

New Equitable Stroke Control Procedure for USGA Handicap System Is Effective January 1, 1993

The present USGA Equitable Stroke Control (ESC) procedure will be changed, effective January 1, 1993, according to Dean L. Knuth, Director of Handicapping.

The new procedure is simpler and independent of par and still accomplishes the purpose of ESC, which is to eliminate unrealistically high hole scores. It sets a maximum score that a player can post on any hole depending on the player's Course Handicap.

The following table will be used to set the maximum score for posting purposes:

<u>Course Handicap</u>	<u>Maximum Score Posted on Any Hole</u>
9 or Less	6
10 through 19	7
20 through 29	8
30 through 39	9
40 through 49	10
50 and above	11

For example, a player with a USGA Handicap Index of 19.2 plays a 120 slope course which gives that player a Course Handicap of 20. For handicap purposes, that player is allowed a maximum score on any hole of 8. There is no limit to the number of holes reduced to 8 in the round, so the player can quickly scan his or her scorecard to locate any hole scores of 9 or higher and reduce them to a score of 8. The reduction is applied to allow a maximum score of 8, no matter what the par of the holes may be. Again, for handicap purposes, that player could pick up on a hole after seven strokes because the best the player could score is 8. Also, this player will find that a lower Slope course with a Course Handicap of 19, that his maximum score will be 7.

Concerns with the present ESC procedure were that:

(1) Clubs have had difficulty teaching golfers how to use the present procedure correctly.

(2) The present procedure depended upon the par

of each hole. Pars often were set higher than they should be. For example, holes under 401 yards for women sometimes were being set as par 5's, instead of par 4's.

(3) It caused unfairly low handicaps just below the "break-points." Players with Course Handicaps of 16 to 18, for example, experienced triple bogeys, but had to reduce them to double bogeys. A 19 handicap player could post a triple bogey and a 20 handicap player could post two triples. This effect caused a disparity in handicaps. The same thing happened at the 34 to 36 handicap level. Such players scored quadruple bogeys, but could not post them, but a 37 handicap could. A harsh limitation was on the scratch golfer who might hit a ball out-of-bounds or lose a ball, but could not post a double bogey.

(4) It had to be applied frequently and unfairly by high handicap players on very difficult holes to the point that often such players were not able to post their average hole score.

In 1991, the USGA Women's Handicap Procedure Committee suggested the concept of a fixed maximum score procedure. The procedure was developed and tested using several thousand lines of golfer's scores.

Research has proved that the fixed maximum score procedure eliminates these concerns, while reducing only unusually high hole scores. On average, the old ESC procedure reduced the 18-hole score by 1.6 strokes. The new fixed maximum score procedure reduces the 18-hole score by .9 stroke.

ESC, in general, is applied less often to the best 10 of the latest 20 scores than to the unused scores, so the average net effect of the new procedure will go to raise USGA Handicap Indexes about three-tenths of a stroke. Those affected the most will be players that were being forced to reduce a score on a hole that was usual for their normal game. The fixed maximum score procedure will apply to very long holes more frequently than to very short holes.

The new ESC procedure is simpler to use because players need to remember only one number—their maximum hole score allowed. Check a few lines of scores yourself and you will see how simple it is.

Audubon Program to Be Honored for Environmental Leadership by GCSAA

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has announced that it will present its President's Award for Environmental Leadership to the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses (ACSP).

The GCSAA President's Award for Environmental Leadership is given in recognition of an exceptional contribution to the game of golf—a contribution that further exemplifies the golf course superintendent's image as steward of the land.

The ACSP is a cooperative effort between the Audubon Society of New York State and the United States Golf Association (USGA). The program, in place since 1990, promotes ecologically sound land management and the conservation of natural resources. The ACSP is committed to increasing environmental awareness and enhancing wildlife habitat through proper golf course management programs.

GCSAA President William R. Roberts, CGCS, said, "Although the golf course management industry has been involved in conservation activities for years, the Cooperative Sanctuary Program has proved successful in educating the public and golf community on the benefits of golf courses as important open spaces and the role they play to the environment and wildlife."

Those who participate in the program register their property as a cooperative conservation area and determine the conservation activities in which they will become involved. Golf course members in the program presently number almost 500 in 48 states, Canada, Spain and Guam. Many courses are involved in nesting box projects, native grass restoration projects, aquatic environment enhancement projects and many other activities.

The award will be presented to Ronald G. Dodson, president of the Audubon Society of New York State, and Stuart F. Bloch, president of the USGA, on behalf of the program. The presentation will take place on January 26, during the opening session of GCSAA's International Golf Course Conference and Show in Anaheim, Calif.