

An aerial photograph of a golf course. The image shows a large, vibrant green fairway on the right side, which is partially enclosed by a circular boundary. To the left of the fairway is a complex sand trap area with several interconnected sand pits and mounds. The surrounding landscape is a mix of green grass and brownish-yellow earth, suggesting a natural or semi-natural setting. The lighting is bright, creating high contrast between the green grass and the tan sand.

World Handicap System™

An overview of key changes for the 2024 revision

USGA®

BACKGROUND

An aerial photograph of a golf course. The left side shows vibrant green fairways and a green, while the right side is dominated by dark blue water hazards and sand traps. The word 'BACKGROUND' is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the top left portion of the image.

An aerial photograph of a golf course, showing lush green fairways, several sand traps, and winding water hazards. The lighting is bright, casting soft shadows across the terrain.

The purpose of the World Handicap System is to enable as many golfers as possible the opportunity to obtain and maintain a Handicap Index[®], use their Handicap Index on any golf course around the world, and compete, or play recreationally, with anyone else on a fair basis.

PURPOSE

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

A single World Handicap System™, governed jointly by the USGA and The R&A, to be consistent with the other sets of Rules.

The WHS™ is comprised of the *Rules of Handicapping* and the Course Rating System™.



Rules of Golf

Rules of Amateur Status

The Equipment Rules

World Handicap System

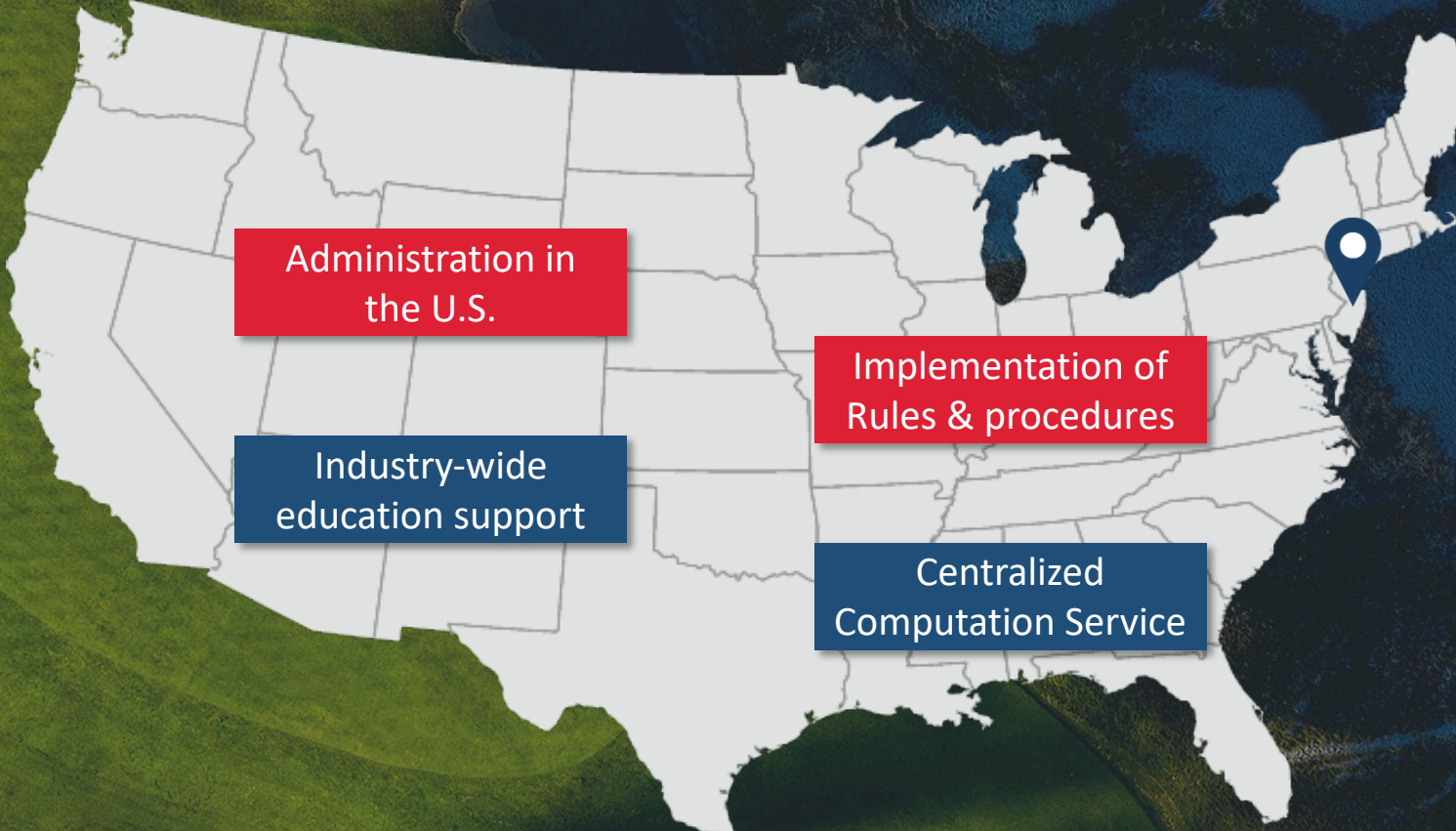
WHS ADOPTION



DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to their joint governance role, the USGA is an Authorized National Association.

The USGA and 58 Allied Golf Associations work together to administer the WHS in the United States.



Administration in the U.S.

Implementation of Rules & procedures

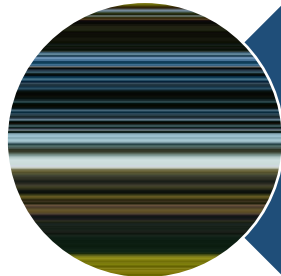
Industry-wide education support

Centralized Computation Service

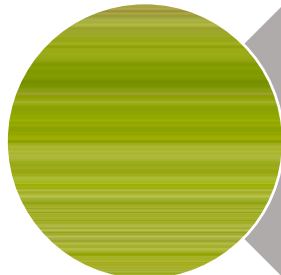
THREE KEY MESSAGES



The WHS welcomes everyone to compete or play socially with anyone on a fair and equal basis, helping to make golf a more enjoyable game.



The WHS provides a consistent method of measuring skill-level and produces handicaps that are portable from course to course, country to country.



The WHS is modern, adaptable across golf cultures and easy to use.

KEY CHANGES

An aerial photograph of a golf course, showing vibrant green fairways and dark blue water hazards. The perspective is from directly above, looking down on the course's layout.

9-HOLE SCORES



9-HOLE SCORES

Pre-2024

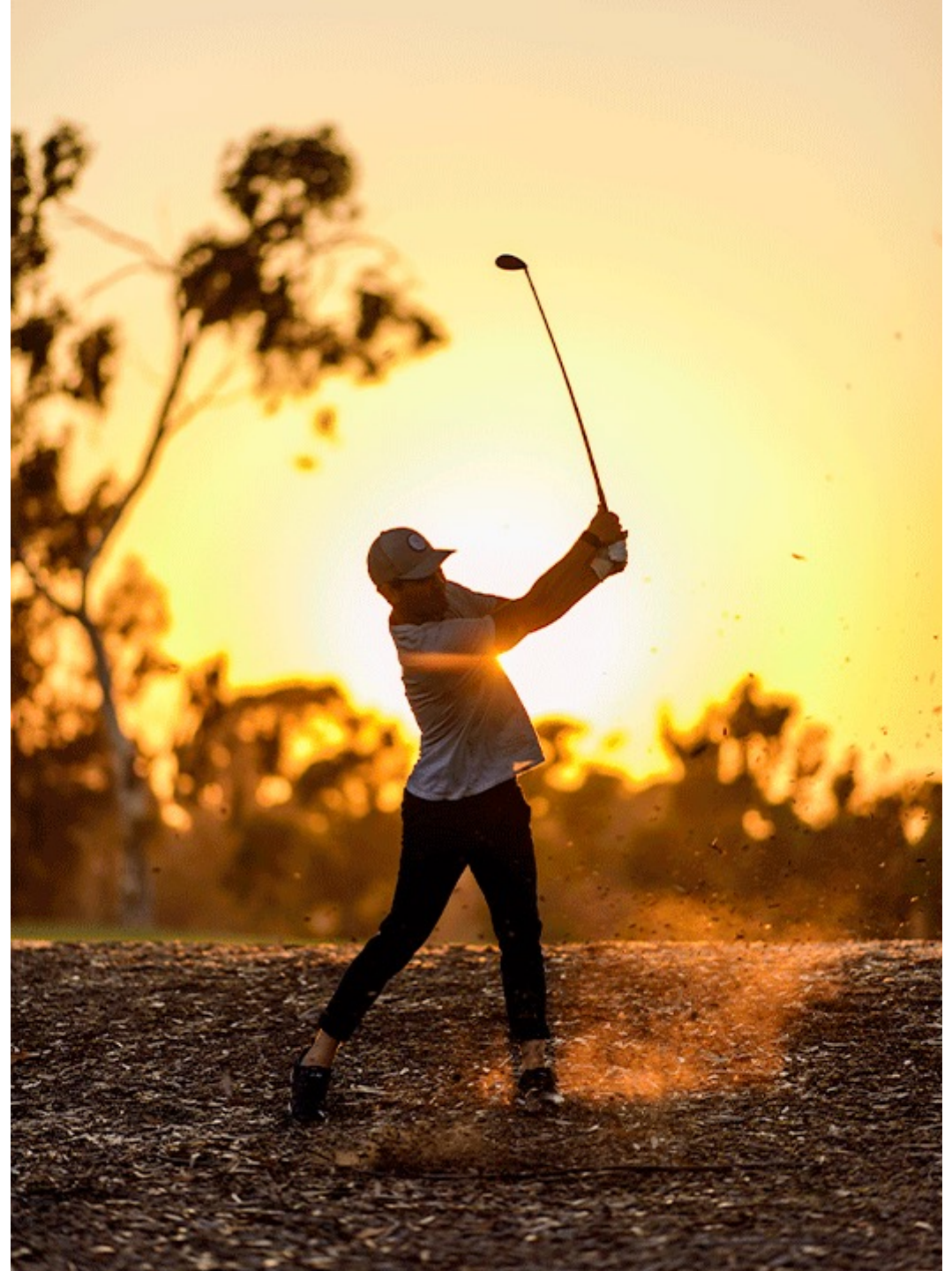
If a player posts a 9-hole score, an 18-hole Score Differential™ is created by combining two 9-hole Score Differentials.

Change for '24

When a player posts a 9-hole score, a 9-hole Score Differential will be calculated for the 9 holes played, and that number will be combined with an expected score (or neutral value) based on the player's Handicap Index to create an 18-hole Score Differential.

Note 1: If fewer than 9 holes are played, the score is not acceptable for handicap purposes.

Note 2: Play of a Rated 9 is required for a score to be acceptable for handicap purposes.



HOW IT WORKS

A player's expected score is based on the mean and standard deviation of players with a particular Handicap Index. The expected score is not player-specific:

- If two players have a Handicap Index of 9.9, then their expected score for the second nine will be the same regardless of the course/tees being played.
- If two players with a different Handicap Index shoot the same 9-hole score from the same course/tees, their expected scores for the second nine will be different.

Note: Use of Expected Score can begin as soon as a player has established a Handicap Index – 54 holes comprised of 9 and/or 18-hole scores.

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for recording golf scores. At the top, a dark blue header displays a back arrow, the title "Post Hole-by-Hole Score", and the text "Total Adj. Score: 37 | To Par: +1". Below the header is a table with the following data:

Hole	6	7	8	9	Total
Yards	198	492	400	390	3179
Par	3	5	4	4	36
Stroke Index	9	5	1	7	
Score	2	3	6	4	37
Adj. Score	2	3	6	4	37

Below the table are two buttons: a red "GPS" button and a dark blue "POST SCORE" button. A red arrow points from the "POST SCORE" button to a score entry screen. This screen has a "Done" button at the top right and a 3x3 grid of input fields. The grid contains the numbers 1, 2, 3 in the first row; 4, 5, 6 in the second row; and 7, 8, 9 in the third row. The bottom row is partially visible, showing a "0" and a delete icon (an 'x' in a square).

BENEFITS



CONSISTENT

It produces a consistent Score Differential based on the Handicap Index and avoids volatility seen with the previous treatment of 9-hole scores.



RESPONSIVE

It provides responsive Handicap Index revisions and allows players to reach a full scoring record of 20 scores more quickly.



EQUITABLE

The new method provides a better indication of what the player would have scored on the second 9 (using player equations rather than net par) and should result in a more equitable Handicap Index.



INCLUSIVE

It is welcoming to players who typically play 9 holes of golf on a given day. For example, this could be due to preference, time available, or participation in a league.

10-17 HOLE SCORES





10-17 HOLE SCORES

Pre-2024

If a player plays 10-13 holes, only a 9-hole score is acceptable for handicap purposes. If between 14-17 holes are played, net par is used on holes not played to produce an 18-hole score.

Change for '24

Rounds of 10-17 holes receive an 18-hole Score Differential with an expected score value for holes not played.

HOW IT WORKS

When 10-17 holes have been played, a value is calculated from the holes played (must include a rated 9). Then, expected score is used for any holes not played. Lastly, these values are added to determine the 18-hole Score Differential.

Note 1: The player will be required to post their score hole-by-hole when 10-17 holes are played so the appropriate Score Differential can be calculated from the holes that were played to combine with the expected score for the holes not played.

Note 2: In limited circumstances, a score of net par can be used for a hole or holes not played.

Post Hole-by-Hole Score
Total Adj. Score: 73 ⓘ | To Par: +9 ⓘ

Hole	16	17	18	In	Total
Yards	437	287	426	3364	6543
Par	4	4	4	36	72
Stroke Index	4	16	2		
Score	5			34	73
Adj. Score	5			34	73

GPS POST SCORE

Done

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
	0	ⓧ

BENEFITS



CONSISTENT

Players will see more consistency than if they were to apply net par for remaining unplayed holes. This is because the expected score is not course specific reliant upon the course's stroke index allocation.



FLEXIBLE

For the first time, if between 10-13 holes are played, the player will have an 18-hole Score Differential in their scoring record. This also positions to support more non-traditional courses such as one with 12 holes.



MODERN

By leveraging score-posting technology to make this process simple and intuitive, the result will be a more modern experience for players.

PAR 3 COURSES





PAR 3 COURSES

Pre-2024

To receive a Course Rating™ and Slope Rating®, a set of tees must be at least 1,500 yards for 9 holes or 3,000 yards for 18 holes and have at least one hole per nine that requires a full tee shot. Those not meeting these minimums qualified for a Short Course Rating used with the former Short Course Handicap System.

Change for '24

The new minimum yardage requirement to receive a Course Rating and Slope Rating is 750 yards for 9 holes and 1,500 yards for 18 holes. Rounds of 10-17 holes will receive an 18-hole Score Differential.

BENEFITS



PORTABLE

This will allow scores to be acceptable for handicap purposes at more golf courses and a Handicap Index to be portable between shorter and more traditional length courses.



INCLUSIVE

As these courses are typically played by beginners or players whose hitting distances are decreasing, it provides an opportunity to enjoy the game more by using their Handicap Index.



MODERN

This is supportive of current trends in golf including more short courses being built and shorter tees being added to accommodate more players based on their ability.

HANDICAP REVIEW



HANDICAP REVIEW

Pre-2024

The Handicap Committee at a golf club is strongly encouraged to conduct a handicap review at least annually for all members who have designated that golf club as their home club. A thorough listing of considerations and reports are available to determine whether a Handicap Index adjustment is warranted.

Change for '24

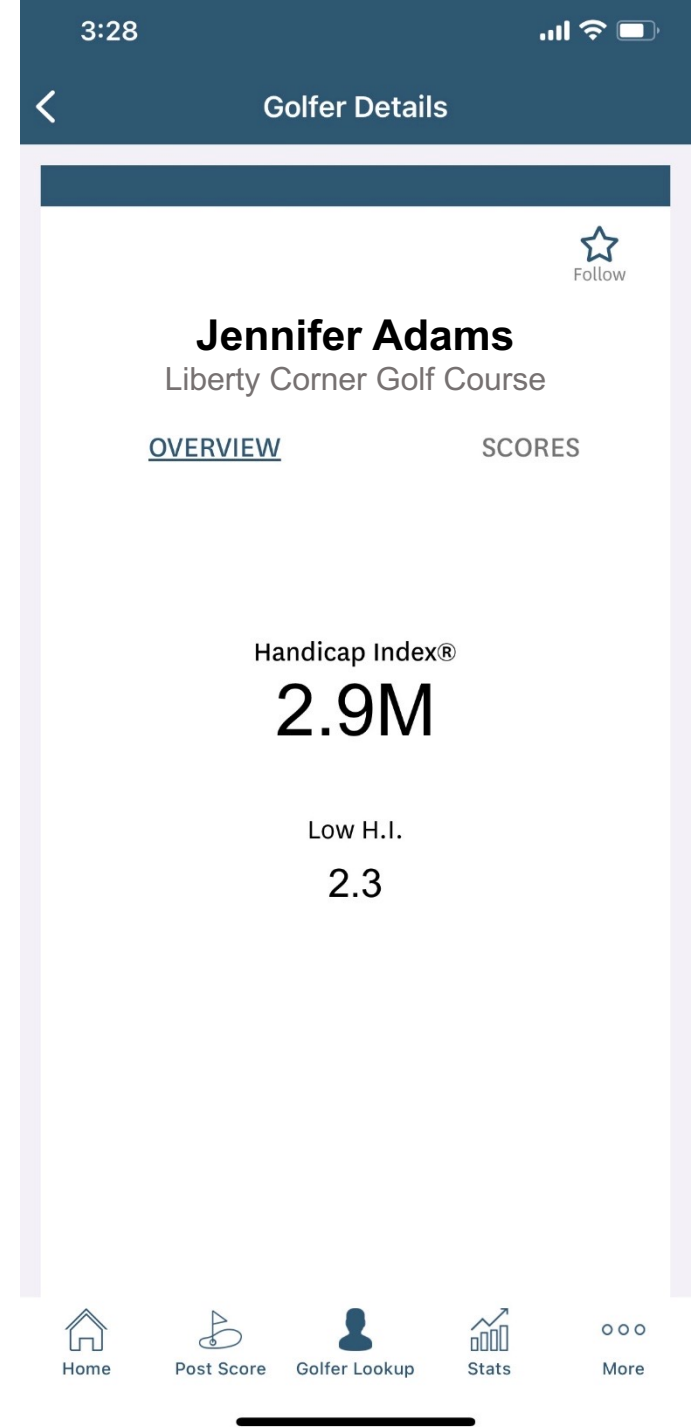
Handicap administration software will include additional reports, analyses and notifications to identify players with abnormal scores and provide recommended actions for the Handicap Committee to consider.



HOW IT WORKS

These enhanced handicap review tools will:

- Identify players who are consistently scoring above, or below, their 'expected' scoring range or where other abnormalities within a player's scoring record exist, and
- Make a recommended adjustment to the Handicap Index of each player identified.



BENEFITS



SAFEGUARD

The handicap review process gives a Handicap Committee the ability to ensure the Handicap Index of a player reflects their demonstrated ability.



DATA-DRIVEN

The handicap review reporting tools are automated and data-driven comparing a player's Handicap Index, individual scores and scoring patterns to expected performance.



HUMAN ELEMENT

A Handicap Index adjustment will be applied only at the discretion of the Handicap Committee, based on any other knowledge or evidence that they have about the player and their demonstrated ability.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM



in association with

USGA®