

COVID-19: Guidance for Clubs and Golfers on playing rounds and submitting Acceptable Scores for handicapping purposes



Where some or all of the modifications permitted in the R&A guidance on the Rules of Golf during the pandemic continue to be applied, all counting rounds and acceptable scores for handicapping purposes must conform with the following:

The Rules of Golf	R&A guidance on the Rules during the COVID-19 Pandemic	The Rules of Handicapping	Golf Ireland's Living with COVID Protocol
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For golfers and golf clubs, the below checklist provides a summary overview of requirements in order for golf activities to count for handicapping purposes. Please note in particular that the guidance below on using physical scorecards and electronic devices has been updated following a review by the Joint WHS Committee of competition activities in 2020. Guidance has been sought from The R&A to ensure the below requirements comply with the Rules of Golf and the Rules of Handicapping where covid measures continue to be in place.

Removal of rakes from bunkers	Where club committees continue to proceed without rakes, they may introduce a local rule allowing placing in bunkers using the wording in Model Local Rule E-3 .
Modifications to Flagsticks	Golf Clubs may continue to employ the protective measures around flagsticks and hole depths that were used in 2020 (see R&A guidance above for approved measures). A further FAQ on flagsticks and hole depths is set out here .
Using Physical Scorecards without cards being counter-signed	If physical scorecards are used, in all cases the MARKER should enter the player's scores on a scorecard (it is advisable that each player keep their own score as well as the score of the person they are marking). At the end of the round, the marker should ask the player to verbally certify his/her scores , and then write the player's name in the player's signature slot. The marker signs the card in the marker's signature slot.
Electronic Devices as an alternative to physical scorecards	Committees may continue to determine that an electronic score return is sufficient without the return of a physical card, but this should happen only where the software or solution which the Committee employs : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows the hole scores to be electronically certified by the player and his/her marker, • Has a facility to register intent to return a score before the player starts the round on the day of play only • Allows verification/amendment of the player's Handicap Index
Electronic Devices used alongside scorecards	If the electronic solution used by the Committee does not have this functionality, it may still be used, but used only to assist the Committee in the same way as players may in the past have returned scorecards and entered scores on a computer terminal. A physical scorecard should also be returned to the Committee.
General Play Rounds counting for handicapping purposes	As the World Handicap System permits scores recorded in general play rounds to count for handicapping purposes, please note the following requirements for such scores: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course must be In "Acceptable Score" condition • Players must register their intention to return a general play score for handicapping purposes before they start their round. • The above guidance on using physical scorecards and electronic devices applies for general play rounds. The Golf Ireland app allows players to register the intent to return a score, electronically certify scores by a player and marker, and facilitates verification / amendment of the player's Handicap Index, and therefore can be prescribed as the method for returning General Play scores by any club, should the Club so determine. A club may also choose alternative methods for accepting such scores provided they comply with the above guidance. • Where an App/electronic device is being used to return a general play score for handicapping purposes as an alternative to a physical score card, the player and the marker should verbally agree on the scores immediately after completing the round.

All scores must be promptly returned to the Committee on the day of play in accordance with Rule 3.3B(2) of the Rules of Golf and Rule 4.3 of the Rules of Handicapping. For more information on the World Handicap System and the Rules of Handicapping, see www.golfireland.ie/handicap-system