

CONGU Unified Handicap System: 2012 – 2015

CSS Calculation – Clause 18

The current CSS process uses SSS+2 as a target (partly for historical reasons) and compares how the players have performed against this target. The composition of ladies' fields contains a relatively large number of category 4 players, who are more volatile as a group. The current CSS algorithm does not appear as stable when compared to its use in typical men's fields, producing more occasions where CSS goes up.

The suggestion was made to investigate the feasibility of BZ as a target. With the widespread use of computers this is now feasible. The same statistical model used for the current CSS table was used to derive the new BZ target percentage values. Data samples from actual competitions were then analysed.

It was concluded that the use of BZ for the CSS calculation will significantly improve the precision of the Ladies' calculations without significantly affecting the Men's.

Intuitively, the use of BZ to assess performance makes sense. This change also brings us into line with EGA practise.

SSS+2 versus SSS+BZ

Using buffer zone as a target, the calculation assesses the number of players in each category achieving appropriate nett scores.

- For example: if SSS is 72 the categories' targets are
 - Cat 1 Nett 73 and better
 - Cat 2 Nett 74 and better
 - Cat 3 Nett 75 and better
 - Cat 4 Nett 76 and better

The number of players is calculated and accumulated, then converted to a percentage of the overall Category 1-3[4] field size. The composition of a typical Ladies' field for Cat1/Cat2/Cat3[4] is 0/10/90 (a typical Men's field is 10/40/50).

Comparing this line in the new Appendix B – Table A (Competition Scratch Score Table) with the old Appendix B shows the impact of the new targets:

Currently the target for CSS=SSS is 16-32%.
The target when BZ is used becomes 23-45%.

So although you might expect more ladies in a typical field to play within their BZ than would play to SSS+2, the target has become proportionately tougher to allow CSS to remain as SSS.

SSS+BZ – Impact Analysis

Analysis against actual men's and ladies' competitions was carried out and the resulting change between old and new CSS was calculated.

Analysis indicates there will be minimal change on the general CSS outcome.

Ladies' fields should see a healthy number of lower CSS outcomes, including slightly fewer reduction only days.

There may be a possible increase in CSS in challenging weather conditions for a Category 1 field, due to a more difficult Category 1 target - their target becomes SSS+1 instead of current SSS+2 and the Cat 1 percentages in the new table are therefore easier:

Comparing a Category 1 ladies' field (100/0/0):

SSS+2 targets from current CSS table:

R/O	SSS+3	SSS+2	SSS+1	SSS	SSS-1
0-9%	10-15%	16-24%	25-36%	37-68%	69+ %

SSS+BZ targets from new CSS table:

R/O	SSS+3	SSS+2	SSS+1	SSS	SSS-1
0-7%	8-12%	13-19%	20-29%	30-57%	58+%

CSS and Small Fields

Small fields are defined as less than 10 players and at this level the precision of the CSS calculation is affected. If no players are within their buffer zone a disproportionate number of Reduction Only results can occur and this is self-perpetuating as players are then under-handicapped.

In order to try and assess more accurately the conditions affecting play on the day, if no player is within BZ the next best score (relative to BZ) is examined.

Example: a field of 7 players of which only 2 are in cat 1, 2, 3 or 4 produces an estimated R/O CSS. One of the players achieved a net score just 1 outside BZ. This is used to identify that CSS will be SSS+1.

Lowest Net Score Relative to Category Buffer Zone				Field Size	(CSS estimate = R/O)
+4	+3	+2	+1		
R/O	SSS+3	SSS+2	SSS+1	1	Cat Pts BZ
R/O	SSS+3	SSS+2	SSS+1	2	3 32 +1
R/O	SSS+3	SSS+2	SSS+1	3	4 25 +11
R/O	SSS+3	SSS+2	SSS+1	4	5 37 -1
	R/O	SSS+3	SSS+2	5	5 30 +6
	R/O	SSS+3	SSS+2	6	5 28 +8
		R/O	SSS+3	7	5 27 +9
		R/O	SSS+3	8	5 20 +16
		R/O	SSS+3	9	

Reductions Only results will be reduced both through use of “best score over buffer zone” in the very small field situation, coupled with the increased precision achieved through using the target of “SSS+buffer zone”

Nine-hole scores

The 9-hole competitions have proved to be very popular. The restriction that 9-hole scores can only be returned at a players Home Club has been lifted - 9-hole scores may now be recorded for handicap purposes at a players Home Club from all other clubs at which they are a playing member.

In addition, scores for allotment of handicap will be allowed over 9-holes, or a combination 9-hole and 18-hole scores. The best submitted cards will represent a total 54 holes as required currently by the return of three 18 hole cards.

(Supplementary Scores must still be played over 18 holes).

Exceptional Scoring

Takes the pressure off handicap committees in reaction to exceptionally low scores, by using the computer to automate the process. The Committee still have to sanction the reduction rather than it being completely automatic as it is a screen click to accept. They MUST consider the reduction.

Aimed at rapid improvers (typically juniors), the process will be triggered when a player first returns an exceptional score (defined as a Nett Differential of -4 or better).

If in the period between Annual Reviews the player then returns another exceptional score, the 2 scores would be averaged and an additional decrease of handicap (over and above that already calculated as normal) may be applied as determined from the table.

Average of the two Low Score Nett Differentials	4 or less qualifying scores in the sequence	5 to 9 qualifying scores in the sequence	10 or more qualifying scores in the sequence
-4.0 to -5.0	1 stroke	0.5 stroke	No change
-5.5 to -9.5	2 strokes	1 stroke	0.5 stroke
-10 or less	3 strokes	2 strokes	2 strokes

For each successive exceptional score in the period, the process is repeated.

This does not apply to Category 1 players and Category 2 players can only be reduced to 5.5.

Case Study (an improving junior)

Present System				Exceptional Scoring Process			
ND	H/cap	Change	New Exact	ND	H/cap	Change	New Exact
-5	16.2	$-(5*0.3)$	14.7	-5	16.2	$-(5*0.3)$	14.7
-7	14.7	$-(7*0.3)$	12.6	-7	14.7	$-(7*0.3)$	12.6
				Average -6 over 2 scores results in further adjustment under ESR of 2.0			10.6
5	12.6	0.1	12.7	7	10.6	0.1	10.7
-3	12.7	$-(1*0.3+2*0.2)$	12.0	-1	10.7	-0.2	10.5
6	12.0	0.1	12.1	7	10.5	0.1	10.6
7	12.1	0.1	12.2	8	10.6	0.1	10.7
-5	12.2	$-(5*0.2)$	11.2	-4	10.7	$-(4*0.2)$	9.9
				Average -5.5 over 6 scores results in further adjustment under ESR of 1.0			8.9

Annual Review – Clause 23

The Annual Review process checks Actual performance versus Target performance using a formula based on a players' Mean Nett Differential.

For players with 3 or more qualifying scores the current process recommends consideration of a handicap decrease if their actual performance is more than 3 better than expected. However checks for handicap increase recommendations are currently only made against players with at least 7 qualifying scores.

The process will be changed to align with the 3 scores required to maintain an active handicap. The Annual review will also consider players for handicap increase if they have 3, 4 -5, or 6 qualifying scores, checking for an actual performance that is more than 6, 5 or 4 worse than expected, respectively.

The Manual will also contain more detailed guidance on the Annual Review process.

Other Issues

Four-Ball Handicap Allowance:

There is general comment that the use of $\frac{3}{4}$ handicap may well be too much where the pairing is of two high handicap players and that $\frac{7}{8}$ (90%) may be better. Full handicap is generally considered to be biased towards the high handicap players winning disproportionately.

Simulations based on individual hole-by-hole scores returned in men's and ladies' competitions were carried out. The findings were inconclusive and data from actual 4BBB competitions is needed to research this issue further.

Slope:

Could the introduction of Slope produce more deserving winners in competitions involving ‘away’ players?

Previous analysis of scores from men’s competitions did not find any worthwhile evidence that away players might gain some advantage when their handicaps were adjusted for Slope. It did however find that, on average, the away player played about 2 shots worse, irrespective of the Slope of their home course.

The analysis has been repeated using data from 1500 ladies’ competitions in England.

H'cap Category	Mean Nett Differential (after applying Slope adjustment)			
	Home Players	Visitors' course slope:		
		'Easier'	'Same'	'Tougher'
Cat.2	5.9	4.2	5.4	7.5
Cat.3	6.2	5.7	7.2	8.6
Cat.4	7.0	6.7	8.8	9.7

On average, the visitors from ‘easier’ courses who were therefore in receipt of additional strokes achieved far better scores than the other players.

On average, the visitors from ‘more difficult’ courses who were therefore conceding strokes achieved far worse scores than the other players.

This distortion was NOT present before Slope was applied.

The original unadjusted data also confirmed that on average the away players were 1-2 shots worse than the home players, regardless of the slope of their home course.

It would appear that the CONGU UHS, with SSS based on Course Rating and the application of the CSS on a round-by-round basis, negates the need for handicap adjustment when players compete away from home - irrespective of the Slope Rating of their home course.

Slope:

Would the introduction of Slope in handicapping bring value to the CONGU system?

There is statistical data now available from the European handicap systems that have adopted Slope. This data shows there are serious problems with how the players are performing above 18/19 handicap (Category 4 in the EGA).

As yet no explanation has been found for this deviation but clearly players in Category 4 are over-handicapped. It could be due to there being more improving golfers in Europe but it could also be due to Slope over-compensating. Both would produce over-handicapping and there is no way that one effect can be isolated. But it is found in all data we have examined to date.

The committee concluded that there are fundamental doubts and unless substantial new evidence comes forward it is difficult to see how Slope, in its present form, could realistically be introduced into the CONGU system.

Changes/Additions to 2012 CONGU Manual

CDH and CONGU: New for 2012

Identify that scores have been sent via CDH.

Facility to search for an event on CDH.

Facility to submit one single score rather than re-open the event and submit all scores.

Confirmation email to be received to identify submitted scores.

Home Club Not Set – CDH id number deleted after 6 months.

Retention of records – current and previous two calendar years (as per Clause 6.11).

Active vs. Inactive

Statistically 7 qualifying scores are required to properly identify a player's ability and as such discussions have taken place to increase the number of qualifying scores required for an Active handicap. It has however been decided to retain 3 as additional scores may be too much of a burden for the majority of club members.

Appendix O: Mixed Golf

The Combined CSS (taking all scores into account to calculate a common CSS adjustment to both men's and ladies' SSS) is now mandatory for handicap alteration purposes - see Note 2 to Appendix O.

Where SSS or PAR varies for men and ladies playing in the same competition, an adjustment is required to take into account the difference between SSS or Par of the courses being played. Similarly when a gross score prize is involved any difference in SSS must be taken into account.

CONGU Calendar Year - to start January 1st

Clause 10: Establishing Par – extended to include Par 6

Clause 16.3d: Allotment of Handicap – clause to be deleted

Clause 17: - extended to include Medford competitions (9 holes Medal/ 9-holes Stableford)

Clause 21.5: Supplementary Scores

Period between Annual Review date to be January 1st

New Decision: Supplementary Score to be first of the day

Clause 25: Lapse of Handicap

Changed to 'Status of Handicap'

Appendix P: DQ Scores in Qualifying Competition

addition: no handicap on card – score still to be accepted

Decision: 1j - wording strengthened

New Decision - Scratch competition - no handicap on card is now a Committee responsibility