

Preserving the Integrity of Golf

The Role of the Handicap Committee

The RCGA Handicap Factor is highly recognized in Canada as a reliable measure of a player's potential playing ability. A player's Handicap Factor is used for conversion to a Course Handicap, which indicates the number of strokes a player receives from a specific set of tees. Your Committee administers procedures of the RCGA Handicap System to make the game of golf enjoyable for all your members.

The role of the Handicap Committee in providing fair and equitable competition is critical. Members at your club depend upon you to:

- **Know the RCGA Handicap System**
- **Communicate the System to all members**
- **Faithfully apply the System at your club**

Read the RCGA Handicap Manual

The RCGA Handicap Manual is the "bible" of handicapping. Everything you need to know about handicapping will be found in the manual and every member of your Committee should have a copy. Copies can be purchased for a nominal fee through the RCGA by calling 905-849-9700 ext. 283, or by visiting www.rcga.org.

Use RCGA Certified Handicap Software

All RCGA clubs must use RCGA Certified Software (a list of certified software is available at www.rcga.org). The RCGA offers the RCGA Network (an internet based handicap program) to all member clubs. The RCGA Network allows your members to post scores at the club or from anywhere there is an internet connection (home, work, vacation, etc). The Network also has a stat-tracking component and allows the club to communicate to its members through an internal messaging function. To get your club onto the RCGA Network please email mmackay@rcga.org or call 1-800-263-0009 x209

Communicate the System to Players

How well players comply with the RCGA Handicap System depends, in large part, on how their responsibilities in the System are communicated to them. *An effective Handicap Committee will continually provide the instruction and information players need.* The RCGA has an informational poster and brochures available to help you communicate the 'rules' of handicapping to your members.

Send Frequent Notices via Newsletter, Website, Bulletin Board, etc.

Send frequent notices to club members (or better yet hold a seminar!). The notices should include information specific to your club, such as where scores are to be

returned, how membership/handicap cards are issued, the duration of the Active handicap season and which scores are eligible for handicap purposes.

In addition, the notice should explain every player's fundamental responsibilities in the RCGA Handicap System:

- **How to adjust a gross score for handicap purposes**
- **How to know if an adjusted score is acceptable for posting**
- **How to post an away score**

It should also include:

- **A list of all the Handicap Committee's policies**
- **Handicap adjustment powers of the Handicap Committee**
- **Penalties for players failing to return scores**
- **Active posting season (as determined by the provincial golf association)**

Decide which Scores will be designated as Tournament Scores

In coordination with the Competition Committee, the Handicap Committee must determine which scores for the year will be deemed as Tournament Scores. *It is very important that this information gets relayed to your members so there is no confusion over which rounds must be entered as a Tournament Score.* Also, the Handicap Committee should examine the results of competitions and take appropriate action if net scores appear out of line.

Display Tables and Ratings

Course Handicap Tables – A player needs to consult a Course Handicap Table in order to convert his or her RCGA Handicap Factor to a Course Handicap for the tees being played. The Tables, which are based on RCGA Slope Ratings, are issued to golf clubs by provincial golf associations. The Committee is responsible for posting these Tables in the clubhouse and displaying copies on or near the first tee of every course at the club.

RCGA Course Rating and Slope Rating of the Club – The RCGA Course Rating and Slope Rating from every set of tee markers should be printed on the club's score card and posted in a prominent place at the club, preferably by means of a poster certified by the provincial golf association. The Ratings, course name, date of play, player's name and adjusted score (accompanied by the letter "T" if it was a tournament score) constitute a complete score entry for handicap purposes.

Faithfully Apply the System at Your Club

An important job of the Handicap Committee is to ensure that all acceptable scores for Handicap purposes are posted and available for peer review. The most common form of

abuse of the RCGA Handicap System is players failing to post all acceptable scores; it's your number one priority to ensure that all acceptable scores are posted.

Take Action in Case of Failure to Post or other Abuse of the System

An RCGA Handicap Factor must be adjusted up or down if the player does not turn in all acceptable scores or otherwise does not observe the spirit of the RCGA Handicap System. The Handicap Committee determines the amount of adjustment.

It is equitable to enter that score or penalty score when a player fails to post a score. A penalty score is a score with the corresponding Ratings equal to the lowest differential used to compute his or her last RCGA Handicap Factor or in the player's latest 20 scores. If the omitted score is unusually high, a penalty score should equal the highest differential in the last 20 scores.

Section 8 of the RCGA Handicap Manual explains these discretionary remedies. *In case of a player's repeated failure to comply with the RCGA Handicap System, the Committee may withdraw the player's Handicap Factor.*

Cooperate with Other Committees

The Handicap Committee should provide guidance to club officials and other club committees on:

- Designation of Tournament Score rounds;
- The allocation of handicap strokes to each hole on the course according to RCGA guidelines (Section 17 of RCGA Handicap Manual);
- Determination of par;
- Course setup;
- Maintaining the playing difficulty of the course.

Contact the RCGA or provincial golf association

Being on the Handicap Committee at your club is not an easy task but we're here to help you in any way. Call the RCGA anytime for handicap advice (1-800-263-0009 x209) or visit the handicap section of www.rcga.org for tons of handicap info including downloadable educational material and an extensive FAQ.

It is also highly recommended that members of your Committee attend an RCGA Handicap Seminar. The seminars are conducted periodically through the year by the RCGA or provincial golf association; by the end of the 3 hour seminar you will know all you need to know about handicapping. Contact your provincial golf association for a schedule of upcoming seminars in your area.