

# **INTERNATIONAL BLIND GOLF ASSOCIATION**

## **HANDICAP POLICY**

**REVISED: FEBRUARY 2025 (WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The International Blind Golf Association (IBGA) first introduced a standardised international handicap system (IBGAS) from 1 January 2005. With the introduction of the R&A/USGA World Handicap System (WHS), with effect from October 2022 this became the default system for the IBGA with the IBGAS remaining in effect for players who do not have access to the WHS.
- 1.2 The only handicaps to be used in an IBGA-sanctioned event will be those determined using this Handicap Policy.

### **2. REQUIREMENTS FOR WHS TO BE USED**

- 2.1 Where players have access to WHS (and hence have both a WHS Handicap Index and an IBGAS Handicap Index) they shall use the lower of their WHS Index and IBGAS Index to determine their playing handicap for all IBGA-sponsored events (unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed with the IBGA Handicap Committee).
- 2.2 Players who have access to a WHS Handicap Index shall use that Index alone, provided that:
  - (a) All relevant scores (i.e. those which appear on the IBGA Handicap Website) have been submitted to the WHS;
  - (b) Their National Handicap Secretary has provided the player's unique WHS ID to the IBGA Handicap Secretary; and
  - (c) The IBGA Handicap Committee has approved the use of the player's WHS (confirmation of which will be displayed on the IBGA Handicap Website).
- 2.3 Players who do not have access to the WHS will use the IBGAS to determine their Playing Handicap.
- 2.4 A player's WHS index must be based in the country of their home national blind golf association (unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed with the IBGA Handicap Committee).
- 2.5 Players may only have one WHS handicap index within a handicapping jurisdiction (e.g. throughout the USA). Where a player has more than one WHS index, for example through an overseas club membership, they must use their lowest index (unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed with the IBGA Handicap Committee).
- 2.6 Where a blind golf association provides access to a WHS handicap index for its members it should capture all acceptable scores on that system and not just those pertaining to blind golf events.
- 2.7 Players with access to the WHS must submit all IBGA and pan-disability scores to the WHS.

### **3. NATIONAL HANDICAP SECRETARIES**

- 3.1 Each Member Association shall appoint a National Handicap Secretary.
- 3.2 On completion of a Qualifying Round, as defined in Appendix 1, the National Handicap Secretary shall obtain and check all of their players' scorecards.
- 3.3 The National Handicap Secretary shall provide the IBGA Handicap Secretary with updated information on players' Adjusted Scores (see Appendix 1), as well as the relevant Course Rating and Slope Rating, as soon as practicable after completion of Qualifying Rounds, unless these have been submitted by the host Association as in 3.4 below.
- 3.4 For IBGA sanctioned events, or for events in which player(s) from other Member Associations participate, it is the responsibility of the host Association's National Handicap Secretary to submit the competitors' adjusted scores to the IBGA Handicap Secretary and, if requested to do so, send the scorecards of players from other Member Associations to their respective National Handicap Secretaries for checking.
- 3.5 The National Handicap Secretary is responsible for providing the IBGA Handicap Secretary with the unique WHS ID for all of their players who have access to WHS.

### **4. IBGA HANDICAP SECRETARY**

- 4.1 The IBGA Handicap Secretary shall ensure that National Handicap Secretaries provide the relevant information at the appropriate time.
- 4.2 The IBGA Handicap Secretary shall ensure an up-to-date list of players' handicap indexes is published.
- 4.3 The IBGA Handicap Secretary shall report on the operation of the System to the IBGA Board of Directors.
- 4.4 The IBGA Handicap Secretary shall chair the IBGA Handicap Committee.

### **5. IBGA HANDICAP COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 The IBGA Handicap Committee shall determine which players have an appropriate WHS Handicap Index for use in IBGA-sponsored events. Confirmation of which players have such approval should be published on the IBGA Handicap Website.
- 5.2 The IBGA Handicap Committee shall determine the outcome in any dispute regarding handicaps.
- 5.3 The decision of the IBGA Handicap Committee shall be final.
- 5.4 The IBGA Handicap Committee shall consist of the IBGA Handicap Secretary and two Directors of the IBGA.

### **6. CALCULATION OF HANDICAP INDEXES**

- 6.1 The IBGAS uses the same broad calculation method as the WHS to produce a Handicap Index. Details on Qualifying Rounds and the calculations are set out in Appendix 1.
- 6.2 The WHS rules can be found on the R&A/USGA website.

## 7. HANDICAP INDEX LIMITS

7.1 For IBGA-sponsored events the recommended maximum handicap indexes for Strokeplay medal competitions (for both men and women) are as follows:

B1: 48      B2: 40      B3: 32

7.2 Competitors with indexes above these limits should play in a Stableford event.

## 8. PLAYING HANDICAPS

8.1 A Course Handicap is determined as:

$$(\text{Handicap Index}) \times (\text{Slope Rating} / 113) + (\text{Course Rating} - \text{Par})$$

This is rounded to the nearest whole number (with .5 being rounded upwards).

8.2 Handicap Allowances are applied to the Course Handicap as the final step in calculating a player's Playing Handicap (regardless of whether the players' handicap index was determined using the IBGAS or the WHS).

$$\text{Playing Handicap} = \text{Course Handicap} \times \text{Handicap Allowance}$$

This is rounded to the nearest whole number (with .5 being rounded upwards).

8.3 The following table sets out the recommended handicap allowances based on medium-sized field net events. These should be used in IBGA-sponsored events.

Format of Play	Type of Round	Recommended Handicap Allowance
Stroke play	Individual	95%
	Individual Stableford	95%
	Individual Par/Bogey	95%
	Individual Maximum Score	95%
	Four-Ball	85%
	Four-Ball Stableford	85%
	Four-Ball Par/Bogey	90%
Match Play	Individual	100%
	Four-Ball	90%
Other	Foursomes	50% of combined team handicap
	Greensomes	60% low handicap + 40% high handicap
	Pinehurst/Chapman	60% low handicap + 40% high handicap
	Best 1 of 4 stroke play	75%
	Best 2 of 4 stroke play	85%

	Best 3 of 4 stroke play	100%
	All 4 of 4 stroke play	100%
	Scramble (4 players)	25%/20%/15%/10% from lowest to highest handicap
	Scramble (2 players)	35% low/15% high
	Total score of 2 match play	100%
	Best 1 of 4 Par/Bogey	75%
	Best 2 of 4 Par/Bogey	80%
	Best 3 of 4 Par/Bogey	90%
	4 of 4 Par/Bogey	100%

8.4 Some countries may, however, operate slightly differing allowances. In such circumstances the host of an IBGA-sponsored event may opt to use their country's standard allowances rather than those in the table above.

## **9. ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN BLIND GOLF EVENTS**

9.1 Eligibility to participate in World Championships or Vision Cup events will still require players to have played at least 7 qualifying blind golf rounds in the preceding two years, or as specifically agreed by the IBGA Board of Directors.

## **APPENDIX 1 - The IBGAS**

### **1. GENERAL**

- 1.1 The IBGAS Handicap Index is a simplified version of the WHS Handicap Index.
- 1.2 All players who have had their sight classification confirmed and appear on the IBGA Sight List (displayed on the IBGA Handicap Website) will have an IBGAS Handicap Index calculated and displayed on the IBGA Handicap Website.
- 1.3 All players' qualifying rounds (from blind golf and pan-disability events catering for blind golfers) should continue to be submitted to the IBGA.

### **2. QUALIFYING ROUND**

- 2.1 A Standard Qualifying Round is defined as any of the following Strokeplay rounds, in which the player's card has been appropriately signed by a fellow competitor or appointed marker:
  - (a) IBGA-sponsored competitions.
  - (b) Competitions arranged by an IBGA Member Association in which there are at least 4 blind golfers competing.
  - (c) Disability competitions which are either:
    - Open competitions arranged by the R&A, USGA or a National Golf organisation (e.g. England Golf, the Spanish Royal Federation etc.), or are
    - pre-approved by the IBGA Member Association's handicap secretary.

A maximum of 5 rounds in disability competitions may be captured for a player in any calendar year, or as agreed by the IBGA Handicap Committee on request from an IBGA Member Association's handicap secretary.
  - (d) Those pre-approved by the IBGA Handicap Committee, which could include rounds in competitions with fewer than 4 blind golfers where justified (e.g. for very small associations or groups of players deemed by the Committee to be isolated by distance).
- 2.2 An Authorised Qualifying Round may be approved by the IBGA Handicap Committee, on recommendation from a National Handicap Secretary, in the following instances:
  - (a) Any of the first 3 rounds in a player's handicap record, required in order for a new player to qualify for a Handicap Index.
  - (b) A maximum of 2 Authorised Qualifying Rounds per year may be recorded for Associate Members or players deemed by the National Handicap Secretary to be isolated by distance, and who thus have not recorded any Standard Qualifying Rounds in the year in question.
- 2.3 Authorised Qualifying Rounds are restricted to rounds played in sighted competitions or rounds played on a pre-agreed date. Signed cards and confirming letters must be submitted to the National Handicap Secretary (or the IBGA Handicap Secretary in the case of an Associate Member).
- 2.4 Where a player is disqualified from a competition the card may count as a Qualifying Round if there is an ascertainable gross score for the round.

### 3. CALCULATION OF HANDICAP INDEX

- 3.1 The gross score for each round shall be adjusted to a maximum of a net double bogey on each hole.
- 3.2 In a Stableford scoring system each hole on which no points are scored should be deemed to have the score of a nett double bogey.
- 3.3 For each round a Differential is calculated as follows:  
$$(\text{Adjusted Score} - \text{Course Rating}) \times (113 / \text{Slope Rating})$$
- 3.4 For all scores prior to 1 October 2022, a Slope Rating of 125 has been used.
- 3.5 For all subsequent rounds:
- (a) Actual Slope Ratings will be used to determine differentials.
- (b) Where Course Rating or Slope Rating is not available for future scores on a particular course, the following will be assumed:
- Course Rating shall be taken as the Course Par; and
  - Slope Rating shall be taken as 125.
- 3.6 The player's Handicap Index shall be determined by averaging the differentials for the latest Qualifying Rounds played as follows:

Number of Qualifying Rounds in player's scoring record	Qualifying Rounds used in handicap calculation	Handicap Index Adjustment
3	Lowest 1	Reduce by 2.0
4	Lowest 1	Reduce by 1.0
5	Lowest 1	0
6	Average of lowest 2	Reduce by 1.0
7 or 8	Average of lowest 2	0
9 to 11	Average of lowest 3	0
12 to 14	Average of lowest 4	0
15 or 16	Average of lowest 5	0
17 or 18	Average of lowest 6	0
19	Average of lowest 7	0
20	Average of lowest 8	0

- 3.7 Course ratings and differentials will be displayed to one decimal place on the IBGA Handicap Website.
- 3.8 There will be no Playing Conditions adjustment or caps on handicap increases built into the IBGAS, but may be imposed on an ad hoc basis at the discretion of the IBGA Handicap Committee.
- 3.9 Where fewer than three Qualifying Rounds have been played the player will not be allocated a handicap under this System and will not be eligible to play in an IBGA sanctioned Nett event.

## **APPENDIX 2 - IBGA Handicap Website**

**IBGA Handicap Website address: <https://ibgahandicaps.com>**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The International Blind Golf Association (IBGA) Handicap website contains key information on players, in particular sight classification and handicap information.
- 1.2 Logging in to the website can be done by:
  - Non-IBGA members: By using the guest login username and password credentials provided on the home page (both set to “guest”); or
  - IBGA members: By using the username and password provided by the IBGA Board to National Handicap Secretaries.
- 1.3 The following web pages are available, and can be accessed via the tabs on the top of the page:
  - Sight (Classification) List (accessible to members & non-members), showing: ID number; name, gender; sight classification; country and status.
  - Handicap List (only available to members), showing – for active members only – IBGA handicap index; number of scores recorded; WHS handicap index; as well as all of the information shown on the Sight List.
  - Score List (only available to members): Contains the details of all scores captured.
- 1.4 Filters are available at the top of the Sight List and Handicap List to allow one to search for specific subsets of information, such as specific player’s ID; name; statuses; sight categories or countries.
- 1.5 By clicking on a player in the Handicap List one is taken to the Member Details, which shows the details of the most recent (up to 20) scores for that player.

### **2. DESCRIPTION OF DATA FIELDS IN THE SIGHT AND HANDICAP LIST**

- 2.1 **GID:** This is a unique identification number allocated to each player once their sight classification has been confirmed as being B1, B2 or B3.
- 2.2 **IBGA Index:** This is the player’s handicap index as determined using the rules set out for IBGA handicap indexes. The IBGA Index is updated every time new qualifying scores are captured.
- 2.3 **Recent Scores:** The count of all of the player’s scores captured on the site in the last 24 months. The maximum number of such scores is 20.
- 2.4 **Total Scores:** The total number of the player’s scores captured on the site (and used to calculate the player’s IBGA Index) . The maximum number of such scores is 20.
- 2.5 **WHS Index:** This is the player’s official WHS handicap index. The WHS Index is only updated on the website as and when Handicap Secretaries provide such information to the IBGA Handicap Committee and when Handicap Secretaries submit qualifying scores for players’ IBGA handicaps. It is thus important for event organisers to ask

players for proof of their current WHS index where it is to be used in a competition (as the website may not contain the most up-to-date information).

- 2.6 Use WHS: This field indicates either “Yes” or “No” and indicates whether the player’s WHS Index meets the requirements stipulated by the IBGA to be used in IBGA-sponsored events. The IBGA Handicap Committee will update this field from time to time as and when it has approved a player’s WHS for use.
- 2.7 Status: This indicates player’s playing status. For example: Active; Inactive; Pending or Suspended.
- Newly classified players will be loaded as Pending prior to their first qualifying score being captured.
  - Only players with an Active status will appear on the Handicaps List. No other players have handicaps approved for use in IBGA-sponsored events.

### **3. DESCRIPTION OF DATA FIELDS IN THE MEMBER DETAILS**

- 3.1 Rating: The course rating for the set of tees played.
- 3.2 Slope: The slope rating for the set of tees played.
- 3.3 Score: The player’s adjusted gross score (as described in the IBGA Handicap Policy).
- 3.4 Differential: A field calculated as:
- $$(\text{Score} - \text{Rating}) \times 113 \div \text{Slope}$$
- This figure is then rounded to one decimal place.
- 3.5 Used: Indicates whether or not the particular score has been used in the calculation of the player’s IBGA Index.
- 3.6 Data viewing options on this page are as follows:
- When the Member Details are first accessed the scores (and related information) appear in a table, with the most recent score at the top.
  - By clicking on the “Show graph” tab at the top of the table the Scores and Differentials can be viewed in a graph (starting with the oldest scores on the left, with Scores shown in blue blocks on top and Differentials in green blocks underneath). A red line indicates which scores are used in the calculation of the IBGA Index.