

Explanation of course rating adjustments:

Excerpt article from the USGA:

Competing From Different USGA Course Ratings

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Question: Why & How Do Players Adjust Their Course Handicap When Competing From Different Tees, Which Have A Different Course Rating And Slope Rating?

One of the commonly misunderstood topics of the USGA Handicap System™ is the additional adjustment that needs to be applied for a competition in which players are competing from different tees/USGA Course Ratings. A common *misconception* held by many golfers is that a Course Handicap™ represents the number of strokes a player needs to shoot par. **This is not the case.** A Course Handicap represents the (rounded) number of strokes a player needs to shoot a score equal to the USGA Course Rating of the tees being played. In most cases, par will remain the same for each gender from one tee to the next as it is based on the effective playing length of each hole. However, look at any scorecard and you will note that the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating® will vary from one set of tees to the next.

Since different tees have different Ratings, as well as different ratings for both men and women, for any competition in which players are competing against one another from different sets of tees, or men and women competing from the same set of tees, an **additional** adjustment needs to be applied in order to put all players on an equal playing field. To compensate for the difference in USGA Course Rating from one set of tees to the next, the rounded difference in USGA Course Rating between the two sets of tees is added to the Course Handicap of the player(s) competing from the higher rated set of tees.

If a majority of the players are competing from the higher-rated set of tees, it is acceptable for the rounded difference in USGA Course Rating to be subtracted from the players competing from the lower-rated set of tees. (See Decision 3-5/1.)* **(The Myrtle Beach Golf Holiday events committee utilizes this format of handicapping in ALL tournament play)**

The USGA Handicap Department has received many inquiries in regard to this topic as players often feel as if they are being penalized for playing a shorter set of tees. However, this adjustment is necessary so players can compete on an equitable basis. Since a Course Handicap gives a player the whole number of strokes needed to shoot the USGA Course Rating of the tees being played, a player competing from a set of tees with a USGA Course Rating of 70.3 is expected to shoot a net score that is two strokes fewer than his opponent who is competing from a set of tees with a USGA Course Rating of 72.7.

The opponent competing from the higher-rated set of tees needs two additional strokes to compete on equal footing ($72.7 - 70.3 = 2.4$, 2 rounded). Without this adjustment, the player competing from the lower-rated set of tees is at a distinct advantage.

Explanation of course rating adjustments (cont'd):

For further explanation, please see the below from the USGA Handicap Manual:

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

■ a. Different Tees:

Different tees usually have different Ratings. Because a **USGA Course Rating** reflects the probable score of a **scratch golfer**, the higher-rated course is more difficult, and the player playing from the set of tees with the higher **USGA Course Rating** receives additional stroke(s) equal to the difference between each **USGA Course Rating**, with .5 or greater rounded upward. The additional stroke(s) are added to the **Course Handicap** of the player playing from the higher-rated set of tees. (See Decision **3-5/1.**)

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) to their **Course Handicap**.

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

EXAMPLE: SECTION 3-5 PROMOTING EQUITABLE COMPETITION

Gary Gold Tees <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">10.4</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">130</div> 12 <u>+71.1</u> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">83</div>	vs. Handicap Index Slope Rating Course Handicap USGA Course Rating Target Score	Bob Blue Tees <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">10.4</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">140</div> 13 <u>+73.2</u> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">86</div>
83	Target Score (minus)	86
-12 <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">=71</div>	<u>Course Handicap (adjusted for Section 3-5)</u> =Net Score	-15 <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">=71</div>