

Handicap Index reductions

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“Why has the SCGA punished me and branded me with the scarlet letter ‘R’ after my Handicap Index (i.e., 13.6R)?” This question is often asked of club handicap chairs, as well as the staff in the SCGA Handicap Department.

The quick answer is the golfer has not been punished or restricted by the SCGA. It does not prohibit the golfer from participating in any events including SCGA and USGA events and should not be looked at by others as identifying a cheater.

The “R” indicates the player’s Handicap Index is automatically being reduced due to exceptional tournament scores. As section 10-3 of the USGA Handicap System states, “The following procedure must be used as an alternate calculation of a Handicap Index for players with two or more exceptional tournament scores.” Each month every golfer in the SCGA is evaluated under this procedure and based on the criteria, a reduced Handicap Index may be calculated.

In order for a player’s index to be reduced, the golfer must have a minimum of two tournament scores in their stored tournament file in which the handicap differentials are at least 3.0 below their calculated Handicap Index. When a tournament score is posted, it will be sent through under normal computation methods (the file of 20 scores) but will also be placed in a stored tournament file for a year from the date the score was posted.

Each month the computer system looks at what the golfer’s Handicap Index calculates to be based on the current file of twenty scores and compares that number to the stored tournament games. If there is at least a 3.0 difference between the two low tournament handicap differentials and the calculated index then the player may become reduced

under this procedure.

Using the shaded box, we can determine that Joe has at least two tournament handicap differentials which are 3.0 lower than his calculated index.

Next, average the two low tournament differentials ($2.4 + 3.7 = 6.1$; divide by 2 = 3.05) and subtract from the calculated index ($8.7 - 3.05 = 5.65$ rounded to 5.7).

Using the Handicap Reduction Table (below) determine amount of reduction (if any).

Example of 10-3 Reduction

Joe Golfer • Current Handicap Index: 8.7
Total number of Tournament Scores over last 12 months: 4

Game Type	Date	Score	CR/Slope	Differential
T	11/14/07	75	72.1/128	2.4
T	5/19/07	76	71.8/127	3.7
T	1/23/08	82	71.5/134	8.9
T	5/17/07	82	71.8/127	9.1

Next, subtract the value derived from the Handicap Reduction Table (1.9) from the calculated index (8.7) to determine the player’s official index for the revision, $8.7 - 1.9 = 6.8R$.

Thus, Joe’s official Handicap Index is 6.8R. This index will be listed on all reports and electronic mediums (posting computer,

internet, etc.).

The reduced index is not a penalty or restriction to the golfer. There is no guaranteed answer to the question how long this reduction will last. The golfer must keep in mind that his or her score file will be evaluated each month based on the criteria listed above (calculated index, number of tournament rounds in the past year, and the two low tournament handicap differentials). As these items change monthly, so might the reduction.

It is important to note the Handicap Index is based on the golfer’s playing potential. When a player’s index has been reduced it is because they have shown they have the potential to play at a certain level but their current index is not indicative of that potential so the system may automatically reduce the golfer to their playing potential.

If you have questions about your index being reduced under this procedure, please contact your Handicap Chair at the club. They will have the reports available to let you know what scores are causing the reduction.

Questions should be directed to your club’s handicap chairperson or handicap committee.

HANDICAP INDEX REDUCTION TABLE

Number of Tournament Scores

	2	3	4	5 thru 9	10 thru 19	20 thru 29	30 thru 39
3.0 to 3.4	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
3.5 to 3.9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
4.0 to 4.4	1.0	*	*	*	*	*	*
4.5 to 4.9	1.8	1.0	*	*	*	*	*
5.0 to 5.4	2.6	1.9	1.0	*	*	*	*
5.5 to 5.9	3.4	2.7	1.9	1.0	*	*	*
6.0 to 6.4	4.1	3.5	2.8	1.9	1.0	*	*
6.5 to 6.9	4.8	4.3	3.7	2.9	2.0	1.0	*
7.0 to 7.4	5.5	5.0	4.5	3.8	3.0	2.1	1.0
7.5 to 7.9	6.2	5.7	5.3	4.7	3.9	3.1	2.2
8.0 to 8.4	6.8	6.4	6.0	5.5	4.8	4.1	3.2
8.5 to 8.9	7.4	7.1	6.7	6.2	5.7	5.0	4.2
9.0 to 9.4	8.1	7.8	7.4	7.0	6.5	5.9	5.2
9.5 to 9.9	8.7	8.4	8.1	7.7	7.3	6.7	6.1
10.0 to 10.4	9.2	9.0	8.8	8.4	8.0	7.6	7.0
10.5 to 10.9	9.8	9.5	9.4	9.1	8.7	8.3	7.8
11.0 to 11.4	10.4	10.2	10.0	9.7	9.4	9.1	8.6
11.5 to 11.9	11.0	10.8	10.6	10.4	10.1	9.8	9.4
12.0 to 12.4	11.5	11.4	11.2	11.0	10.7	10.5	10.1
12.5 to 12.9	12.1	11.9	11.8	11.6	11.4	11.1	10.8
13.0 to 13.4	12.6	12.5	12.4	12.2	12.0	11.8	11.5
13.5 to 13.9	13.2	13.1	12.9	12.8	12.6	12.4	12.2
14.0 to 14.4	13.7	13.6	13.5	13.4	13.2	13.0	12.8

The value in the table is the amount that the Handicap Index will be reduced from the 10-2 (normal) calculation.
* An asterisk indicates that no reduction will apply.