



Peer Review & Playing Alone

Enhance Peer Review

The concept of “peer review” is an essential element of the USGA Handicap System™. It allows other players to learn a player’s potential ability and to form a reasonable basis for supporting or disputing a score that has been posted. Without peer review, a Handicap Index® loses its inherent value, and is just a number.

Strengthen the Integrity and Credibility of the USGA Handicap System

Players are not prohibited from playing alone, only from posting solo-round scores for handicap purposes. By playing alone, a player loses the advantage of someone alongside who can remind the player of a Rule or verify that they made a 5 and not a 6. Handicap controls, a series of checks and balances that have always been a part of the USGA Handicap System, ensure that a Handicap Index will accurately measure a player’s potential ability. They exist to assist the golf club and the Handicap Committee with its responsibilities. The amendment to clarify a round played alone as an unacceptable score is an important part of building greater confidence in a player’s Handicap Index.



Global Game

Societal trends such as globalization and technology are making our world a smaller place. Golfers are traveling and competing with one another more today than ever. Therefore, this change will further enhance the credibility of the USGA Handicap System worldwide.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why will scores made while playing alone no longer be eligible for posting?

Primarily, to support a key tenet of the USGA Handicap System: peer review. Knowing golfers rely on the integrity of the system to produce an accurate view of playing ability, this change helps golfers form a better basis to support or dispute scores that have been posted to a player’s scoring record.

The majority of handicapping authorities around the globe have employed this policy for some time. With them, the USGA believes it provides a more accurate view of a golfer’s ability, supporting integrity, fairness and equitable play among all golfers.

What constitutes not playing alone?

As long as someone accompanies the player during the round (e.g., fellow competitor, opponent, caddie, marker for a tournament, friend riding along in a cart) the player is not playing alone.



How many holes can a player play alone to post their score?

The player must be accompanied for at least seven holes for a nine-hole score or 13 holes for an 18-hole score. This is consistent with Section 5-1 and the minimum number of holes played under the Rules of Golf.

For the holes played alone (unaccompanied), the player would treat these as not played under the Rules of Golf and post according to “par plus” any handicap strokes the player is entitled to receive.

(For more information, see Section 4-2).

Note: If a player plays nearly all holes accompanied but just a few alone, the holes played alone are calculated using “par plus,” keeping in mind the maximum that can be played alone in a round eligible for posting is two holes for a nine-hole score and five holes for an 18-hole score. Some examples would be starting out alone and joining up with a player(s), or starting out accompanied and finishing the round alone.