

Handicap Guidelines and Procedures For the 2003 Season

1 Introduction

These Handicap Guidelines and Procedures, issued by the CA's Handicap Co-ordination Committee ("HCC"), supersede all previous guidelines.

Separate guidelines, issued by the Golf Croquet Committee, apply to Golf Croquet.

The following important changes have been made since the Guidelines were last published:

- The maximum CA handicap has been reduced from 28 to 24. All players with a CA handicap above 24 will start this season with a handicap of 24 and an index of 850.

However, note that 'no player whose handicap is over 20 when they enter, may play in an event organised by the CA. This limit does not normally apply to events organised by clubs, although any limit may be advertised in advance. For Association Croquet doubles, the maximum handicap a player may have is 20': Regulation H1(e).

Clubs remain free to set club handicaps above 24 for their internal use. However, such handicaps may not be used in qualifying games.

- From March 2000, Club Handicappers have had jurisdiction over handicaps above 8.
- The break test (described below) is now just one factor that a handicapper should consider when setting and altering handicaps.
- Handicappers now have a duty, where possible, to consult other handicappers who have altered a player's handicap in the previous three months before making a handicap change.
- Qualifying Games have been re-defined to remove ambiguities.
- At Tournaments (other than CA Calendar Fixtures) that last no more than 4 days, a handicap change can only be triggered at the end of a Tournament.

For CA Calendar Fixtures, the position remains that a handicap change can only be triggered at the end of the Tournament. However, note Regulation H1(a), which states that for tournaments that run over several weeks, such as the Longman Cup or Mary Rose, each round shall count as a separate tournament for the purposes of triggering a handicap change.

- Provision is now made for the non-automatic adjustment of minus handicaps.
- A procedure has now been established for appeals against the decisions of handicappers. The requirements that must be satisfied before the decision of a handicapper to be overturned are set at a high level and allow a large margin of appreciation.

Note that this is in addition to the established appeals procedure under Regulation O1(c) of the Tournament Regulations, which only applies to appeals from Tournament Handicappers at CA Calendar Fixtures.

- Previously if Club Handicappers wished for a handicap under 8 to be altered or set they had to recommend such changes to the HCC. Now the procedure is

that a Club Handicapper should recommend such changes to an Association Handicapper, normally one within their Federation.

All players are required to maintain handicap cards, even A-class players who do not play handicap games. The reason for this is:

1. it is important for the leading players to set a good example; and
2. for the Inter-Counties, players' handicaps affect the pairings that their teams may field. It is therefore important for players' handicaps to be accurate and to achieve this they must maintain a handicap card.

The HCC is aware of the concerns expressed by some players about the operation of the handicap system. We are looking into this matter.

2 Setting Initial Handicaps

2.1 For a beginner

A handicapper will have to watch the player play a number of games and ask himself how many bisques the player needs to win half his games against opponents he is likely to play.

The following test *may* be used, as guidance for the handicapper. The handicapper should set the hoops on a court according to the Tournament Regulations. The balls should be placed on court as if the standard opening had been played and the tice missed on the fourth turn. Thus, two partner balls should be placed about three yards apart on the East boundary near hoop 4. One of the other balls should be placed in the tice position near hoop 1 on the West boundary and the final ball should be placed in corner II.

The player whose handicap is being assessed should then construct and play a four-ball break to peg, finishing with a tidy leave. Each attempt should be continued to the peg even if disaster strikes along the way.

The total number of bisques used to complete this exercise should be noted and the exercise should be repeated about 5 times. The handicapper may disregard the first two attempts if he considers that the player performed poorly due to lack of familiarity with the exercise.

To calculate the player's handicap the handicapper averages the number of bisques taken to complete the exercise and then subtracts one bisque. The result is then multiplied by two and rounded to the nearest integer to give the appropriate handicap for the player.

2.2 Overseas players

The HCC is considering how best to integrate overseas players into the AHS.

Until guidelines are published under this section, the same rules apply in relation to setting and altering the CA handicaps of overseas players as apply to all other players.

2.3 In all other cases

A handicapper will have to watch the player play a number of games and ask himself how many bisques the player needs to win half his games.

If the handicapper is considering setting a handicap of over 8, he should ask the player to complete the above test. However, he should not adhere religiously to the test result, but should also consider factors including the player's tactical awareness and ability to hit long roquets.

A Club Handicapper may set an initial handicap of above 8. An Association Handicapper may set an initial handicap of 0 or above.

3 Automatic Changes to Handicaps

The Automatic Handicapping System (“AHS”) is to continue as the principal method by which handicaps are changed.

3.1 Starting indices

All players carry forward their indices from season to season. When a player’s handicap is altered outside the AHS, his index is reset to the trigger point corresponding to that handicap [see Tables 4 and 5 below].

3.2 Qualifying Games

All singles games in CA Calendar Fixtures, Federation Leagues, inter-club contests and Designated Club Competitions qualify for the system. Designated Club Competitions are competitions:

1. run by Member Clubs;
2. in which hoops are set to CA Tournament standards; and
3. which are clearly publicised by the Member Club, prior to the start of the tournament, as consisting of qualifying games.

Short croquet, golf croquet, doubles, friendly club games, ad hoc-games, walkovers and abandoned games are specifically excluded from the system.

3.3 Changes to Indices: Handicap Games

For 26 point, 22 point and 18 point qualifying games a player’s index increases by 10 for each win and decreases by 10 for each loss. For 14 point qualifying games, a player’s index increases by 5 points for each win and decreases by 5 points for each loss.

Full bisque, advanced-handicap and bisque-difference games are treated the same way by the AHS.

3.4 Changes to Indices: Level Play

The change to a players index depends on the number of *steps* difference between him and his opponent. The index change is calculated from table 1 for 26 point, 22 point and 18-point games and from table 2 for 14-point games. A *step* is two bisesques from handicap 12 upwards, one bisque between handicaps 5 and 12, half a bisque between handicaps 0 and 4½. For minus handicaps table 3 is used to calculate steps difference. These rules apply to both ordinary level and level advanced games.

Example 1: Roy (H’cap 3) and Bab (H’cap 14) play each other in a 26-point qualifying game. There are 12 steps difference between their handicaps. Thus, if Roy wins his index increases by 1 and Bab’s index decreases by 1. However, if Bab wins her index increases by 19 and Roy’s index decreases by 19.

Example 2: Bag (H’cap -1½) and Wap (H’cap 0) play each other in a 26-point qualifying game. There are 8 steps difference between their handicaps. Thus, if Bag wins her index increases by 3 and Wap’s index decreases by 3. However, if Wap wins his index increases by 17 and Bag’s index decreases by 17.

Handicap Steps Difference	Index Change	
	Higher Handicap Wins	Lower Handicap Wins
0	10	10

1	11	9
2	12	8
3	13	7
4	14	6
5	15	5
6	16	4
7 or 8	17	3
9 or 10	18	2
≥ 11	19	1

Table 1: Level play index changes for 26 point, 22 point and 18 point games.

Handicap Steps Difference	Index Change	
	Higher Handicap Wins	Lower Handicap Wins
0	5	5
1 or 2	6	4
3 or 4	7	3
5 or 6	8	2
≥ 7	9	1

Table 2: Level play index changes for 14-point games.

Handicap	0 to -½	-½ to -1	-1 to -1½	-1½ to -2	-2 to -2½	-2½ to -3
Notional steps	2	3	3	4	4	5

Table 3: Notional steps for minus handicaps.

3.5 Handicap Changes under the AHS

3.5.1 At a CA Calendar Fixture, or other tournament lasting no more than 4 days

At either:

- a) a CA Calendar Fixture; or
- b) any other tournament lasting no more than 4 days

a handicap change can only be triggered at the end of the tournament. If, at the end of the tournament, a player's index is on or past a trigger point for a handicap change [see Table 4] then his handicap changes accordingly.

Any such handicap change should be reported to the Tournament Handicapper. He must then complete form HC1 and return it to the CA office.

3.5.2 In all other cases

Handicap changes take place at the end of the day. So if, at the end of a day, a player's index is on or past a trigger point for a handicap change [see Table 4], his handicap changes accordingly.

Any such change should be reported to your Club Handicapper. He must then complete form HC1 and return it to the CA office.

Handicap	Index	Handicap	Index	Handicap	Index
-3	3050	2	1800	9	1300
-2 ½	2800	2 ½	1750	10	1250
-2	2600	3	1700	11	1200
-1 ½	2400	3 ½	1650	12	1150
-1	2250	4	1600	14	1100
- ½	2100	4 ½	1550	16	1050
0	2000	5	1500	18	1000
½	1950	6	1450	20	950
1	1900	7	1400	22	900
1 ½	1850	8	1350	24	850

Table 4: Handicap and index trigger points.

3.6 Handicap Record Card

All players who compete in qualifying games are required to record their results on an official handicap card. Players should bring their handicap cards to all tournaments in which they play. See the example for an illustration of how to complete a handicap card.

4 Non-Automatic Changes to Handicaps

There are occasions when the AHS is unable to respond to changes in a player's ability. These occur where:

1. the player infrequently plays eligible games; or
2. the player is a rapid improver.

In such circumstances, it will be appropriate for a non-automatic change to be made to the player's handicap, in accordance with the procedures below.

4.1 Handicappers

There are two grades of handicappers appointed by the CA, Club Handicappers and Association Handicappers. It is the policy of the HCC that there should be a Club Handicapper active within all Member Clubs.

4.2 Handicaps above 8

Both grades of handicapper have power to alter and set handicaps in this range.

When a player's handicap is so altered, his index is reset to the trigger point corresponding to that handicap. Odd numbered handicaps above 12 may be used; where they are used, the player's index is altered to the value given in Table 5.

Handicap	Index	Handicap	Index	Handicap	Index
13	1125	17	1025	21	925
15	1075	19	975	23	875

Table 5: Supplementary handicaps and indices.

A handicapper who is considering setting or altering a handicap above 8 should normally ask the player to complete the test described in 'Setting and Initial Handicap', above. However, the handicapper should also have regard to his ability to hit roquets, his general tactical knowledge and the results of any qualifying games which he has played.

4.3 Handicaps from 0 to 8

Only Association Handicappers may alter and set Handicaps in this range. However, Club Handicappers may recommend such changes to an Association Handicapper but it will not take effect until confirmed by the Association Handicapper.

Any such change must be by at least 3 steps. Such changes must be based on a period of 10 or more consecutive Eligible Games. Eligible Games are games that count in the AHS.

4.4 Consultation before altering handicaps

Where practical, before altering a player's handicap, a handicapper should consult with any other handicapper who has changed that player's handicap in the last three months.

4.5 Minus Players

Handicappers may not alter or set minus handicaps. In exceptional circumstances, the Chairman of the HCC, on the recommendation of an Association Handicapper, may alter or set minus handicaps.

4.6 Reporting non-automatic handicap changes

Any handicapper who changes the handicap of a CA associate has a duty to report the change to the CA office on the appropriate form. Changes to handicaps above 8 must be reported on form HC1; other changes are to be reported on form HC2.

4.7 Appeals from decisions of handicappers

Appeals from handicap changes made by handicappers may be made to the HCC or under the Tournament Regulations. Such appeals will only be successful if the appellant can prove either:

1. that these Guidelines and Procedures have not been followed; or
2. that no reasonable handicapper acting reasonably could have made the decision that the handicapper made.

Appeals against a decision of a Club Handicapper may be made to an Association Handicapper who is local to the player concerned.

For appeals against a decision of an Association Handicapper, the Chairman of the HCC shall nominate three members of the HCC, which may include the Chairman of the HCC, who shall hear the appeal.

There is no appeal from a handicap change under the AHS.

4.8 Power of HCC to alter handicaps

The HCC recognises that there may be times when strict adherence to these guidelines and procedures may produce an unfair result. Thus in individual cases the HCC may depart from these guidelines and procedures when it considers it just and equitable to do so.

This power shall be exercised by the Chairman of the HCC on the advice of an Association Handicapper who is local to the player concerned.