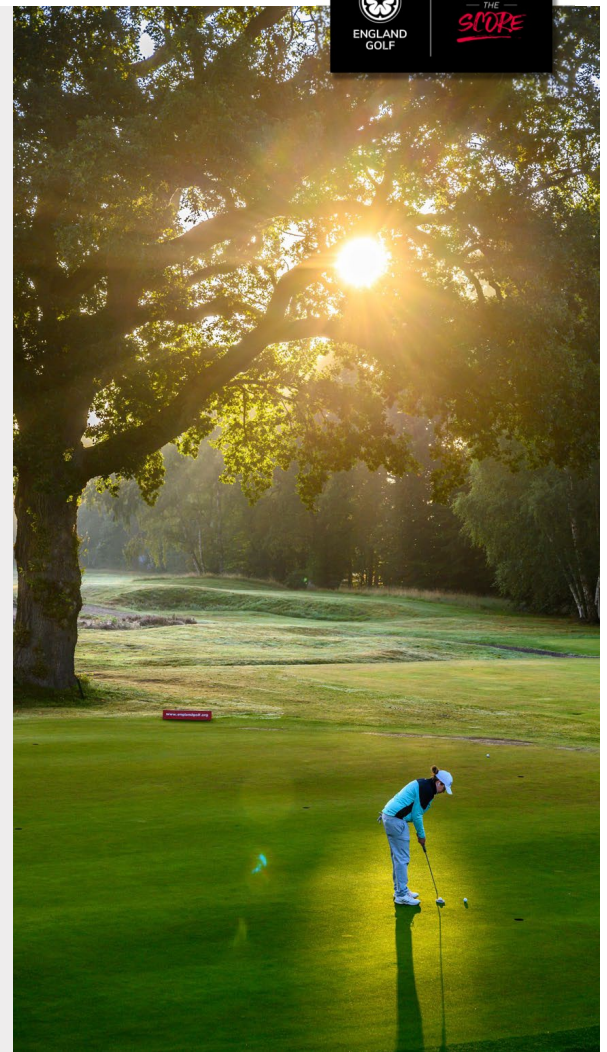
To allow as many golfers as possible the opportunity to:

- Obtain and maintain a Handicap Index and reduce barriers of entry
- Use their Handicap Index on any golf course around the world
- Compete, or play recreationally, fairly regardless of where they play

With golf being centred around one standard set of rules governed by The R&A and USGA, it makes sense to unify the previous six different Handicapping systems, making for a more inclusive and equitable sport.

The WHS was therefore developed with consideration given to club golfers who play both sporadically and more regularly.

With all golfers only initially required to submit scorecards for 54 holes to acquire a Handicap Index, the new WHS is less formidable for new players.



How does the WHS work?

For golfers in England, calculating a new Handicap Index will be front of mind when adopting the WHS. The process will begin in the same way throughout the world – by accurately measuring a player's golfing ability.

For regular golfers, this will be done by:

- The WHS Software calculating the average of the eight best scores from the previous 20 rounds

For new golfers, they will have to:

- Submit scorecards of 54 holes (3x 18 holes, 6x 9 holes or any combination of 9 and 18 holes) to their golf club's Handicap Committee

From this they will be provided an initial Handicap Index. After a player has achieved 20 scores, a 'fully developed' Handicap Index can be calculated to provide the most accurate representation of a player's ability.

To ensure a player has only one Handicap Index, the golfer will nominate a home club. The home club is determined by the player, but for practicality it is recommended this is where the player typically submits the most of their scores.





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WHS KEY FEATURES

Course Rating & Bogey Rating

What is Course Rating?

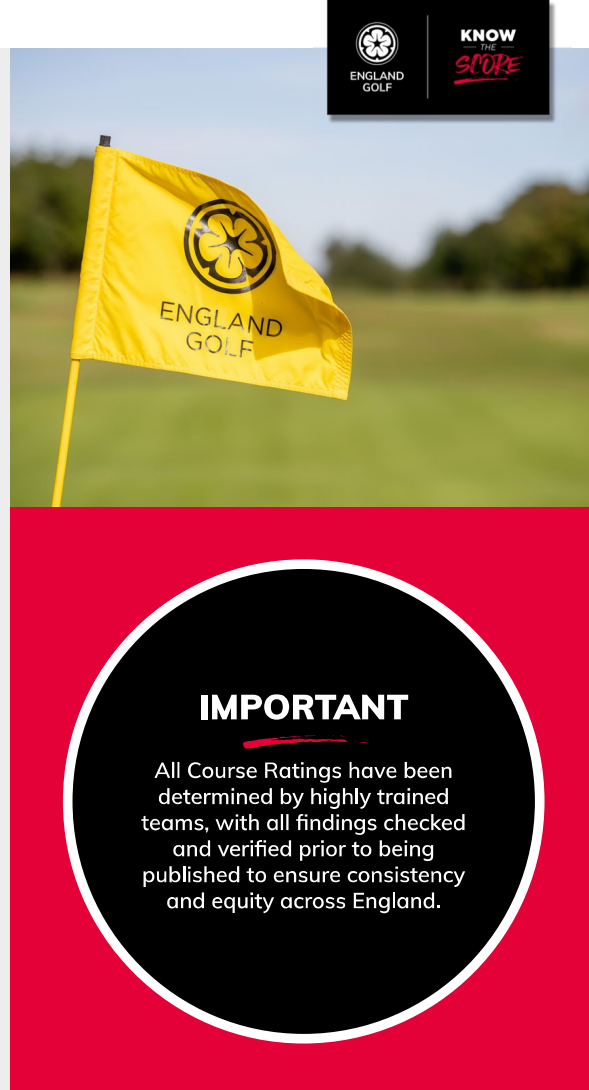
Golf Course Rating will be used to measure the playing difficulty of a golf course. It measures how many strokes a Scratch Golfer (a player who can play to a Course Handicap of zero on all rated golf courses) should take on any given course.

The rating does this by assessing two main types of challenges which, when combined, result in a common base from which to compare players' abilities:

- The playing length of the course
- The obstacles that a player will encounter (e.g. size of green and hazards)

A Bogey Rating is the measure of playing difficulty from a set of tees when played by a Bogey Golfer (a player who has a Course Handicap of approximately 20 for a male and 24 for a female).

Knowing the Course Rating and Bogey Rating allows the WHS to assess and rationalise the relationship between the two. From this, the difficulty of the course for all other levels of ability can be deduced.



IMPORTANT

All Course Ratings have been determined by highly trained teams, with all findings checked and verified prior to being published to ensure consistency and equity across England.

Slope Rating

What is Slope Rating?

Slope Rating is the number which indicates the relative playing difficulty of a course for Bogey Golfers, compared to Scratch Golfers. It is the difficulty comparison between a Bogey Golfer and a Scratch Golfer from the same set of tees.

$$\text{Bogey Rating} - \text{Course Rating} \times \text{Factor} = \text{Slope Rating}$$

(In simple terms it is the combination of the Course Rating and the Bogey Rating, which allows us to calculate the Slope Rating of a set of tees)

The use of Slope allows a player's Handicap Index to be portable from course to course and country to country. It also enables acceptable scores from any rated golf course in the world to be submitted for a player's handicap purposes.

The Slope Rating is a key component in calculating the number of strokes each player receives to play a particular golf course. Each set of tees will have a Slope Rating value between 55 and 155.

The higher the Slope Rating, the more additional strokes a Bogey Golfer will need to be able to play it. The lower the Slope Rating, the less strokes a Bogey Golfer will require.

NOTE

The Slope Ratings are gender specific and the tee which a golfer plays from must have a Slope Rating for each gender.

IMPORTANT

113 is the Slope Rating value where all players play from their Handicap Index (i.e. the course is as equally hard for both Scratch and Bogey players).

Handicap Index

What is a Handicap Index?

The Handicap Index is considered to be the most important element of the WHS.

The Handicap Index will:

- Measure the ability of a player
- Be portable from course to course
- Allow players to compete fairly and therefore promote inclusivity within the game

A Handicap Index is calculated from the best eight scores from the last 20 rounds.

As a new score is submitted, a player's Handicap Index will automatically update to the most recent 20 scores. A player's Handicap Index will update promptly overnight after the submission of an acceptable score and be ready before the next time they play.

How to obtain a Handicap Index?

When the new system comes into play most golfers can have a Handicap Index generated, based on their existing records.

For new golfers to gain their Handicap Index they will have to submit a minimum of 54 holes (using any combination of 9 and 18 holes). Their Handicap Index will be the lowest of their three rounds minus two strokes and continue to be built until the preferred 20 scores are achieved.



IMPORTANT

The maximum Handicap Index for any player is 54.

To obtain a recognised Handicap Index a player must be an affiliated member of a golf club.

Handicap Index

How to safeguard a Handicap Index?

A Soft Cap and Hard Cap will be implemented to limit any extreme upward movement of a player's Handicap Index within a 365-day period. This has been introduced to act as a safeguard to prevent any handicap manipulation.

The Soft Cap will suppress movement by 50% after a 3.0 stroke increase over a player's Low Handicap Index (see glossary of terms later in this toolkit). For clarity in this instance, a Low Handicap Index is the lowest Handicap Index a player has had during the previous 12-month period.

The Hard Cap will restrict upward movement on 5.0 strokes over the Low Handicap Index.

Restricting the extreme upward movement of a Handicap Index will ensure that a player's temporary loss of form does not cause the Handicap Index to move too far away from their actual ability.



IMPORTANT

Caps only start to take effect once a player has at least 20 acceptable scores in their record.

Course Handicap

What is Course Handicap?

Before any player starts their round they must convert their Handicap Index into a Course Handicap.

The Course Handicap will determine the number of strokes a player will receive for any set of tees on a course.

An easy way for a player to remember the WHS, is to think HCP!

H - Handicap Index

C - Course Handicap

P - Play

It's as easy as HCP!

- 1 Handicap Index
- 2 Course Handicap
- 3 Go out and **Play**

How to work out a Course Handicap?

England Golf has provide Course & Slope Rating tables to all golf clubs (as per the example provided on the next page). Tables should be positioned in conspicuous locations around the club to make it simple for all golfers to find prior to beginning their round.

Golfers simply have to choose the tees they are playing off that day and cross reference their Handicap Index on the Course & Slope Rating table to ascertain their Course Handicap. It really is as simple as that - they're then ready to get out on the course and play!



In time, Course Handicap Tables will be available via an App and club handicap software so golfers can view their Course Handicap remotely prior to a round. Should any golfer wish to calculate their Course Handicap manually the formula is as follows:

NEW RULE

Handicap Index

$\times$

(Slope Rating / 113)

=

Course Handicap (rounded)

Course & Slope Rating Table Example

WOODHALL SPA - HOTCHKIN COURSE					
WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM		COURSE RATING™ & SLOPE RATING® TABLE		ENGLAND GOLF	
MEN		MEN		LADIES	
BLUE YARDS Course Rating: 75.3 Slope Rating: 152		WHITE YARDS Course Rating: 74.4 Slope Rating: 151		YELLOW YARDS Course Rating: 72.5 Slope Rating: 149	
Handicap Index	Course Handicap	Handicap Index	Course Handicap	Handicap Index	Course Handicap
1.0	15	1.0	14	1.0	13
1.5	23	1.5	22	1.5	21
2.0	31	2.0	30	2.0	29
2.5	39	2.5	38	2.5	37
3.0	47	3.0	46	3.0	45
3.5	55	3.5	54	3.5	53
4.0	63	4.0	62	4.0	61
4.5	71	4.5	70	4.5	69
5.0	79	5.0	78	5.0	77
5.5	87	5.5	86	5.5	85
6.0	95	6.0	94	6.0	93
6.5	103	6.5	102	6.5	101
7.0	111	7.0	110	7.0	109
7.5	119	7.5	118	7.5	117
8.0	127	8.0	126	8.0	125
8.5	135	8.5	134	8.5	133
9.0	143	9.0	142	9.0	141
9.5	151	9.5	150	9.5	149
10.0	159	10.0	158	10.0	157
10.5	167	10.5	166	10.5	165
11.0	175	11.0	174	11.0	173
11.5	183	11.5	182	11.5	181
12.0	191	12.0	190	12.0	189
12.5	199	12.5	198	12.5	197
13.0	207	13.0	206	13.0	205
13.5	215	13.5	214	13.5	213
14.0	223	14.0	222	14.0	221
14.5	231	14.5	230	14.5	229
15.0	239	15.0	238	15.0	237
15.5	247	15.5	246	15.5	245
16.0	255	16.0	254	16.0	253
16.5	263	16.5	262	16.5	261
17.0	271	17.0	270	17.0	269
17.5	279	17.5	278	17.5	277
18.0	287	18.0	286	18.0	285
18.5	295	18.5	294	18.5	293
19.0	303	19.0	302	19.0	301
19.5	311	19.5	310	19.5	309
20.0	319	20.0	318	20.0	317
20.5	327	20.5	326	20.5	325
21.0	335	21.0	334	21.0	333
21.5	343	21.5	342	21.5	341
22.0	351	22.0	350	22.0	349
22.5	359	22.5	358	22.5	357
23.0	367	23.0	366	23.0	365
23.5	375	23.5	374	23.5	373
24.0	383	24.0	382	24.0	381
24.5	391	24.5	390	24.5	389
25.0	399	25.0	398	25.0	397
25.5	407	25.5	406	25.5	405
26.0	415	26.0	414	26.0	413
26.5	423	26.5	422	26.5	421
27.0	431	27.0	430	27.0	429
27.5	439	27.5	438	27.5	437
28.0	447	28.0	446	28.0	445
28.5	455	28.5	454	28.5	453
29.0	463	29.0	462	29.0	461
29.5	471	29.5	470	29.5	469
30.0	479	30.0	478	30.0	477
30.5	487	30.5	486	30.5	485
31.0	495	31.0	494	31.0	493
31.5	503	31.5	502	31.5	501
32.0	511	32.0	510	32.0	509
32.5	519	32.5	518	32.5	517
33.0	527	33.0	526	33.0	525
33.5	535	33.5	534	33.5	533
34.0	543	34.0	542	34.0	541
34.5	551	34.5	550	34.5	549
35.0	559	35.0	558	35.0	557
35.5	567	35.5	566	35.5	565
36.0	575	36.0	574	36.0	573
36.5	583	36.5	582	36.5	581
37.0	591	37.0	590	37.0	589
37.5	599	37.5	598	37.5	597
38.0	607	38.0	606	38.0	605
38.5	615	38.5	614	38.5	613
39.0	623	39.0	622	39.0	621
39.5	631	39.5	630	39.5	629
40.0	639	40.0	638	40.0	637
40.5	647	40.5	646	40.5	645
41.0	655	41.0	654	41.0	653
41.5	663	41.5	662	41.5	661
42.0	671	42.0	670	42.0	669
42.5	679	42.5	678	42.5	677
43.0	687	43.0	686	43.0	685
43.5	695	43.5	694	43.5	693
44.0	703	44.0	702	44.0	701
44.5	711	44.5	710	44.5	709
45.0	719	45.0	718	45.0	717
45.5	727	45.5	726	45.5	725
46.0	735	46.0	734	46.0	733
46.5	743	46.5	742	46.5	741
47.0	751	47.0	750	47.0	749
47.5	759	47.5	758	47.5	757
48.0	767	48.0	766	48.0	765
48.5	775	48.5	774	48.5	773
49.0	783	49.0	782	49.0	781
49.5	791	49.5	790	49.5	789
50.0	799	50.0	798	50.0	797

Playing Handicap

What is Playing Handicap?

Playing Handicap is a mandatory stroke allowance that is implemented in order to maintain the integrity of the WHS when used in competition. It allows golfers to compete on a level playing field, regardless of their Handicap Index.

The Course Handicap converts to a Playing Handicap for competition purposes and changes depending on the format of play.

The most important aspects of Playing Handicap to remember are:

- It is only used for competition purposes
- It ensures equity to calculate competition results (via Handicap Allowances)
- Golfers do not need to calculate it (it is generated before their round)
- Golfers should continue to play in the mindset of their Course Handicap in competition rounds
- It is a mandatory stroke allowance that must be implemented in competition play

On the following page a table example is available which shows mandatory handicap allowances for all competition formats.

The WHS has been designed with the enjoyment of recreational golf at the forefront. The WHS will allow golfers to play with freedom, therefore changing the nature in which they play the game. The focus for golfers should not be on their Playing Handicap.



The Playing Handicap is calculated as follows:

NEW RULE

Course Handicap

_____ **x** _____

Handicap Allowance

_____ **=** _____

Playing Handicap

Mandatory Allowances Table Example

 ENGLAND GOLF		
PLAYING HANDICAP: MANDATORY ALLOWANCES TABLE		
FORMAT OF PLAY	TYPE OF ROUND	MANDATORY HANDICAP ALLOWANCE
STROKEPLAY	Individual	95%
	Individual Stableford	95%
	Individual Par/Bogey	95%
	Individual Maximum Score	95%
	Fourball	85%
	Fourball Stableford	85%
MATCHPLAY	Fourball Par/Bogey	90%
	Individual	100%
STROKEPLAY	Fourball	90%
	Foursums	50% of combined team handicap
	Greensomes	60% low handicap + 40% high handicap
	Pinehurst/Chapman	60% low handicap + 40% high handicap
	Best 1 of 4 Stroke Play	75%
	Best 2 of 4 Stroke Play	85%
	Best 3 of 4 Stroke Play	100%
	All 4 of 4 Stroke Play	100%
	Scramble (4 players)	"25%/20%/15%/10% from lowest to highest handicap"
	Scramble (2 players)	35% low/15% high
	Total score of 2 match play	100%
	Best 1 of 4 Par/Bogey	75%
	Best 2 of 4 Par/Bogey	85%
	Best 3 of 4 Par/Bogey	90%
	4 of 4 Par/Bogey	100%

General Play & Competition Rounds

How to submit a score?

After the completion of a competition round, a player has to submit their scorecard as soon as possible in order for their Handicap Index to be updated. Preferably, scores should be posted at the venue being played and on the same day, as this will be when a player's Handicap Index will be updated.

Posting of scores is possible by players utilising the technology available at their golf club.

How to verify a score?

In order to verify a score and for it to count towards a player's WHS, it must be played:

- In accordance with The Rules of Golf
- In an authorised format of play
- Over a minimum number of 10 holes for an 18 hole round
- With at least one other person
- On a course with a current Course Rating and Slope Rating



General Play & Competition Rounds

How your score counts towards the WHS?

Acceptable formats of play for submitting a score towards a player's Handicap Index include:

- Pre-registered general play 'social' scores
- All individual competition rounds, both 9 and 18 holes, whether played at home or away

Non-Acceptable formats of play for submitting a score towards a player's Handicap Index include:

- Scores from fourball better ball
- Other matchplay events

For golfers playing in recreational rounds with friends, either in teams or pairs, even when there is no intention of submitting a score for handicap purposes, they will need to calculate their Course Handicap prior to their round.

The following page in this toolkit includes a table of authorised formats of play.



Authorised Formats of Play Table Example

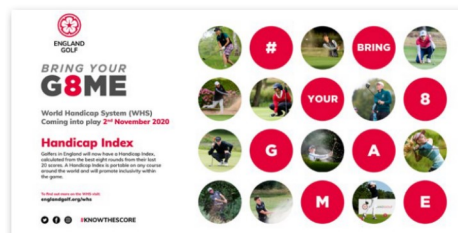
 ENGLAND GOLF				
FOR COMMITTEE USE ONLY				
AUTHORISED FORMATS OF PLAY TABLE				
ACCEPTABLE FORMATS OF PLAY				
FORMAT OF PLAY	TYPE OF ROUND	NUMBER OF HOLES		
INDIVIDUAL STROKEPLAY	Strokeplay - Organised Competition	9	✓	18 ✓
	Strokeplay - General Play	9	✓	18 ✓
	Stableford - Organised Competition	9	✓	18 ✓
	Stableford - General Play	9	✓	18 ✓
	Par / Bogey - Organised Competition	9	✓	18 ✓
	Par / Bogey - General Play	9	✓	18 ✓
	Maximum Score - Organised Competition	9	✓	18 ✓
	Maximum Score - General Play	9	✓	18 ✓
NON-ACCEPTABLE FORMATS OF PLAY				
FORMAT OF PLAY	TYPE OF ROUND	NUMBER OF HOLES		
FOURBALL STROKEPLAY	Strokeplay - Organised Competition	9	✗	18 ✗
	Strokeplay - General Play	9	✗	18 ✗
	Stableford - Organised Competition	9	✗	18 ✗
	Stableford - General Play	9	✗	18 ✗
	Par / Bogey - Organised Competition	9	✗	18 ✗
INDIVIDUAL MATCHPLAY	Organised Competition	9	✗	18 ✗
	General Play	9	✗	18 ✗
FOURBALL MATCHPLAY	Organised Competition	9	✗	18 ✗
	General Play	9	✗	18 ✗
WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM R&A USGA		www.Englandgolf.org		

Resources Summary

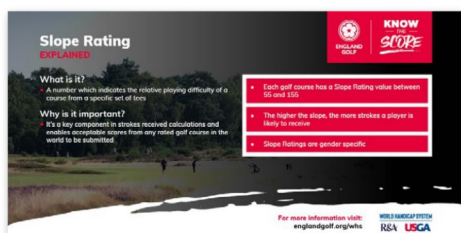
Here are some of the resources we produced to help explain the key features of the WHS, which you should have seen from your golf club



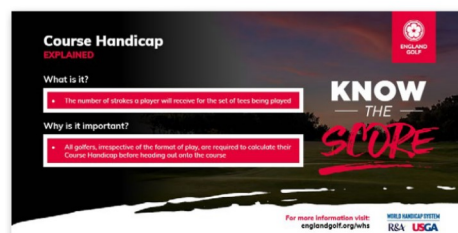
Course & Bogey Rating



Handicap Index



Slope Rating



Course Handicap

Resources Summary

Here are some of the resources we produced to help explain the key features of the WHS, which you should have seen from your golf club



Playing Handicap



General Play & Competition Rounds



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ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION

The WHS Challenge

England Golf has created an event concept to engage all golf clubs in the country, with a kick-off event on selected dates in November.

When:

- Any day between the 7th-15th November

What:

- The Challenge is hosted at your club and should either be added as a new competition (entry fee added at club discretion) or you can simply re-name an existing competition you were already planning on running over the same day/s to 'The WHS Challenge'

Why:

- The player who returns the lowest score at each club will be entered into a prize draw to win two tickets to the 2021 Open Championships

Ahead of the November start date, England Golf will be promoting the WHS Challenge to golf clubs across the country through their own channels. Golf Clubs will receive an email from England Golf with more detail about the day and how players can enter. This competition is not compulsory for golf clubs to enter, but will be a fantastic way of introducing the new system to golfers in a competition format, with a fantastic prize up for grabs!



WHS Gurus

What is a WHS Guru?

Our aim is for each golf club across the country to have a WHS Guru.

- A WHS Guru can act as a voice for the WHS at golf clubs, allowing strong representation and positioning of the new WHS system at club level. They are meant to help educate their fellow members on the system and therefore share the responsibility of explaining the WHS with official club representatives.
- A WHS Guru can also make sure the educational resources from the toolkit will be used on a regular basis in the lead-up to and following the 2nd November launch. They will also have the opportunity to run any internal WHS education sessions, using the information provided by England Golf, to answer any further questions their club's members may have about the new system
- Golf clubs across England can nominate / recommend members as a WHS Guru at their own discretion

If you wish to find out more about how to become a WHS Guru, please speak to your Handicap Committee.

Gurus will be required to take part in an exclusive webinar hosted by Gemma Hunter, Head of Course Rating & Handicapping at England Golf.

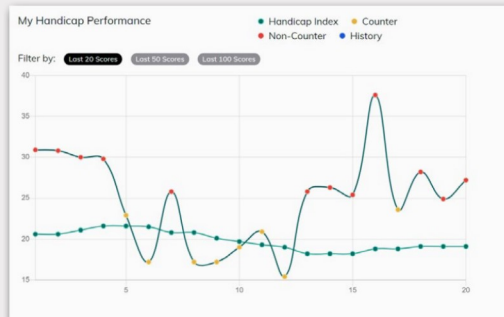


The England Golf WHS Platform

England Golf Platform

The recently launched England Golf WHS Platform (and the My England Golf app from 2nd November 2020) will allow golfers to regularly check on the progress of their Handicap Index. Golfers can sign up to the England Golf WHS Platform [here](#).

Golfers will be able to review their updated Handicap Index the morning after a score has been entered to count towards their Handicap Index, and will be able to access the WHS Platform through the England Golf Website.



My WHS Handicap Index

19.2

You are in the top

0%

Abbey Hill...

0%

Berk, Buc...

0%

England

Last Updated: Today



Glossary of Terms

A glossary of all key terms about the WHS was made available for golf clubs to download.

The glossary will have acted as a useful way of educating golfers on terminology. Golf clubs will have been able to circulate this document to all their members electronically and by placing hard copies around the club.



For example, some of the key terms to know about the WHS are:

Handicap Index

A Handicap Index is a number that represents a player's ability and can be taken and played with on any golf course around the world. It is calculated from the best eight rounds from a player's last 20 scores.

Course Handicap

A Course Handicap is the number of strokes a player will receive for a specific set of tees on the golf course being played.

Playing Handicap

A Playing Handicap represents the total number of strokes a player will receive when they play with or against other players, depending on the format of play and the handicap allowance.

Course Rating

The Course Rating is the measure of playing difficulty from a set of tees when played by a scratch golfer.

Slope Rating

The Slope Rating is the number which indicates the relative playing difficulty of a course for bogey golfers, compared to scratch golfers. It is the difficulty comparison between a bogey player and a scratch player from the same set of tees.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Following feedback from golf club representatives from the various presentations and seminars hosted by England Golf, we created a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document. This was provided to all golf clubs to help the education process for golfers.

Golf clubs will have been able to circulate this document to all their members via electronic communications, or by placing hard copies around the golf club.

Here are some of the most important FAQs:



Why is the new WHS being introduced?

There is one standard set of rules in golf, so it makes sense to unify the six different handicapping systems currently in operation. This will make the game more inclusive and equitable across the world.

When will current handicaps switch over to the WHS?

The WHS launch date has been set as Monday 2nd November 2020.

I'm new to golf: How do I obtain a Handicap Index?

Score cards totalling 54 holes need to be returned to the Handicap Committee (3x18 holes, 6x9 holes or a combination of both) before an initial Handicap Index can be awarded.

What is the maximum Course Handicap if the maximum Handicap Index is 54?

The Course Handicap will likely exceed 54.0 if playing a course with a slope rating of 114 or higher. There is no maximum Course Handicap.

Do I enter competitions using my Handicap Index or my Course Handicap?

Competition entry should be based on your Handicap Index. This will be clarified in the Terms of Competition.

When playing other courses can I submit a score card to my home club?

Yes – you can record all pre-registered scores that follow the rules of golf and are authorised formats of play.

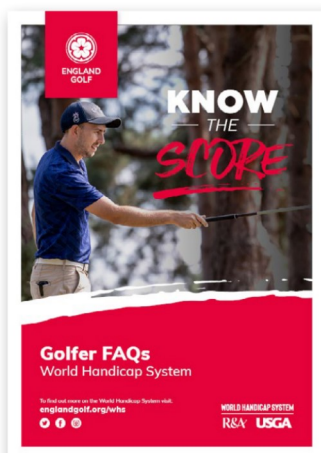
The Glossary of Terms and FAQ's is available to download on the following page

Additional Information: Resources

Click on the download buttons below to access some useful resources on the WHS

Golfer's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

[Download here](#)



Glossary of Terms

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Key Contact Details

The table below should be viewed as a guide to the best points of contact for any queries you might have:



For all information regarding the World Handicap System, please follow the England Golf social media channels listed below, or visit the [England Golf website](#).

- 

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- 

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- 

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