

Rule 7

HANDICAPPING

Committee Actions

Principle of the Rule:

The Handicap Committee plays a vital role in the successful administration of a player's Handicap Index and is equipped with tools to intervene when the calculated Handicap Index is no longer reflective of the player's demonstrated ability.

Used appropriately, these tools are designed to ensure that players are treated fairly and consistently from golf club to golf club.

The Committee in charge of the competition also plays an important role in setting appropriate Terms of the Competition for all participating players.

7.1

a

Conducting a Handicap Review and Adjusting a Handicap Index

- i. Conducting a Handicap Review. The Handicap Committee should conduct a review of a player's Handicap Index using the procedures set out in Appendix D.
 - It is strongly recommended that the Handicap Committee conduct a handicap review annually.
 - A handicap review may be conducted at the request of the player or another player at any time.
 - Before making any adjustment to a player's Handicap Index, the Handicap Committee should carefully consider all available evidence, including:
 - Whether the player's scoring potential has been affected by a temporary or permanent injury or illness which is significant enough to impact the player's ability to play with or against all other players on a fair and equal basis.
 - Any handicap(s) previously held by the player.
 - Whether the player's ability is rapidly improving or declining.
 - Whether the player is performing significantly differently in one format of play compared to another, for example between organized competitions and general play ; unauthorized and authorized format of play.
 - Where it has been determined that a player's actions are for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage.
- ii. Adjusting a Handicap Index. In considering all of the available evidence, the Handicap Committee must decide the most appropriate course of action for any adjustment to a player's Handicap Index, which can be either:

- Resetting the **Handicap Index** by applying an adjustment to each of the most recent 20 **Score Differentials** in the **scoring record**, to achieve the chosen **Handicap Index** that is determined to better reflect the player's demonstrated ability.
- This will allow for the **Handicap Index** to be updated as new scores are posted.
- If fewer than 20 scores are recorded on a player's **scoring record** the adjustment is applied to all recorded **Score Differentials**.
- The **Handicap Committee** can remove the adjustment at any time if the adjustment is determined to no longer be warranted.

Or

- Freezing the **Handicap Index** at a level selected by the **Handicap Committee** for a defined period of time.
- During this period, a player's **Handicap Index** will not be updated as new scores are posted unless the **Handicap Committee** has determined to freeze only against upward movement.
- The **Handicap Committee** can remove the freeze upon the **Handicap Index** at any time and the scores in the player's **scoring record** will be used to calculate the player's **Handicap Index**.

Any adjustment to a player's **Handicap Index** resulting from a **handicap review** must:

- Be applied only after the player has been informed and has had an opportunity to respond to the **Handicap Committee** or, where appropriate, the **Authorized Association**.
- Be a minimum of 1 stroke, upward or downward.
- Only increase a player's **Handicap Index** by up to 5.0 strokes above the player's **Low Handicap Index**, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances could include a player who has a long-term illness or injury preventing them from playing golf at the level previously attained.

National Associations have discretion to introduce further requirements.

b

Applying a Penalty Score

In a situation where a player fails to submit a score from an **authorized format of play** in a timely manner, the **Handicap Committee** should investigate the reason and take appropriate action.

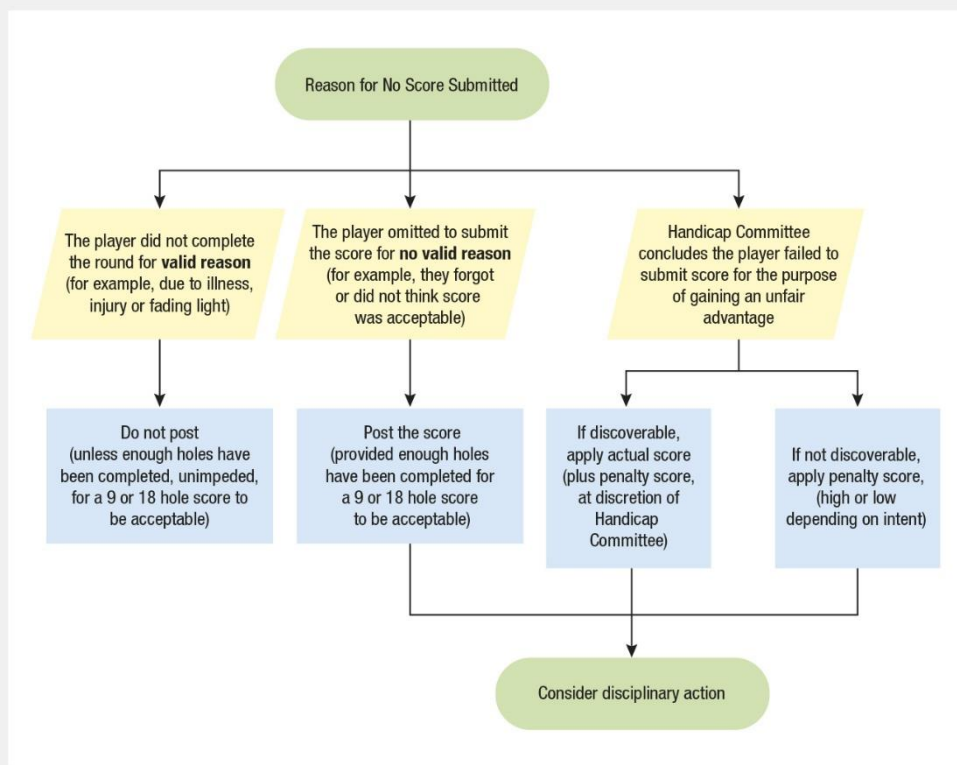
- i. If There is a Valid Reason For a Score Not Having Been Submitted. The **Handicap Committee** of the player's **home club** has the authority to determine whether a player's reason for not submitting a score is a valid reason.
 - Valid reasons for not submitting a score can include:
 - Sudden injury or illness,
 - Emergency,
 - Dangerous weather conditions, or
 - Any other reason for stopping play that is considered valid by the **Handicap Committee**.

- ii. If There is No Valid Reason For a Score Not Having Been Submitted. The **Committee** has the authority to determine whether a player's reason for not submitting a score is a valid reason.
- When the **home club** or the Committee considers that a player has a valid reason for not completing a round, there are two options:
 - Option 1 – The score must be posted. If the player does not complete their round but has completed the minimum number of holes determined by the **Authorized Association** for an acceptable 9-hole or 18-hole score, the score must be posted for handicap purposes.
 - Option 2 – The score must not be posted. If the player does not complete their round and has not completed the minimum number of holes determined by the **Authorized Association** for an acceptable 9-hole or 18-hole score, the score must not be posted for handicap purposes.

 - Invalid reasons for not submitting a score can include:
 - Preventing a low score from causing a **Handicap Index** to decrease.
 - Preventing a high score from causing a **Handicap Index** to increase.
 - If the player's score is identifiable and they stopped their round after having completed at least the minimum number of holes determined by the **Authorized Association** for an acceptable 9-hole or 18-hole score, the score should be posted for handicap purposes.
 - Where a **Handicap Committee** subsequently becomes aware of the score the player actually had after it has already posted a **penalty score**, the actual score should also be posted to the player's **scoring record**. The **Handicap Committee** has discretion to leave the **penalty score** on the player's **scoring record** or to remove it.
 - If the **Handicap Committee** concludes that a player failed to submit a score for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage, it should consider withdrawing the player's **Handicap Index**, and/or applying an appropriate **penalty score** (high or low depending on intent).

The **Handicap Committee** or the **Authorized Association** should consider disciplinary procedures for players who repeatedly fail to submit their scores or who fail to complete rounds.

DIAGRAM 7.1b: ACTIONS AVAILABLE TO HANDICAP COMMITTEE WHEN NO SCORE IS SUBMITTED



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c

Withdrawing a Handicap Index

The Handicap Committee, or Authorized Association, should withdraw the Handicap Index of a player who deliberately or repeatedly fails to comply with the player’s responsibilities under the Rules of Handicapping (see Appendix A).

- The withdrawal of a player’s Handicap Index should be applied only after the player has been informed and has had an opportunity to respond to the Handicap Committee, Authorized Association or other disciplinary panel
- - A player must be notified of the length of time their Handicap Index will be withdrawn and any additional conditions.

d

Reinstating a Handicap Index

Reinstatement of a player’s Handicap Index will be required after a player’s Handicap Index has been withdrawn for a period of time.

To determine the level of Handicap Index at which the player is to be reinstated, the Handicap Committee may wish to consider:

- Reinstating the [Handicap Index](#) at a level that the [Handicap Committee](#) feels is currently reflective of the player's demonstrated ability,
- Allocating a [Handicap Index](#) as if the player were new to the sport, or
- Reinstating the last recorded [Handicap Index](#).

It is strongly recommended that, after a player's [Handicap Index](#) has been reinstated, the [Handicap Committee](#) should monitor the player's [Handicap Index](#) closely over subsequent rounds and, where required, make appropriate adjustments.

7.2

a

Terms of the Competition

The Committee in charge of a competition may set a maximum limit for play within the Terms of the Competition. For example, the Committee can set:

- A maximum [Handicap Index](#) for entry or use in the competition.
- A maximum [Playing Handicap](#).

For the purpose of updating a player's [Handicap Index](#) after a competition where the Committee has set maximum limits, the player's full, unrestricted [Course Handicap](#) should be used for the calculation of their [adjusted gross score](#).

For ease of competition administration purposes, the Committee in charge of a multi-round competition played during the same or consecutive days must determine within the Terms of the Competition whether a player's [Handicap Index](#) will remain unchanged for the duration of the competition. It is strongly recommended that the [Handicap Index](#) remains unchanged between such rounds.

b

Other Actions

The Committee in charge of a competition may reserve the right to:

- Adjust the [Playing Handicap](#) of an entrant within the Terms of the Competition where there is evidence that the player's [Handicap Index](#) does not reflect their demonstrated ability.
- Determine that when course conditions are exceptionally poor, the submission of scores for handicap purposes should be suspended. The Committee should obtain approval from the appropriate [Authorized Association](#) when implementing such a suspension.