

**Introduction Of Course
Rating Minus Par To The
Course Handicap
Calculation**



Introduction

This guidance document for clubs focuses on the impact of the 2024 WHS system change to include Course Rating minus Par (CR-Par) into the calculation of the Course Handicap (CH).

It provides guidance in relation to the setting of Pars and provides points that clubs should consider to help prepare for this change from April 2024.

Some clubs will have reviewed their Pars and SI for their course(s) in recent years, particularly if they have made significant changes.

Others may have used the same values for many years but each 4-year cycle of modifications to WHS presents a timely opportunity to review the established Par values and Stroke Index ("SI") allocations.

Purpose Of Document

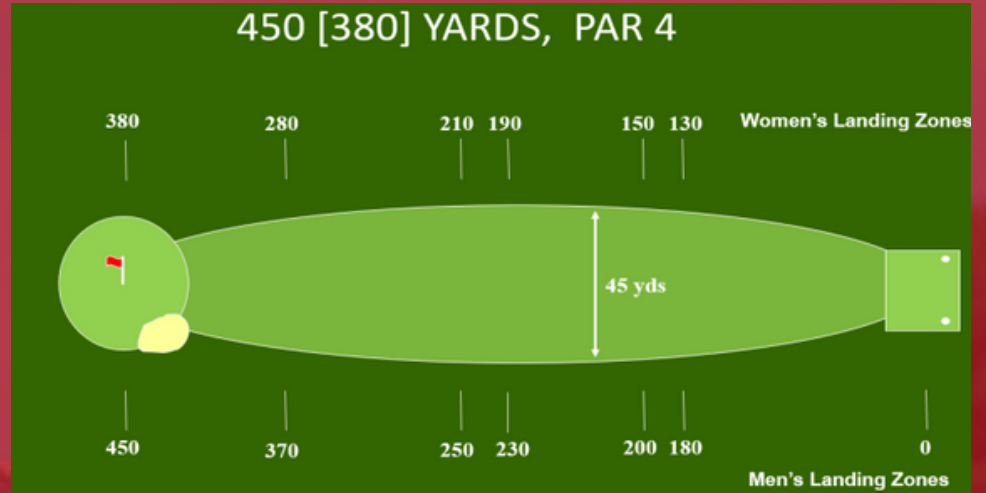
- To make clubs aware of the implications for members of the introduction of CR-Par from April 2024
- This change will impact on members' Course Handicaps and may mean they will receive less or more shots than at present.
- We are asking clubs to take the time to review their existing scorecard and consider their Par before placing a new order for scorecards for the 2024 season.
- The advice is for clubs to check what the difference is between the Course Rating and Par from each set of tees.
- In many cases, there will be a minimal difference and the change will have a minimal impact on Course Handicaps
- Where there is a wider variance between CR and Par, this document provides options to consider.

What Is The Difference Between Par And Course Rating (CR)?

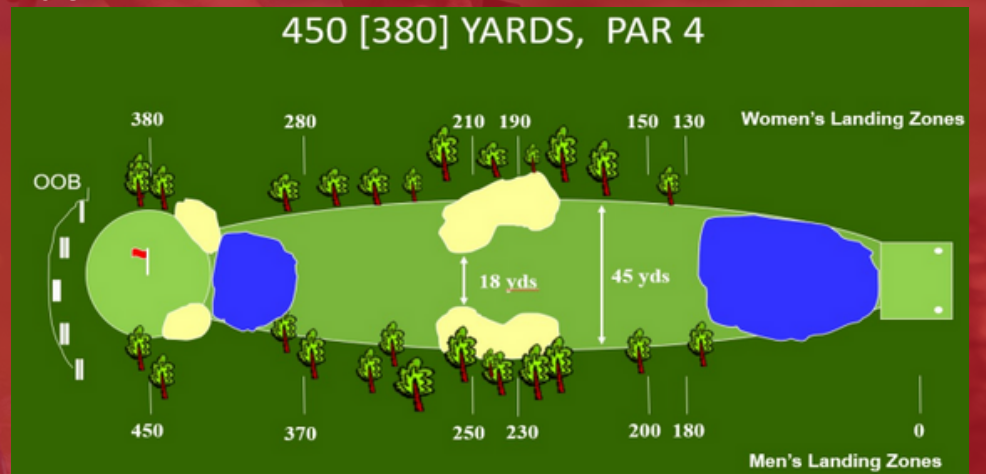
- Par reflects the number of strokes a scratch player is expected to score on each hole when played from a particular set of tees assuming that he/she takes two putts from the green.
- Course Rating is an indication of the overall difficulty of a golf course (expressed in strokes to one decimal point) for the scratch player under normal course and weather conditions. This is based on the rating of each hole to account for yardage, effective playing length and 10 obstacle factors evaluated under the course rating system (see Appendix G, Rules of Handicapping (RoH))
- The difference between CR and Par and why do they vary? Par is based mainly on hole length and is not an accurate measure of course difficulty – the reason is that there could be two golf holes both measuring the very same yardage.



Hole A



Hole B



- Hole A is bland and straight with light rough and no trees to a large unprotected green with only a small bunker to negotiate:
- By contrast, hole B is also 450 [380] yards but has a 180 [130] yard carry over water, a very narrow fairway with bunkers on each side at the scratch landing zone, followed by another water hazard to carry to the green and is lined with trees on both sides, followed by OOB at the green.
- If this pattern manifested itself over 18 holes, we have two very different golf courses - both with a Par 70 – but they each pose a very different challenge.

This is why Course Rating is used as a measure of playing difficulty and not Par.

Introduction Of CR-Par To The Course Handicap Calculation

Effective 1 April 2024

Currently across GB&I, our 18-Hole CH is just based on the Slope Rating of a golf course:

Course Handicap = Handicap Index x (Slope Rating/113)

To provide additional consistency to the way Course Handicaps (CH) are calculated and to bring GB&I in line with most of the golfing world, the decision has been taken by GB&I nations to adopt the 'Course Rating – Par' method when calculating a Course Handicap for both 18-hole rounds as well as for 9-Hole rounds (which have used this method since being included within handicapping in GB&I since 2008).

The new calculation method for 2024 for 18-Hole rounds will be:

Course Handicap = (Handicap Index x Slope Rating/113) + (Course Rating - Par)

In a number of circumstances this may mean little or no change. However, depending on the difference between a club's Course Rating and Par, the change could be quite significant.

- Currently, without CR-Par, the target score for a golfer to play to handicap is the Course Rating™ + Course Handicap.
- However, with CR-Par, it will move the target score to play to handicap to the PAR of the course + the Course Handicap.



Impact of Different Calculations (Old Course, St Andrews)

Using Current Course Handicap Calculation (No CR-Par)

Course Handicap for Scratch Golfer – from each tee

Tee	Rating	Slope	Par	CH	Target Score
Black	73.1	132	72	1	73
Blue	71.4	129	72	-1	71
Green	69.9	125	72	-2	70

Course Handicap for 15 HI Golfer– from each tee

Tee	Rating	Slope	Par	CH	Target Score
Black	73.1	132	72	18	91
Blue	71.4	129	72	17	88
Green	69.9	125	72	17	87

Using new Course Handicap Calculation (CR-Par)

Course Handicap for Scratch Golfer – from each tee

Tee	Rating	Slope	Par	CH	Target Score
Black	73.1	132	72	1	73
Blue	71.4	129	72	-1	71
Green	69.9	125	72	-2	70

Course Handicap for 15 HI Golfer– from each tee

Tee	Rating	Slope	Par	CH	Target Score
Black	73.1	132	72	19	91
Blue	71.4	129	72	17	89
Green	69.9	125	72	15	87

Three important observations:

- Whichever option is used – the player's target score to 'play to handicap' is generally the same.
- Research shows that the impact of the two different calculations on two players' H.I. is no more than 0.2, should any of the players' scores in their best 8 include adjustments for Net Double Bogey. Such a difference would have very little or no impact on equity – which is why the two options were permitted at the outset of WHS.
- The number of strokes given/received in a match between two players would remain the same in most cases.

Benefits of Using CR-Par

- Having a Course Handicap that is relative to Par ensures that the correct number of strokes are received and applied for Net Par and Net Double Bogey adjustments.
- By not including CR-Par in a scenario where CR is less than Par, the player would receive more strokes and thus less adjustments for Net Double Bogey, which leads to a higher Adjusted Gross Score.
- As Par is often the same from multiple tees on a course, this eliminates or reduces the need to apply an adjustment to Playing Handicaps in multi tee events.
- In the event that Par is different across tees golfers may be more willing to accept an adjustment when playing from different tees, as they assume Course Rating is already factored into the CH and this adjustment confuses them.
- Helpful in all Par-based formats, where the score is relative to Par. For example, in Stableford formats, 36 points would always be a score 'played to handicap'.
- Produces bigger differences in CH from different tees which is more intuitive to players
- Many golfers resonate better with Par often comparing their score to Par. It is also information that is readily available to golfers on scorecards, tee furniture, etc.
- All of our closest neighbours in Europe use CR-Par and this difference is confusing to golfers who travel and raises lots of questions.
- Despite the inclusion of the CR-Par adjustment into the CH calculation, Course Rating remains at the core of the H.I. calculation which is absolutely correct, as Course Rating is acknowledged to be a robust evaluation of course difficulty, which Par is not.
- It improves the calculation of the player's Adjusted gross Score (AGS) – because Net Double Bogeys and Net Pars are Par based adjustments and the number of strokes that the player receives should therefore be aligned and reference the Pars of each applicable hole played.
- The majority of golfers are confused as to why this calculation is done differently in GB&I compared to the other countries they travel to – with the criticism being that we do not have a 'WHS'.
- They also struggle to understand why the adjustment is used for a 9-hole CH, but not an 18-hole CH. Making the change would bring consistency here.



ACTION POINT - Assess Your Current Scorecard

We are advising clubs to review their scorecard and be aware of any difference between CR and Par for each set of tees.

- The Par values assigned to each hole will directly impact the new CR-Par adjustment within the calculation of the Course Handicap from April 2024
- A good starting point is to take the set of tees from which most competitions are played (usually the traditional medal tees for each gender).
- How close is the Par value to the Course Rating?

What Impact Will A Gap Between The CR And Par Have?

As both Par and CR will impact the strokes received the greater the difference between these parameters the greater will be the gap between a player's Handicap Index and their Course Handicap/Playing Handicap.

- The closer the two parameters are for the most commonly used tee sets, the easier it is for players to understand.
- This is not an issue for the outcome of competitions as the difference in CR and Par is applied across all handicap ranges and is the same for all players - to provide equity for the field.
- Having CR and Par values close together is not essential as it does not affect the score differential on a player's handicap record. The formula for the calculation of a score differential uses the CR value (and not the Par).

Score differential = (Adjusted Gross Score – CR) x 113 / Slope

- The CR is the cornerstone of handicapping. Par does, however, have a role in that it is the value against which any Net Double Bogey (NDB) adjustment is applied. Hence the need for sensible, accurate Par values.

Factors To Consider

Whilst the length of a hole is the main feature that will determine Par, other factors have a role in determining the Par due to the playing difficulty of the hole:

- Elevation change - is the hole played uphill or downhill?
- Can a long shot roll onto the green easily or will an upslope cause it roll to back?
- Are there any obstacles e.g. a pond or ditch or bunkers, in a scratch golfer's landing zone sufficient to cause scratch golfers to lay-up rather than to play directly to the green?
- Does a dog-leg mean that the scratch golfer will layup, thus increasing the effective length of the hole or, alternatively, will shorten the hole if the player cut the dog-leg?

Examples

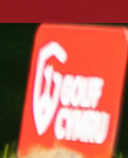
- Courses that have a Par value significantly higher than the CR - there may be holes with generous Par values:
- E.G., A) a hole of less than 240 yards for men or less than 200 yards for women that have been allocated a Par of 4 rather than 3. This may well be justified for a hole that, for example, is significantly uphill but if not, this could be adjusted to a Par 3 which would bring the Par and the CR closer together.
- E.G., B) For a women's Par, there may be some holes that measure less than 400 yards that are currently Par 5s. You could consider changing these holes to Par 4s as the scratch lady would be expected to reach these holes in 2 shots (depending on the difficulty of the hole and how it plays accounting for elevation changes eg downhill, and any forced lay ups, dog legs etc).

What Are The Options For Changing Par?

- Once you have reviewed the Pars on your scorecard, and are comfortable with them, you may still find that there is a gap between CR and Par – this will be very common and you do not have to make any changes to try and narrow the gap.
- If your course has a set of tees with a variance between the CR and Par, you may decide to look at the options available to narrow the gap.
- It should be emphasised that there is not always a correct answer when determining the Par and compromise is often the order of the day. Mother Nature and golf course designers do not produce course layouts with perfect Pars and a perfect SI that works well with all sets of tees!
- If you have reviewed your scorecard and would like to consider changing the Par, guidance is available in Appendix F(RoH). Appendix F recommends Par for each hole to be established according to a range of yardages as set out in the table below:

Par	Men	Woman
3	Up to 260 Yards	Up to 220 Yards
4	240 - 490 Yards	200 - 420 Yards
5	450 - 710 Yards	370 - 600 Yards
6	670 yard and up	570 Yards and Up

- Clubs can use the flexibility within these ranges to establish Pars that when totalled come as close as possible to the CR.
- Where there is a variance check to see if any of the existing Pars were to be adjusted up or down by one stroke, they would remain within the above parameters and would better reflect the design of the hole as it was intended to be played.
- Within Appendix F, Par reflects the score that a scratch player is expected to achieve on a given hole.



Standardised Pars

Clubs should also be aware, as of 2024, the Rules of Handicapping now incorporates a discretionary method of establishing Par called “standardisation of Par”. Standardising Par will allow clubs to retain the same Par across all tee sets rated for the same gender.

As previously detailed, currently the guidance given to clubs for the allocation of Par centres around a set of yardage limits within which a hole should fall to be allocated a particular scorecard Par. (Appendix F – Rules of Handicapping). Moving forward, clubs now have a choice to standardise (keep the same) Par for each tee set regardless of whether they move out of certain yardage brackets as indicated in Appendix F.

Since the introduction of WHS, shorter and longer tees are now being rated for each gender. Currently a hole which plays as a Par 5 from the White and Yellow tees but falls short of the minimum length for that same Par from the Red tees (shown in Appendix F), is advised to be allocated a Par 4. However, using Standardisation of Par, golf clubs can retain the forward tee as a Par 5, as this is likely to be how the hole plays for golfers who most commonly use that tee.

Given all clubs are likely to have a change to the Course Handicaps of their members from April 2024, clubs may wish to take this as an opportunity to adopt a completely new approach in establishing Par.

Should a golf club wish to explore the idea of standardising their Par, we would ask the club to carefully consider a number of points:

Whilst a player's target score to Play to Handicap would remain the same, there is a much wider spread of CH strokes between front and back tees when using Standardised Pars.

- "Standardisation of Par" may be appropriate on some shorter courses with only two or three sets of tees (and not a significant difference in yardage), and for clubs that run a lot of multi-tee competitions.
- Standardising Par is a procedure that is currently used in some countries around the world under WHS as their default position for adjudicating Par.
- The primary factor for determining whether "standardised Par" should be used is the design of the hole as it was intended to be played.
- In instances where the yardage for one or more tees falls outside of the established Par guidelines in Appendix F, the club should determine whether the yardage difference, any effective playing length factors, and/or the setup of the hole from that tee(s) has caused a change in the way the hole is meant to be played.
- A standardised Par (for a specific gender) eliminates the need for an additional adjustment for players (within a gender) competing from different sets of tees with differing Pars.

The following is an example where it would be practical to establish a standardised Par on a hole: The hole lengths from all sets of tees on a specific hole lie within the recommended par-5 range for women, except for the forward tee with a length of 355 yards. Most players, especially those who are likely to play from the forward tee, play it as a 3-shot hole. Each set of tees on this hole should be adjudicated as a Par 5 due to the way the hole was designed to be played.

Impact Of CR-Par For Mixed And Multi-Tee Events

This section focuses on scenarios that involve more than one set of tees – be they mixed gender competitions and/or events where a single gender plays from different sets of tees. The introduction of CR – Par has simplified the requirement for equalisation strokes in such situations.

- Taking Stableford and Par/Bogey, the Play to Handicap (P2H) score from any tee is 36 points (or level for Par/Bogey) which means that no additional strokes are required.
- For stroke play rounds and handicap match play the additional adjustment to the CH is the difference between the Pars of the different sets of tees used not the CR values.
- For scratch match play between players of different gender be they playing from the same or different tee sets or scratch match play between players of the same gender playing from different tees the adjustment remains simply the difference between the Course Rating of the two sets of tees.

Examples Of Calculations Involving More Than Two Sets Of Tees

Increasingly, clubs are running stroke play competitions that give players a choice over which set of tees they play from on any given day. If the players were given the option of playing from the Yellow, White or Blue tees then the Playing Handicap adjustments would be calculated as follows:

Tee	SLOPE	C.R.	Par	Medal, Maximum Score	Stableford, Par/Bogey	Scratch
				Difference in Par Adjustment (a)	Stroke Adjustment	Stroke Adjustment
Yellow	118	69.4	69	0	0	0
White	125	71.1	70	1	0	2
Blue	131	72.8	71	2	0	3



Singles stroke play

The stroke allowance is 95% of the Course Handicap. In addition, because the players are playing from tees with different Pars, the competitor playing over the higher valued Par receives the difference in the Par values added to the Course Handicap after the application of the stroke allowance.

Playing Handicap = (Course Handicap x 95%) + Difference in Par

Gross Score (Scratch)

It is often incorrectly assumed that handicap is irrelevant in a mixed/multi-tee scratch event. This is not the case and, instead, such an event can be considered as one in which the players' Course Handicaps are all 0.0 regardless of their true index.

The stroke adjustment for both scratch stroke play and match events involving different tees and/or different genders is simply to take the difference between the two Course Rating values. In the above example the difference between the Yellow and Blue tee players would be: $72.8 - 69.4 = 3.4$ rounded to 3

Stableford & Par/Bogey

As the format is singles stroke play, the stroke allowance is 95% of the Course Handicap. In addition, both Stableford and Par/Bogey formats are scored against the Par of the course, rather than the Course Rating. The introduction of Course Rating - Par to calculate the Course Handicap means that the P2H score from both tees is now 36 points. Accordingly, no further equalisation is required.

18 Hole Match Play

For singles match play the stroke allowance is 100% of the Course Handicap. In addition, because the players are playing from tees with different Pars, the competitor playing over the course with the higher Par receives the difference in the Par values added to the Course Handicap.

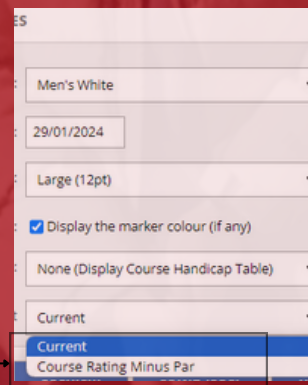
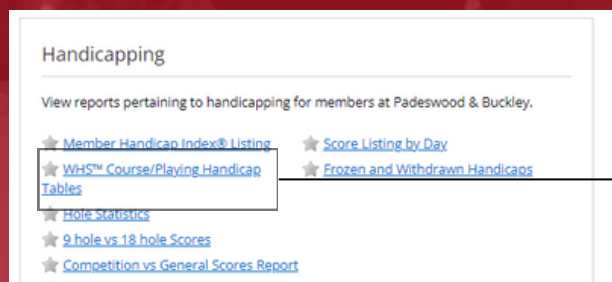


Course Handicap Charts

It is worth noting that Course Handicap lookup charts are not mandatory.

If they are being used, with the introduction of 'CR-Par', there will be changes to the information you need to display on your club's Course Handicap charts.

New Course Handicap charts (with CR-Par) are now available to print and display directly from your club's login to the Wales Golf Clubhouse.



We would also recommend considering a more sustainable method of displaying Course Handicaps. E.G. if your course is due to be re-rated or if you plan to make any change to the yardage or layout, you will need to replace the boards every time there is a course change.

Digital solutions are also becoming available from some of your golf chart suppliers.

The Wales Golf App will be updated (for CR-Par) to easily check your Course Handicap prior to play.



