

A “HWM Idiot’s Guide” to the new World Handicap System (WHS)

- From 2nd November, there will be significant changes to handicapping systems in England. The bad news is that there’s a lot of terminology, definitions and calculations involved but the good news is that most of the work will be done for you – by Jack and his team, the handicapping system and the conversion tables they will provide. Adding 0.1, buffer zones and the like will all disappear.
- The big change is that you will not have a single “**handicap**” as at present. In future, you will have a “**Handicap Index**” which will take into account your previous playing record. For existing players, it will be calculated within HandicapMaster from scores you have already recorded. Typically, this will be the best 8 from your most recent 20 scores but a lower number can be used if you don’t have 20. We shall be told our initial “**Handicap Index**” by the Proshop once they are available. New members without a “**Handicap Index**” will need to submit scores covering a minimum of 54 holes in groups of 9 and 18. All under the normal rules of golf. Generally speaking, you will keep the same “**Handicap Index**” until the scores you submit result in a change. It is the main piece of information you need to remember.
- When you play, your “**Handicap Index**” is converted to your “**Course Handicap**” to reflect the number of strokes you should be allowed, typically, to enable you to play to the par score for your chosen course and tee. That conversion takes into account the different levels of difficulty of different courses and tees. Each club, including Windlesham, will have tables showing the conversion to your “**Course Handicap**” for the course and tees you are playing. In cases of difficulty, Proshop staff will be happy to help.
- Finally, your “**Course Handicap**” will be converted to your “**Playing Handicap**” by applying a “**Handicap Allowance**” which depends upon the golf format you are playing eg medal, stableford, match play etc. This is the actual number of strokes you receive for the round being played. Each format has its own “**Handicap Allowance**”, which is a percentage of your “**Course Handicap**”. You will be advised before each Highwaymen’s competition what your “**Handicap Allowance**” will be. Tables, showing your “**Playing Handicap**” will be available from the Proshop.
- You do not need to submit a card every time you play golf. The official recommendation is that you submit a card each time you play an individual round, or similar, using the rules of golf and of handicapping. There is, as yet, no minimum number of scores you must submit but Clubs may apply their own requirements.
- This is meant to be a very simplified note of the main aspects of the WHS. The detailed Rules can be found at <https://www.my-golf.uk/download/2133/>. Jack Bamford has also sent round very helpful notes which you are encouraged to read – especially Parts 5 & 6 on Course and Playing Handicaps.