Top 5 Things A Golfer Needs To Know (Part 5)
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We finish up with Part 5 of the Top 5 Things a Golfer Needs to Know about the World Handicap System (WHS). Parts 1-4 can be accessed at www.msgagolf.org/newsletter-archive, and a summary of the Top 5 can be found at www.msgagolf.org/top-5. For more information about the WHS go to www.usga.org/whs.

#5: Safeguards Have Been Added To Protect Your Handicap

The World Handicap System adds three new safeguards to help maintain accuracy of your Handicap Index. They also promote fair play and fun for golfers of every ability.

1) Playing Conditions Calculation (PCC)  
Course and Slope Ratings measure the difficulty of a course under normal playing conditions. But, not every day is normal. Sometimes the weather is bad or the course is set up more challenging than usual. To adjust for this circumstance, the system will compare scores turned in that day with what is expected based on the Course Ratings and Handicaps of the players at that course. If scores are significantly higher or lower than expected, an automatic adjustment is made for anyone who played that day. The adjustment is conservative, ranging from -1 to +3 (but usually 0), and will be shown in your score record next to that score.

What does this mean for you?  Please remember to post your score the day you played!!! If you don’t, your score is not included in the pool of scores that are compared. If very many people forget, you can see how that would skew the numbers of what actually happened. If you do happen to post your score later, make sure to date your score correctly so that if there is a PCC adjustment, it is still applied to your score.

2) Limit on Extreme Upward Movement  
Your Handicap Index represents your demonstrated ability. But, even the best players can occasionally have a bad score, and it shouldn’t be reflective of their true ability. Because of this, the Soft Cap and Hard Cap have been introduced. After a player has 20 18-hole scores (or the equivalent of 9’s) in the score record, a Low Handicap Index is established. This is the baseline, and looks back over a 12-month period. Your Handicap Index can extend up to 3 strokes over the Low Handicap Index without incident. However, if your Handicap Index goes over this limit, a Soft Cap is applied, which suppresses the increase by 50%. The Hard Cap will not allow your Handicap Index to extend more than 5 strokes over your Low Handicap Index.

What does this mean for you?  You can rest assured that, even if you have a few bad rounds, you shouldn’t be afraid to post them to your record. The Soft and Hard Cap will act on your behalf to keep your Handicap Index more consistent.  ...Continued on the next page
Congratulations to our NEWEST WINNERS!

FEBRUARY’S DRAWING:
Alb Hot Air Ballooning - Kathryn Felzer, El Paso, TX
$200 cash - Steve Sherburne, East Glacier

** MARCH’S TRIP PRIZE is Park City, Utah **

New Recruits For Montana Tech

Kevin Noctor, a Butte senior, attracted attention from MSU Billings and out-of-state schools, but his knowledge of the school’s educational program is what attracted him to Montana Tech. He won the Montana State Junior Championships in Billings last June and played in the Boys Junior Americas Cup and the Montana-Alberta Cup. He plans to major in Business and Information Technology.

J.R. Small, of Bozeman, helped his team win back-to-back Class AA titles, earning all-state honors all four seasons. He also intends to major in Business and Information Technology.

Other recruits include Jhett Braley of Billings, Jace Rhodes of Billings, and Gabe Witham of Helena.

What does this mean for you? The tournament score adjustment from the past could stay on your record up to a calendar year. The ESR is not so harsh. The more scores you post, the quicker the adjustment is eliminated. It is also a more fair assessment of your ability.

To sum up the Top 5 Things A Golfer Needs To Know, they are: 1) Your Handicap Index could change, 2) Your Course Handicap could change, 3) Net Double Bogey will replace ESC, 4) Your Handicap Index will be revised daily, and 5) Safeguards have been added to protect your handicap. Please visit our website at www.msgagolf.org/top-5 if you’d like to print a copy of the Top 5.

If you have any questions about the new Rules of Handicapping, please feel free to contact us.
The PGA Junior League Golf is a fun and social opportunity for boys and girls, ages 17 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. Click here to register your son or daughter today!

Eagle Bend Golf Club in Bigfork experienced a devastating loss early Sunday, February 16th, when their clubhouse burned down. The club and restaurant were closed over the weekend, and authorities are trying to determine the cause of the fire.

The fire apparently started around 2 a.m. in the part of the building farthest from administrative offices, which contained the pro shop and dining area. It was reported as a total loss. Fortunately, no one was injured.

Neither the golf course nor the carts were damaged, and the course anticipates they will be open for play at the end of March or early April.

Simulators For Winter Months Help Profits

Because winter weather is unpredictable, golf courses in Montana have struggled in times past to make a solid profit during the winter months. But, there is a trend emerging among some courses to fill those winter gaps, and the latest course to benefit is Whitetail Golf Course in Stevensville.

Course owners and managers have had to think outside the box for new, creative ideas to keep their patrons engaged during winter. The pro at Whitetail, Jason Lehtola, saw how profitable golf simulators could be in other venues, so decided to take the idea to his golf course. “I pitched the idea to the board and stayed on them for a couple of years and here we are,” Lehtola said. "We have them now and it's been great so far.”

“Simulators started coming out a few years ago, probably about a decade ago ... but they were so bad, they weren’t accurate. They weren’t close to the real thing and these are close,” Missoula resident John Velk said. “They are measuring your spin rate, launch angle, everything. Everything you are seeing actually came off your club, whether you want to believe it or not.”

Players can use the simulators year-round, and they are open to beginners, as well as experienced players. They were an investment, with an average price of more than $15,000, but the hopes are that it will create a steady income in the winter that can be put back into improving the course for summer.

Montana’s Official Golf Season: April 1 to October 31

Off-season scores played in Montana should not be posted. Scores played where it is in-season are valid and should be posted, via the online handicap system, smartphone app, or membership linking.
STU FRANCIS ELECTED AS 66TH USGA PRESIDENT

J. Stuart Francis, of Hillsborough, CA, has been elected to serve as the 66th president of the USGA. The election took place at the Association’s Annual Meeting in the Village of Pinehurst, NC, on February 29th. Francis will serve a three-year term leading the USGA Executive Committee, which serves as the policy-making board and provides strategic direction and oversight to the Association’s full-time staff, which is based in Liberty Corner, NJ. “The opportunity to serve the game that has given so much to me is truly a great honor,” Francis said. “I look forward to leading an exceptionally dedicated group of fellow Executive Committee members as we work in close alignment with CEO Mike Davis, USGA staff, volunteers, and members to achieve our mission to champion and advance the game.”

Francis is currently a senior managing director for Evercore, a global investment banking advisory firm, where he leads the firm’s Silicon Valley based technology practice. He is entering his sixth year on the Executive Committee and has served as chairman of the Championship Committee for the last four years. He has also served on the USGA’s Compensation, Equipment Standards, and Governance committees.

An accomplished amateur golfer, Francis competed in three U.S. Amateur Championships, two NCAA Championships, and three Canadian Amateur Championships. He earned his B.A. from Princeton University, where he was named First Team All-Ivy League and All-American as co-captain of the men’s golf team, and later earned an MBA from Stanford University.

USGA AND R&A RELEASE KEY FINDINGS ON IMPACTS OF DISTANCE IN GOLF

The USGA and The R&A have issued the Distance Insights Report, which provides comprehensive research and analysis on the contributors to, and long-term impacts of, hitting distance in golf. After extensive stakeholder research, the report features more than 100 years of data, informed by a library of 56 supporting documents. It is accompanied by a 15-page conclusions paper from the governing bodies that summarizes their perspectives on the long-term implications for the sport. The reports and library have been publicly released and can be found at usga.org/distanceinsights.

“This is not about the last few years or the next few years but rather about the long-term future of the game,” said Mike Davis, CEO of the USGA. “This report clearly shows a consistent increase in hitting distance and golf course lengths over the last 100-plus years. These increases have had a profound impact on costs to build, modify, and operate golf courses and they have impacted golfers at all levels. We believe this problem will continue unless this cycle is brought to an end. With collaboration from the entire golf community, we have an opportunity to stem this tide and help ensure golf remains sustainable and enjoyable for generations to come.”

Martin Slumbers, chief executive of The R&A, said, “We believe we have reached a pivotal moment in golf. The publication of this report is highly significant. The impact of long-term hitting distance increases on some of golf’s essential elements are now clear – including changing the strategic challenge of the sport, altering the balance of skills needed to be successful and risking courses being less challenging or obsolete. Our objective as governing bodies is to work with the key stakeholders in golf to address this issue in a way that brings the sport together and which ensures it continues to thrive for many years to come.”

No solutions have been determined yet. The USGA and The R&A will now enter the next phase by assessing potential solutions that can help end the cycle of increased distance. It is expected the main topic for research and potential changes in the Equipment Rules, along with the effects of course design, conditions, and setup on hitting distance.