USGA Announces World Handicap System

Emily Hulsey, MSGA Handicap and Website Coordinator

Why a World Handicap System? Technology has brought the world closer, people are traveling more, golf is global, but handicap systems vary around the world.

There are currently 6 different handicap systems being used globally: the United States Golf Association, Argentine Golf Association, European Golf Association, Council of National Golf Unions, South African Golf Association, and Golf Australia. The World Handicap System (WHS) is a collaboration of these 6 authorities, plus the R&A, National Associations, and input from golfers and golf administrators around the world. It will bring these systems together into a single set of Rules for Handicapping, using the best features of each.

Golfers will be able to compete or play socially on a fair and equal basis, making handicaps truly portable. The system has also been modernized and simplified to encourage others to join in, everyone from beginners to the experienced, from the recreational to the competitive.

Here are a few examples of the new features: An adjustment for abnormal course and weather conditions is added, the minimum number of scores needed changes from five 18-hole scores to three, a maximum handicap moves up to 54.0, regardless of gender, and a change to daily handicap revisions.

“For some time, we've heard golfers say, 'I'm not good enough to have a handicap,' or 'I don't play enough to have a handicap,'” said Mike Davis, CEO of the USGA. “We want to make the right decisions now to encourage a more welcoming and social game. We're excited to be taking another important step — along with modernizing golf’s Rules — to provide a pathway into the sport, making golf easier to understand and more approachable and enjoyable for everyone to play.”

Martin Slumbers, Chief Executive of The R&A, said, “We want to make it more attractive to golfers to obtain a handicap and strip away some of the complexity and variation which can be off-putting for newcomers. Having a handicap, which is easier to understand and is truly portable around the world, can make golf much more enjoyable and is one of the unique selling points of our sport.”

Further details of the WHS will be released later this year, with materials, resources, and education becoming available in 2019. The new system will be launched in 2020.

To provide feedback to the USGA on the new World Handicap System, email whsfeedback@usga.org, or see usga.org/whs. Golfers are encouraged to follow and join in the conversation on social media by using #GolfWHS2020.
Despite much of Montana under the cover of snow, the spring golf season is underway for some collegiate golfers. Kelly Hooper of Montana State did not exhibit any rust from the winter, as the MSU sophomore earned medalist honors at the Grand Canyon Invitational in Phoenix, Arizona. Hooper put together rounds of 70–76–73 for a 219 total, tied with Utah Valley’s Carley Dehlin. Hooper defeated Dehlin on the second playoff hole. The two competitors each birdied hole 18 to begin the playoff, then played the hole again with Hooper notching another birdie as Dehlin parred. Hooper’s performance was the fourth best total in MSU program history and her win was the first by a Bobcat golfer in five years.

Jaylee Tait of MSU also finished in the top ten, as Tait closed the tournament with 72, bouncing back from a second-round 79, after beginning with 72 for a T9 finish. Delaney Elliott, Lilly Navarre, and Coral Schulz were mostly in the 80’s during the tournament, as the Bobcats team finished in a tie for ninth with CSU-Bakersfield at 927 over the three rounds. ...Continued next page

PGA Junior League Golf is a fun and social opportunity for boys and girls, ages 13 and under, to learn and enjoy the game of golf from PGA Professionals.

Like many other recreational youth sports, participants wear numbered jerseys and play on teams with friends. Teams are already forming in Billings, Missoula, Flathead valley, and other areas.

Click here to register your son or daughter today!

MSU-Billings Golf Season Set to Resume
Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

The Yellowjackets are ready to resume the 2017-18 season. The men have five scheduled spring tournaments.

First up February 26-27, the East/West Bay Area Invitational in Livermore, California. On March 12-13, MSUB will compete at the Warrior Invitational in Las Vegas, Nevada, where the women’s team will join them and make their spring debut.

MSU-B is scheduled to host the Yellowjacket Spring Invitational at Lake Hills Golf Club on March 26-27. The GNAC Championships will be conducted on April 23-24. Bring on some warm weather!

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Lewis-Clark State was the only other Frontier Conference team in the top-25, as the Warriors remained in 16th. Montana Tech received one vote. The Frontier Conference Championships take place April 23-24 at the Arizona State University – Karsten Golf Course.

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The University of Montana also competed in Phoenix and the Grizzlies finished 11th as a team, with Baylee Barckley leading the way with a top-twenty finish. Barckley was the only U of M golfer in the 70’s all three rounds with 76-77-73, 226 total, for T19 overall.

Hailey Hoagland and Teigan Avery each put two days in the 70’s, finishing T33 and T43 respectively. Kari Opatz closed out with a 75 and Faith D’Ortenzio was consistently in the low 80s, as the Griz were one shot behind their rivals in Bozeman at 928.

Up next for MSU is the March 5-6 Battle at Boulder Creek in Boulder City, Nevada (the site of the 2018 Big Sky Championship). U of M will next compete at the Red Rocks Invitational in Sedona, Arizona, on March 24-25.

NEW ADVOCACY GROUP PROMOTES YOUTH CADDYING

Together with a number of leading golf organizations, the Western Golf Association (WGA) announces today a groundbreaking initiative centered around promoting youth caddying and golf called Carry the Game.

Carry the Game is an advocacy group that introduces young students to the game of golf by creating additional opportunities for them to train and work as caddies and encourages them to become lifelong players. Through caddying, young people learn valuable life lessons, develop a strong work ethic and money management skills, and make professional contacts on the golf course. In addition to being a great way to learn about the game, caddying provides life-changing benefits that are instrumental to their individual growth.

Carry the Game operates under the organizational umbrella of the WGA. Participants in the effort include the World Golf Foundation, United States Golf Association, PGA of America, The First Tee, and Youth on Course, among other groups. This special collaboration to promote the role of youth caddying within the game of golf will help ensure Carry the Game’s long-term success while encouraging a new generation of young golfers to play the game.

“Over the past few years, numerous leading golf organizations have discussed the importance of creating a governing body for youth caddying, and we’re excited to see that the WGA is spearheading this important initiative,” said World Golf Foundation CEO Steve Mona. “The WGA is a recognized leader in youth caddying, and we’re all looking forward to working together to help bring this effort to life.”

Carry the Game will be a resource for anyone interested in becoming a caddie or forming a youth caddie program. In 2018, the group will begin an extensive research project to provide qualitative data on the current state of youth caddying and inform the initiative’s work. ...Continued next page
**YOUTH CADDYING ... from previous page**

The overall goal of Carry the Game is to increase the number of youth caddies – and the diversity of those caddies – by helping to establish additional caddying opportunities at golf clubs nationwide. Carry the Game will also promote youth caddie programs as a way to create future golfers and preserve and enhance the tradition of caddying within the game of golf.

It will offer resources including caddie training materials and certification, a caddie club locator, best practices on creating and managing programs, media and public relations support, and knowledge and expertise on all caddie-related topics.

“Through Carry the Game, our goal is to provide young people with an early introduction to golf by creating life-changing opportunities to work as a caddie,” said WGA President and CEO John Kaczkowski. “Ultimately, we believe the experiences and mentorship gained through caddying are invaluable to a young person’s development and will help cultivate a lifelong passion for playing golf. Some of golf’s greatest players, as well as many of the world’s most successful executives, emerged from the caddie ranks. We look forward to supporting current and future caddies as they continue the legacy of a game so beloved and carry it forward for years to come.”

Carry the Game will also share and promote local and national caddie scholarship opportunities and resources. You can access the Caddie Club Locator and Caddie Resources on the WGA website.

For more information, contact Tim Orbon at orbon@wgaesf.org or 847-724-4600.

**NEW PLAYOFF FORMAT FOR U.S. OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS**

A revised playoff format for all four USGA Open Championships – the U.S. Open, U.S. Women’s Open, U.S. Senior Open, and U.S. Senior Women’s Open – will take effect in 2018, with each championship implementing a two-hole aggregate playoff in the event of a tie at the end of 72 holes of stroke play.

“We know how important it is to everyone in the golf world to see play conclude on the Sunday of a major championship, and to award the trophy to the champion,” said USGA CEO/Executive Director Mike Davis, who made the announcement prior to online player registration for each USGA Open Championship, which opens next week. “After receiving input from a variety of constituents, including players, fans, volunteers, officials, and our broadcast partners, it clearly came across as something that everyone valued, and would benefit from.”

“There is no right or wrong way to determine a winner in stroke play, but we’ve seen over the years how the aggregate playoff has served us well in both the U.S. Women’s Open and U.S. Senior Open,” Davis added. “Two holes will allow a player to recover from any single mistake, and at the same time, provide a memorable, and perhaps dramatic, experience for all involved.”

If the playoff results in a tie after two holes, the tied players would immediately continue to play off hole-by-hole (sudden-death format) until the champion is determined.

In its 117-year history, the U.S. Open has had 33 playoffs that have employed 18- and 36-hole formats. There have been 12 playoffs in U.S. Women’s Open history. A three-hole playoff was held for the first time in 2011. The U.S. Senior Open, which held a three-hole playoff for the first time in 2002, has had six playoffs in its championship history.