

Handicapping and Why It Matters

Now that Spring has arrived and golf courses are waking up, it's time to start thinking about your game and how a handicap can help. The golf season officially started in Ohio on March 15th, so here is some information about handicapping and how your chapter Handicap Committee is here to help you.

What is a golf handicap?

A numerical indicator of the number of extra 'shots' over par that you can be expected to take on a course. It is used as a measure of the ability of the golfer.

Who can hold a handicap?

Any golfer can hold a handicap; competitive players AND social players. To establish a new handicap or renew an existing handicap with the Columbus LPGA Amateurs, [Columbus \(lpgaamateurs.com\)](http://Columbus (lpgaamateurs.com))

Why is a handicap important?

As a **social golfer**, holding a handicap is a way to track your progress and identify areas to improve. For example, you can track the number of putts or greens in regulation per round and see how your game is trending throughout the season. In addition, having a handicap allows you to play in events that require an established handicap.

As a **competitive golfer**, it allows you to play golf against any other player, at any skill level, and on any course and still have a reasonable chance of competing on a level playing field.

For example: Players with a 'high' handicap will be allowed a higher number of extra strokes over the course par. Players with a 'low' handicap are expected to take fewer additional strokes to get around the course. So, in a handicap-based competition you and your competitor are basically playing equal to each other when using your individual handicaps. You might take more strokes to get around the course than your competitor, but the handicap is subtracted from the final score to get an equitable comparison.

Columbus LPGA Amateur Handicap Committee:

Over the winter your Handicap Committee was busy creating this Handicap Committee Manual, [Handicap Committee Manual .docx \(ctctusercontent.com\)](http://Handicap Committee Manual .docx (ctctusercontent.com)) to guide work in assisting members and monitoring handicap compliance. The committee is in place to assist you with all things handicap-related such as, handicap set-up and renewals, general questions, and errors and issues in correctly reporting scores. Although not all handicap issues require an audit or investigation, here are some examples of investigations within the past few years:

- Scores not posted on the day of play
- Scores not posted from weekly competitive league play

- Multiple scores posted many months after rounds were played, giving the player a competitive advantage
- Scores posted using the wrong tee boxes, skewing the player's handicap index
- Member exclusively playing in formats that could not be posted (scramble, alternate shot, etc), and yet played in competitions without an accurate handicap

Expectations of LPGA Amateur competitive golfers: (*Optional for social league players*)

To ensure equity and integrity for all competitive play, the chapter will implement the following guidelines which will be managed with the assistance of the competitive league captains.

- Scores must be recorded for handicap by midnight on the day of play
- Scorecards must be signed by member of playing foursome
- A picture of the scorecard must be sent to captain on the day of play

It is always the responsibility of the competitive player to know the rules of golf. Although it may be difficult to know every rule, resources are always available through the USGA website and app. In addition, if you have any questions contact the Handicap Committee at handicap.lpgaamateurs.columbus@gmail.com or refer to the chapter Handicap Manual. We are here to help and to keep the game of golf fair for all.

Handicap Committee

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