

14 December 2022

Handicap on Scorecard

As you are all aware, as of 1 January 2023 there are a few changes to the Rules of Golf (as written by the R&A and USGA).

One of the changes under Rules 3.3b(4) states that the player will not be responsible for putting their handicap on the scorecard. This means that Golfers will no longer incur a penalty under the Rules of Golf for accidentally recording an incorrect Daily Handicap (whether it be their Course Handicap or Playing Handicap) on their scorecard.

This Rule change means that the inclusion of the handicap on a player's scorecard will become a responsibility of the Committee. This change in the Rules of Golf is consistent with other penalty reductions, from 1 January 2023, such as reducing the penalty down to only one stroke for playing an incorrectly substituted ball.

The Rules of Golf, however, acknowledge that in certain countries Committees do not always have access to a computer system to help with the administration of a competition, or do not have access to a complete database of player handicaps. In these cases, the Rules of Golf will allow Committees to modify Rule 3.3b(4) by adopting Model Local Rule L-2, which allows the club to make the player responsible to record one handicap on the scorecard.

GolfRSA recognises that the majority of Committees in South Africa would likely choose to adopt this Local Rule. However, if left to make their own decision on this matter, some might specify that players are responsible for the correct Handicap Index (HI), others might specify Course Handicap (CH) and some might specify Playing Handicap (PH).

Should this happen, Committees could face an endless number of scorecard complications, as golfers who play at a variety of golf courses will not know from day-to-day or week-to-week which they are required to state on their scorecards.

Therefore, GolfRSA has adopted the policy of standardising the Model Local Rule, as of 1 January 2023, so that **the player remains responsible for recording their Handicap Index (HI) on the scorecard**. This will lighten the burden for club committees when it come to scorecards and club competitions.

Note: While this standardised Model Local Rule is there to help golf clubs around the country with their competitions, it may also be adopted by GolfRSA, Provincial Unions and tournament/event organisers when setting Terms of Competition.

Model Local Rules L-2 will be in effect as follows:

Model Local Rule L-2

Rule 3.3b(4) is modified in this way:

The player is responsible for indicating their Handicap Index on the scorecard.

Once the Committee receives the scorecard from the player at the end of the round, the Committee is responsible for:

- Adding up the player's scores, and
- Applying the player's handicap strokes to calculate the player's net score.

If the player returns a scorecard without the correct handicap:

- Handicap Too High or No Handicap Shown:
If this affects the number of strokes the player gets, the player is disqualified from the handicap competition. If it does not, there is no penalty.
- Handicap Too Low
There is no penalty and the player's net score stands, using the lower handicap as shown.

Note: In the same way that it is strongly recommended that players calculate their Stableford Points and include score totals on their scorecard, despite the Rules not requiring it, GolfRSA also strongly recommend that players record their **Daily Handicap (CH or PH)** and indicate the **Colour Tees** that they played from, as doing so will be helpful to administrators.

Clubs who need assistance with the implementation of the local rule can contact their Provincial Union or GolfRSA.

Yours Sincerely,

