

Handicap on Difficulty, Not on Length

Editor, Golfdom,
Dear Sir,

We are troubled with the problem of handicaps. I understand that the regular system is $4/5$ ths of the strokes over par, figured from the average of a number of best scores. I am informed that the $4/5$ ths system is to allow for the better scores made by the poorer golfers on short holes. Sounds reasonable, but is it? However, here is our problem.

Our course is very short, being situated on property owned by the County, inside the city limits. Total yardage is 1900 yards. Of course, we have tried to make it as difficult as possible, without greatly handicapping the poorer golfers. How would you advise us in establishing a system of handicapping?

D. L. W. (Wash.)

Reply:

The usual system of handicapping is to take the average of a player's five best scores, subtract from this average the par of the course, and allow the player a handicap equal to $4/5$ ths the difference.

The $4/5$ ths rule seems to work out equitably at courses where the order in which strokes are taken is based on the difficulty of the various holes of the course. By "difficulty" length is not meant. The shortest hole on a course may be more difficult to play in par (because of hazards or the size of the green) than the longest hole of the layout.

We suggest that you conform to custom and figure your handicaps on the $4/5$ ths basis. But award the strokes in order of the hole difficulty, not hole length. Here is how to determine hole difficulty:

Collect the scores of some 500 rounds, as made by all classes of golfers and tabulate these scores to get the total number of strokes the whole lot of them required for each hole.

Strike an average for each hole. For example, one of your short 3-par holes may show an average of 4.462 strokes, while another may figure out 4.824 strokes. Obviously the latter hole is more difficult than the former by $4/10$ ths of a stroke.

After you have obtained the average for all nine holes, the next step is to divide the average of each hole by the par of the hole. This is to make possible comparison between 3-par holes and 4-par holes. If you didn't do this you'd get

some such figure as 4.965 for a 3-par hole and 6.067 for a 4-par hole. Which is harder to shoot in par? Dividing each of these averages by the par of the hole you get 1.655 for the 3-par hole and 1.516 for the 4-par hole. Now you can easily compare the two holes although they have different pars and it is obvious that the 3-par hole is harder than the 4-par hole.

Still Working on National Daily Fee Association

LEADERS in the daily fee golf business continue to work toward the formation of a national daily fee association. Prominent daily fee operators in Kansas City, Cleveland, Detroit, Minneapolis and Chicago are endeavoring to call a convention that will result in an active nucleus of a national organization.

The main handicap right now is lack of money. The owners don't want to form an association unless the organization can do something constructive. That will take money, and money is what the fee owners haven't got after the last three murderous years in their business. Inasmuch as considerable of the trouble from which the fee course owners suffered was from an internal competitive condition, it is the hope of fee course leaders that a recurrence of this misery may be prevented by an organization that will get code action.

Improvement in the fee course business promises that definite action in forming the national association will be taken some time this season.

CONSENSUS of manufacturer and pro opinion is that the pros' big day is coming back with the new code. The general idea of the codes is to equalize prices.

With prices equalized there is no sense of a member going downtown; quality and service will determine the point of purchase. If a pro can't show a plainly better deal on first class quality or at least equal quality for the same price, and on expert service, he had better get out of the business.

HERE'S a cheering note. On May 25, 1934, the PGA had 180 more Class A members than it had the same day last year.