

## Properly Posting for Handicap Purposes

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The two cardinal principles of handicapping are players are expected to post all of their acceptable rounds, whether they are good or bad, and each player will try to make the best score at every hole in every round, regardless of where the golf was played. Because your Handicap Index is based on the low 10 handicap differentials of your last 20 rounds, it's important to keep your file current. Moreover, because statistics show that golfers shoot to or below their handicap in only about 20 percent of their rounds, posting every score possible is a key to maintaining a proper Handicap Index.

Following is a list of scores which are acceptable for posting for handicap purposes: if 13 or more holes are played for an 18-hole round posting; if 13 or more holes are played for an 18-hole round posting; if 7 to 12 holes are played for an acceptable nine-hole round posting; both match and stroke play rounds, including team competitions; if a player is requested to pick up when out of contention on a hole; or if a player is disqualified from a competition but has an acceptable score. All of these scores, including tournament scores, must be adjusted under Equitable Stroke Control.

Oftentimes during a casual round of golf a player runs into a situation where they pick up and do not finish a hole. This can be for a multitude of reasons: to speed up play, the putt has been conceded, their partner has already won the hole, etc. You might also run into the situation where the golf course has shortened a par 5 to a par 3 because the maintenance staff is working on the teeing ground or the green area. In both instances do you know how to correctly post your score for handicap purposes?

In the first case, because the golfer started the hole but did not

finish they are to post a most likely score (a mostly likely score is defined below). In the second scenario because the hole was not played according to how the hole was rated (rated for a par 5 but played as a par 3), the golfer will post a par plus any handicap strokes the player is entitled to receive on the hole. Below you will see examples of how to properly post your score for handicap purposes when you run into these situations on the golf course.

### UNFINISHED HOLES OR CONCEDED STROKES

If a player starts but does not complete a hole or is conceded a stroke, he or she shall record for handicap purposes what he most likely would have made. The most likely score consists of the number of strokes already taken plus, in player's best judgment, the number of strokes that he will need to complete the hole from that position more than half the time. The most likely score is not to exceed the player's maximum allowable under *Equitable Stroke Control*.

The phrase in the player's best judgement is obviously subjective. The most egregious violation of this principle comes when a player who fails to complete a hole simply writes down the score allowed under Equitable Stroke Control, when in many cases this score is too high.

For example, a golfer lies 3, 12 feet from the hole and is conceded the putt. For posting purposes, the golfer would probably record a score of 5 because in his best judgment he would have two-putted from that position.

It's up to the player to determine whether he or she would make that particular putt more than half the time. If the answer is "yes," then the score posted should be a 4; if not, then post a 5. However, posting a 7 (the maximum allowable under ESC) would almost never be correct.

There is no limit to the number of unfinished holes the player may have in a round, provided that failure to finish is not for the

purposes of handicap manipulation.

### HOLES NOT PLAYED OR NOT PLAYED UNDER *THE RULES OF GOLF*

If a player does not play a hole or plays it other than under the principles of *The Rules of Golf* (except for preferred lies), his or her score for that hole for handicap purposes must be par plus any handicap strokes they are entitled to receive on the hole.

In an 18 hole round once a golfer completes 13 holes, they may post the remaining hole scores as par plus. In a nine-hole round, the golfer must complete seven holes in order to post the score.

**EXAMPLE 1:** A golfer has a course handicap of 10. They do not play the 18th hole on the course because of darkness. The 18th hole is a par 5 and is the number 1 handicap stroke hole on the scorecard. For handicap purposes, the golfer will post a score of 6 (par = 5 plus 1 stroke because his course handicap is a 10).

**EXAMPLE 2:** A golfer comes to the 12th hole of the course which is normally a par 5 but has been shortened to a par 4 for maintenance purposes. The player's course handicap is a 5 and the hole is the number 10 allocated stroke hole on the scorecard. For handicap purposes, the golfer will post a score of 4 for handicap purposes (par = 4, plus 0 strokes because his course handicap is 5).

**PLEASE NOTE:** Example 2 is to be used for the purpose of returning a score for handicap purposes only, and is not affected by the number of strokes actually taken when a golfer plays the modified hole. Thus, in the above example, the player who makes a 3 on the hole still posts a 4. However, unless noted by the Committee in charge, actual strokes still apply for games or competitions in which the player may be participating.

Remember: the overriding principle is to post all scores whenever possible, so your index is as accurate as possible.

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