

# WHAT HAPPENED TO MY HANDICAP FACTOR?

Playing exceptionally well in tournaments may automatically reduce your handicap factor.

Have you ever wondered why, after playing in a competition, you are instructed to post your score for handicap purposes as a tournament score?

A tournament score entered into your handicap scoring record is not weighted differently than other scores, so why bother designating it as a tournament score?

The answer to this question should provide solace to those who feel that certain players tend to play much better in tournaments and take home the prizes on a frequent basis.

The posting of tournament scores for handicap purposes provides a method for automatically reducing a player's handicap factor for exceptional tournament scores (ETS). A handicap factor that has been reduced by ETS will be displayed with an 'R' beside it.

The first step in the ETS process is for the Handicap Committee, in consultation with the committee in charge of a competition, to decide whether scores from certain events should be considered a tournament score for handicap purposes.

There are no hard and fast rules for what constitutes a tournament score for handicap purposes, but the Royal Canadian Golf Association provides general guidelines. The RCGA recommends:

- A tournament score must be a competition organized and conducted by the committee in charge of the competition.
- A tournament score must identify a winner(s) based on stipulated round(s) and must be played under the Rules of Golf.
- The competition must be significant in the traditions, schedules, formats and membership

of the club. Routine events such as weekly play days normally are not to be designated as tournament scores.

Examples of competitions that should be posted as tournament scores include member/guest competitions, club championships (both match play and stroke play), invitational tournaments, and qualifying rounds for city, provincial and national events

It is very important that the committee inform competitors that the score for that round must be posted as a tournament score.

The ETS reduction process does not work unless players post the score in the computer as a tournament score (all RCGA Certified handicap software programs allow for this).

When a tournament score is posted, it is added to the handicap scoring record and is used in the handicap factor calculation the same as a non-tournament score.

However when a player posts, over the previous 12 months, at least two tournament score differentials that are 3.0 or better than the player's current handicap factor, then an automatic reduction to the handicap factor may take effect.

The greater the difference between the player's best two tournament differentials and the player's current handicap factor, the greater the ETS reduction.

Handicap factor reduction for ETS is calculated with each and every score entered into a player's scoring record and may fluctuate based on a number of factors:

- Additional tournament scores (the more tournament scores that are entered, the less severe the reduction will be, so it is important that the

Handicap Committee does not designate too many club events as tournament scores).

- Expiration of tournament scores (Tournament scores stay on file for 12 months or longer if they are still one of the most recent 20 games posted).

- Fluctuation of handicap factor calculation (the reduction can get more severe or less severe, or may disappear altogether. The computer, after every score entered, compares the player's regular handicap factor calculation to the average of the best two tournament score differentials to determine what reduction, if any, needs to take effect).

One of the major advantages of ETS reduction is that the computer independently recognizes players who play much better than their handicap in tournaments and automatically adjusts the handicap factor.

The Handicap Committee at the club does not have to subjectively identify these players and make any modifications to the players Handicap Factor.

However, the Handicap Committee must review all ETS reductions and is at its own discretion to override the reduction if, for example, a player has been playing injured and the reduction is based on tournament scores posted prior to the injury.

The topic of exceptional tournament score reduction can be a difficult one to grasp. We get many calls and e-mails regarding ETS, usually from people in a panic because their handicap factors have suddenly been reduced and they can't figure out why.

Section 10-3 of the RCGA Handicap Manual, which is available for viewing on the website at [www.rcga.org](http://www.rcga.org), provides a comprehensive review of ETS. You can also call the RCGA Handicap Department for more information.

—Matt Mackay

**[40 YEARS AGO...]** Canada was celebrating its centennial year, Toronto was savouring what would be its last Stanley Cup victory to this day and people were flocking to Montreal for Expo 67 \* Expo wasn't the only attraction in Montreal as Billy Casper, who won the U.S. Open the year before, beat Art Wall in a playoff at the Canadian Open that year at Montreal Municipal Golf Course \* The King and the Bear finished one-two on the leaderboard at the U.S. Open, where Jack Nicklaus finished four shots ahead of Arnold Palmer at Baltusrol which marked the second U.S. Open championship in the career of Nicklaus, a member of the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame.

