



Tournament Players Golf Club Rule and Play Information (AKA - The Rules By Ben)

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Tee Adjustment Application

Why do we do a second adjustment when ladies are competing in the same flights as the men or golfers are playing from different tees?

At present we do not have enough lady golfers to justify a separate flight for the ladies. Also, many of the lower handicap golfers like to play from the Championship tees when playing a course for the first time or the course is relatively short for their style of game. By doing a second adjustment, the difference between the course ratings from the different tees is equalized allowing all golfers to compete against one another regardless of the tee box played. The following article taken from the USGA FAQ web site explains the philosophy and process involved:

3-5. Players Competing from Different Tees or Men and Women from Same Tees

a. Different Tees: Men vs Men; Women vs Women; Women vs Men

Different tees usually have different USGA Course Ratings. Since Course Ratings reflect the probable scores of scratch golfers, the higher-rated course is more difficult, and the player playing from the set of tees with the higher USGA Course Rating receives additional strokes equal to the difference between the Course Ratings, with .5 or greater rounded upward. First, the Course Handicaps should be determined and then the additional strokes are added to the Course Handicap of the player playing from the higher-rated set of tees.

Example 1: If men playing from the middle tees where the men's USGA Course Rating is 70.3 compete against men playing from the back tees where the men's USGA Course Rating is 72.6, the men playing from the back tees will add two strokes ($72.6 - 70.3 = 2.3$ rounded to 2 strokes) to their Course Handicaps.

Example 2: If women playing from the forward tees where the women's Course Rating is 73.4 compete against men playing from the middle tees where the men's Course Rating is 70.9, the women will add three strokes ($73.4 - 70.9 = 2.5$ rounded to 3 strokes) to their Course Handicaps.

b. Same Tees: Men vs. Women

Men and women playing from the same set of tees will have different USGA Course Ratings. Since the women's Course Rating usually will be higher, women receive additional strokes equal to the rounded difference between the USGA Course Ratings, with .5 or greater rounded upward.

Example: If women playing from the middle tees where the women's Course Rating is 77.3 compete against men playing from the middle tees where the men's Course Rating is 70.9, the women will add six strokes ($77.3 - 70.9 = 6.4$ rounded to 6 strokes) to their Course Handicaps.

The adjustment shall be added to the players' Course Handicaps even if it causes a Course Handicap to exceed the maximum possible for the Slope Rating of the set of tees being played.

Many players question the application of [Section 3-5](#), where players are competing from different sets of tees, or men and women are competing from the same set of tees. This is a difficult concept to understand and we are offering a few different ways to allow you to explain this to your club members.

We need to define what the Slope Rating does, as many players think the different Slope Ratings automatically take care of the difference in the two sets of tees. This is a myth. The Slope Rating is used to convert a Handicap Index to a Course Handicap, which allows the player to receive the number of strokes he needs to play to the level of a scratch golfer for that particular set of tees. In other words, it is the number of strokes he needs to play down to the Course Rating for that particular set of tees.

Example

Player A: Handicap Index of 10.4

White set of tees: Course Rating of 71.1 and a Slope Rating of 130.

Course Handicap for player A on the white tees is a 12 ($10.4 \times 130/113$).

He needs 12 strokes to play down to the level of a scratch golfer on the white set of tees. The scratch golfer is what the Course Rating is based upon, so that is 71.1. For the Course Handicap of 12 to play down to the level of a scratch golfer, he would need to shoot $71.1 + 12$, or 83.1, which we will round to 83. So, if player A plays to his Course Handicap by shooting 83, he would tie the scratch golfer shooting 71 on the white set of tees. Now, we have found a way for a golfer to compete against a player with a different skill level from a specific set of tees.

Player B: Handicap Index of 10.4

Blue set of tees: Course Rating of 73.2 and a Slope Rating of 140.

Course Handicap for player B on the blue tees is 13 ($10.4 \times 140/113$).

Player B needs 13 strokes to play down to the level of a scratch golfer for this particular blue set of tees. As we said earlier, the scratch golfer is what the Course Rating is based upon, and on the blue set of tees that is 73.2. For the Course Handicap of 13 to play down to the level of a scratch golfer, he would need to shoot $73.2 + 13$ or 86.3, which we will round to 86. So, if player B plays to his Course Handicap by

shooting 86, he would tie the scratch golfer shooting 73 on the blue set of tees. Great, again we have found a way for a golfer to compete against a player with a different skill level from a specific set of tees.

So now the two non-scratch players decide to compete against one another; Player A from the white tees and Player B from the blue tees. We have determined their Course Handicap when they were going to play someone else from the same set of tees, but that is no longer the case. However, we have already determined that player A needs 12 strokes to play down to a scratch for the white set of tees and player B needs 13 strokes to play down to the level of a scratch player for the blue set of tees. If both players play exactly to their Course Handicap, player A scores 83 for a net of 71 and player B scores 86 for a net of 73. Player A wins every time if they shoot to their Course Handicap, as 71 is better than 73. This is because the Course Handicaps were set up allowing each player to score down to the level of the scratch golfer for the specific set of tees they are playing. SLOPE allows one to compete with someone from the same set of tees, but in our example the players are not playing the same set of tees.

Now, we have to standardize/equalize the Course Ratings in order for the two players to compete equitably. The same thing would apply when two scratch players chose to play from these two different sets of tees. A scratch golfer would shoot a 71 from the white tees and another scratch golfer would shoot a 73 from the blue tees. Because the player playing the blue tees is playing a course with a higher Course Rating (more difficult set of tees), we must equalize the difference in Course Ratings in order to do any type of comparison or competition. This applies to every golfer, no matter what their level of skill, as all the Slope Rating has done is given a player enough strokes to play down to the level of a scratch for the specific set of tees.

Back to our net players A and B. Because player B is playing a set of tees with a higher Course Rating, we must add the difference between the two Course Ratings to his Course Handicap if he is going to compete with someone else from a different set of tees. $73.2 \text{ (blue)} - 71.1 \text{ (white)} = 2.2$, which we round to 2. So player B will add two strokes to his 13, resulting in a Course Handicap of 15. Now let's look at the competition if both players score to their Course Handicap:

	Player A	Player B
Target Score	83	86
Course Handicap	12	13
Diff. in Rating		2
Net Score	71	71

We have reached our desired goal. Both players have scored to their Course Handicap and their net score results in a tie.

Common thoughts:

1. **My Handicap Index converts to the same Course Handicap from two different sets of tees. This system must be screwed up because I definitely score higher on the longer set of tees and I need more strokes.** Example, a player has a Handicap Index of 10.4. The white set of tees has a Course Rating of 70.9 and a Slope Rating of 118. The blue tee has a Course Rating of 73.1 and a Slope Rating of 122. In both cases 10.4 converts to a Course Handicap of 11. As we learned in Example 1, the Slope Rating allows us to receive enough strokes to play to the level of a scratch golfer from a particular set of tees. So, when this player plays the white set of tees, he needs 11 strokes to play down to the Course Rating of 70.9. When he plays the blue set of tees, he needs 11 strokes to play down to the Course Rating of 73.1. So, to play to his Course Handicap, he needs to score $70.9 + 11 = 81.9$ or 82 from the white tees and $73.1 + 11 = 84.1$ or 84 from the blue tees. The system recognizes the difficulty difference in the two sets of tees, but it doesn't show up until we take into account both the Course Rating and the Slope Rating.

2. **A player develops a Handicap Index from a certain set of tees, so a 10.4 who plays all the time from the blue tees is better than the 10.4 who plays from the white set of tees.** Another way to read this is that a player develops a Handicap Index from a specific set of tees. In our last example, we said the white tees had a Course Rating of 70.9 and a Slope Rating of 118. What would a player have to average with his ten best scores/differentials to become a 10.4? Let's skip the 96 percent factor in the formula to make it easier to determine. First, we need to determine how to calculate a handicap differential. It is the adjusted gross score minus the Course Rating multiplied by a 113 STANDARD for Slope Rating, divided by the Slope Rating of the tees played. $81.8 - 70.9 \times 113/118 = 10.4$. So if a player averaged 81.8 on his ten best differentials, the result would be 10.4. If a blue tee player averaged 81.8, the result would be 8.1 ($81.8 - 73.1 \times 113/122$). Result: Shooting the same score from different sets of tees does not result in the same Handicap Index.

For a player averaging 84.3 from the blue tees, the resulting Handicap Index would be 10.4 ($84.3 - 73.1 \times 113/122$). The combination of the differences in Course Ratings, plus the weighting of the Slope Rating shows that a blue tee player averaging 2.5 strokes higher than the white tee player would result in the same Handicap Index. This is how we determine which ten rounds to count in your Handicap Index, whether played from the blue tee at your course, the white tee at your course or the blue tees at Pebble Beach.

Nowhere in the above information did we mention the word par. Players often try to throw par into the mix when trying to figure if scores are equal. Par is of little relevance in the handicap system and is a terrible indicator of predicting score. For example, one course may be 5500 yards long and have a par of 72 and another may be 7200 yards long and have a par of 72. It is highly unlikely that scores on these two courses would be equal for any level of golfer.

In each of the examples, we have used both Course Rating and Slope Rating. The point is that Slope Rating by itself has little meaning within the Handicap System. There must be a Course Rating standard

to connect/attach to the Slope Rating in order for there to be any meaning. If there is one thing to remember from all of this, it is that the Slope Rating is used to convert a Handicap Index to a Course Handicap, which allows the player to receive the number of strokes he needs to play to the level of a scratch golfer for that particular set of tees.
