



Winter Golf Checklist & Reference Guide – For Handicap Purposes

Version 2.1 – Updated 29th October 2021

Players should be encouraged to return scores for handicapping throughout the year. This document has been compiled to assist clubs prepare for winter golf and the requirements to ensure relevant scores for handicap purposes can continue to be submitted. Your County will be pleased to offer further advice, if required.

Tee Set & Yardage Compliance

The Rules of Handicapping require that for a score to be acceptable for handicap purposes, it must have been played over a measured and officially rated tee set. The set of tees must be registered on the WHS platform by England Golf. Every golfer should be made aware of the available course/tees for the day on arrival at the first tee; and whoever controls the first tee (Professional etc) should be fully informed.

Appendix G of the WHS Rules of Handicapping clarifies that the front of the teeing area **should not** be placed more than +/- 10 yards from the fixed measurement point on each tee. Overall length of the course is not to be +/- 100 yards from its measured length (from the fixed marker).

A 300 yards Rule provides for situations where there is a necessary shortening or lengthening of one or more holes by a total of more than 100 yards, but less than 300 yards: **BUT only on a 'temporary' basis e.g., course excavation work / drainage etc.** This 'Temporary Rating' **must be submitted to, and approved by, England Golf.** This will permit 'acceptable scores' to continue to be returned. The maximum duration of approval is one year. For such ratings,



please use form CR003 obtainable from the England Golf website and submit the completed form together with the required documents to course.rating@englandgolf.org

Clubs and green staff teams are to be made aware of these requirements when setting up a course or tee set.

Default Markers

Within the WHS portal, clubs have the opportunity to switch on and off available tee sets. This functionality can stop scores being submitted in competitions and from general play at certain times of the year – for example to protect ‘Championship’ tees in the winter months or allow for course maintenance.

The image below illustrates the tick boxes involved. Any changes need to be saved.

COURSE	SHOW ALL	18 HOLE	9 HOLE	ACTIVE DAYS							Options		
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Winter Handicaps

As WHS allows for the submission of scores from measured and rated tee sets throughout the year, **any reference to a 'Winter Handicap' is no longer acceptable** (note: a player may only have one handicap). Clubs may not run their own handicapping system.

Annual Review

The annual WHS handicap index review process is to be completed between 1st October and the end of December each year.

Specific criteria when completing a handicap review is detailed on pages 98 & 99 of the WHS Rules of Handicapping (Appendix D).

An Annual Review report with recommendations is available via the WHS portal, to ensure any review process is carried out in a consistent manner for all participants. Committees should also consider any player with a long-term illness or injury. It is recommended that a review of every player is NOT carried out. Full guidance notes are available on the EG website.

The Committee must inform the player of any adjustment in writing. Clubs are advised to record any changes within the 'notes' tab of each member record for players who-have been impacted by any handicap review.

Preferred Lies

Ensure that all members and visitors are aware of the preferred lies period, which runs from the 1st of October through to 30th April each year. Any extension of preferred lies past the 30th of April, must be approved by the relevant County. For scores to be acceptable for handicapping, the Local Rule may only allow the lie to be preferred on closely mown areas, within 6" of the original lie of the ball.



The Local Rule for marking, lifting, cleaning, and **replacing on the same spot** may be used anywhere within the General Area.

Further details on the long and short version of the rules can be located via this link - <https://www.Englandgolf.org/handicaps-rules/preferred-lies/>

Mats (tees and fairway mats)

Acceptable Scores may be returned in Competitions and in General Play when there is a Local Rule in place requiring the compulsory use of fairway mats to protect the natural surfaces of the course, during the preferred lies period.

Suggested wording for local rule - *'When a player's ball lies in a part of the general area cut to fairway height or less and a putter is not being used for the stroke, the ball must be lifted, placed on and played from an Astroturf, or similar type, of mat. The mat must be placed as near as possible to where the ball originally lay, and the ball must be placed on the mat. The ball may be cleaned when lifted.'*

Bunkers

Providing a Local Rule is in place, bunkers may be taken out of play and marked as GUR for situations such as severe or prolonged wet weather. Bunkers flooded with water, can be marked as GUR; allowing scores to still be acceptable and returned for handicap purposes. Players must be made aware of which bunkers are GUR before play. There is no limit on the number of bunkers that can be taken 'out of play'.

Temporary Greens

For scores to be acceptable, no more than 2 temporary greens are allowed to be used. For a 9-hole course, only one temporary green will be allowed. Whilst temporary or alternative greens are acceptable for handicapping purposes,



whenever the length of the course length has been increased or decreased by more than 100 yards for an 18-hole round or 50 yards for a 9-hole round, the adjustments to the Course Rating and Slope Rating set out in Appendix G of the Rules of Handicapping must be applied.

Closed Holes

During winter months there are various situations such as course conditions and maintenance plans where holes may be closed and declared out of play. In these circumstances the committee may decide to declare some holes out of play and could also still have a requirement for up to 2 temporary greens.

These scores continue to be acceptable for handicap purposes - the golfer would follow rule 3.2 of the WHS Rules of Handicapping, 'When a Hole is Not Played', with the software calculating and awarding an adjusted gross score accordingly.