



To: ALL NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Date: 26 January 2023

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First and foremost, please let us extend our best wishes to you for a happy, peaceful and prosperous 2023.

For us, it will be a busy year pulling everything together for the January 2024 revision of the World Handicap System™ (“WHS™”) – but we are excited to start building on the solid foundation that has already been established since launch; increasing the system’s inclusivity, portability and accuracy.

As we are now less than 12 months away from this revision, we wanted to share the following information with you – to assist with your own planning and development:

As flagged in our last report circulated in July 2022, the key areas where change is expected are as follows:

- a) Rule 5.1b, where the method of scaling up a 9-hole score will change from the current net par procedure to the use of a player’s expected score over the 9 holes not played. For the avoidance of doubt – the option to combine two 9-hole scores will remain as an alternative to scaling.
- b) More guidance within Appendix D on conducting a Handicap Review and more data-driven reporting procedures included in the Technical Specifications. This will provide Committees with comprehensive analysis and comparisons between scores from various formats of play.
- c) Lowering the minimum length requirement under the Course Rating System™ to allow scores to be submitted for handicap purposes over shorter length golf courses, including Par 3 courses. This change is expected to be within the Course Rating System requiring no change under the Rules of Handicapping.

**REMINDER:** The updated Playing Conditions Calculation (PCC) algorithm was shared with you in July 2022 and approved for implementation with immediate effect. It is worth noting that, as expected, Associations which have already implemented this change are observing a slight increase in the incidence of a non-zero PCC.

To assist with your planning and development, please consider engaging with the WHS Accreditation service, to help you to ensure your software provider is correctly interpreting and implementing the updated Rules of Handicapping and the WHS Technical Specification. As soon as the changes for 2024 are agreed, we will be updating the QA tests and we can use these to check that the new calculations are being performed correctly as they are being developed.

1. REVISION TIMETABLE

The following table sets out the planned schedule between now and January 2024:

DATE	EVENT	NOTES
6-7 March 2023	Handicap Operations Committee meeting	Where final decisions for the 2024 revision will be taken.
3 April 2023	World Handicap Authority meeting	Where the final version of the Rules will be presented for approval.
Mid-April 2023	Communication with National Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distribution of Master Version of the 2024 Rules of Handicapping and Technical Specifications</li><li>• Explaining process for updating/choosing discretionary items and producing new Rule books/translating</li></ul>
Mid-April 2023	Media Release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public confirmation of the date of the next revision of the Rules of Handicapping and Course Rating System</li><li>• Providing overview of key changes for 2024</li></ul>
June-Dec 2023	Send out Rule books, guides and manuals	Produce and distribute Rule books based on discretionary choices and manage translations. Distribute guides and manuals for the Course Rating System
November 2023 onwards	Promotional activity	Raising awareness of the revisions and highlighting key changes.

2. RULES OF HANDICAPPING - CLARIFICATIONS

Attached to this communication is a copy of the updated Clarifications document for your information - which includes additional guidance to Committees in charge of elite level competitions in respect of eligibility/entry requirements.

This document has also been uploaded to the WHS Resource Portal to ensure that there is a permanent record, which you can access and download again if needed. For the avoidance of doubt, we would request that this document is not distributed outside of your Association. However, policy decisions or positions that are taken by your Association as a result of each Clarification can be communicated as appropriate.

3. WHS ACCREDITATION AND INTEROPERABILITY STANDARD

We are pleased to confirm that several software providers have now completed the accreditation process and others are working their way through.

## WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM



We would continue to strongly encourage you to work with your own handicap computation provider to determine when might be the best time for them to start the software accreditation process. As a reminder, any Association that becomes accredited is then eligible to participate in the interoperability standard, streamlining the method of retrieving a Handicap Index® and returning scores across jurisdictions. For more information regarding the World Handicap System Accreditation and Interoperability Programme, please visit [WHS.com](https://www.whs.com).

As part of the interoperability standard, the Course Rating Database is now available to accredited providers, to help facilitate the calculation of a Course/Playing Handicap and the submission of away scores. Efforts to make the Central Lookup Directory and Authentication Server production ready is still ongoing – but this should be completed with the next few weeks.

#### 4. WHS TERMINOLOGY AND TRADEMARKS USAGE GUIDE

Attached is a guide which we would ask that you use to check that you are using WHS terminology and trademarks correctly and consistently – on your website and in your promotional materials, handicapping software or player apps. This is important to protect the trademarks and WHS from unauthorized use - and also promote trust.

We thank you for your understanding, help and co-operation in this area.

#### 5. WHS Data Request

One of the key objectives of the World Handicap System is to ensure that equity is provided for all that play the game of golf, which involves examining scoring data on an annual basis to verify that the system is operating in accordance with expectations and how it was designed to perform. In support of these important objectives, you will soon receive a request for the submission of (a) de-personalized player scoring data, and (b) key WHS statistics that many National Associations already capture today. The de-personalized player scoring data will be used for the sole purpose of facilitating handicap research work.

Your early attention to this request would be much appreciated.

We hope all of the above information is helpful and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Kind regards

**CLAIRE BATES & STEVEN EDMONDSON**  
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