

Handicap Committee explains the Handicap System

In order to join one of Rossmoor's golf clubs (except the Hackers), all players must have a GHIN number. GHIN stands for "Golf Handicap Information Network." GHIN is a system of the USGA that is used by thousands of golf clubs. The GHIN system calculates and updates daily, your Handicap Index, allowing golfers to compete with any other player, regardless of their skill level, on a fair and equal basis.

The calculation of an Index is a complicated process which starts with posted scores and adjusts for course difficulty, tee played, and even takes into consideration the weather and course conditions. The result is that each score is converted to what is called a "Differential." Then, the Index is calculated by averaging the lowest 8 Differentials of your most recent 20 posted scores. It's not a perfect system in practice, but it's a thoroughly researched method that has been adopted by the World Handicap System.

So what is your responsibility as a golfer with a USGA Handicap? And what is the responsibility of the Handicap Committee charged with overseeing the implementation of the USGA Rules of Handicapping?

The Handicap System is an honor system. A player's responsibilities are two-fold and simple. First, post all scores, the good, the bad, and the ugly. Second, play with integrity regardless of whether in a tournament or just playing a casual round with friends. Some players have been known to manipulate their Handicaps by posting only high scores in casual play in order to inflate their handicap. Players doing this are labeled "Sandbaggers." Other players selectively post only low scores in casual play wishing to maintain a low handicap. These players have the nickname "Vanity Players". Either way, the player has an incorrect handicap.

The Handicap Committee's Responsibilities are described in Rule 7 (Rules of Handicapping). These responsibilities are focused on ensuring that the Handicap Index calculated by the GHIN system reflects each player's "demonstrated ability." The challenging part of carrying out this responsibility is how to identify players whose Index does not reflect their demonstrated ability.