

2012-2015

# THE USGA COURSE RATING SYSTEM

Developed by the United States Golf Association



## THE 10 BASIC RULES FOR COURSE RATING TEAMS

1. The rating team must be composed of a minimum of three trained and experienced raters, with one rater designated as the team leader. The team leader must have attended a course rating seminar conducted by the USGA.
2. Do not serve as a team member when your home course is being rated.
3. Do not play a course while rating it. Play the course before or after rating it to gain greater insight. Shots may be hit from various positions when rating to assist in evaluations.
4. View each hole from the teeing ground, the landing zones of scratch and bogey golfers, and the green.
5. Rate the obstacles in accordance with the guidelines established in “The USGA Course Rating System Guide,” not based on how you would play the hole.
6. Do not discuss obstacle values while evaluating a hole. Values should be discussed with the team leader after each team member has completed rating the hole. The Green Target rating may be agreed upon before rating the other obstacles.
7. Do not record obstacle values on Form 1 until the hole has been evaluated from all positions.
8. Attempt to agree within one unit on the rating of each obstacle. The team leader has the responsibility of ensuring that the team members reach an agreement; his decision is final.
9. Take about four hours to rate an average 18-hole golf course.
10. Do not divulge the course rating results to a club. Ratings are subject to review by a Course Rating Review Committee before the ratings are official.

## THE USGA® COURSE RATING SYSTEM

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# The USGA Course Rating System

DEVELOPED BY THE  
UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION

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## SECTION 1 — INTRODUCTION

The purpose of “The USGA Course Rating System” is to offer a “Textbook” on the USGA Course Rating System.

The USGA Course Rating System, including Slope Rating, was implemented by the USGA on January 1, 1987, as a refinement of the existing USGA Handicap System. This system assists in addressing the problem of portability of handicaps by adjusting a player’s Handicap Index according to the relative difficulty of the golf course being played.

Prior to the introduction of Slope Rating to the USGA Course Rating System, golf courses were rated only for the scratch golfer, with no consideration given to average or higher handicapped players. Under the USGA Course Rating System, including Slope Rating, courses are rated according to the relative difficulty for both the scratch and the bogey golfer. The USGA Course Rating System takes into account the factors that affect the playing difficulty of a course.

The USGA Course Rating System is designed to ensure that the rating of a course is in proper relation to the ratings of other courses. If this is not achieved, players at courses rated too low will be over-handicapped, and vice versa.

**Accuracy** and **consistency** are the keys to effective course rating. A course must first be accurately measured, and the measured yardage must be corrected for factors that affect the playing length, which are roll, changes in elevation, forced lay ups, doglegs, prevailing wind, and altitude. Obstacles that affect playing difficulty must then be evaluated in accordance with established standards. These standards reduce subjectivity in course rating.

A USGA Course Rating is based on the performance of the scratch golfer as defined and described in Section 4. A USGA Course Rating is based on yardage, effective playing length corrections, and 10 obstacle factors to the extent that they affect the scoring ability of a scratch player.

The USGA Course Rating System provides procedures for determining a Bogey Rating based on the performance of the bogey golfer as defined in Section 4. This rating is used in connection with a USGA Course Rating to provide a Slope Rating.

Through the collection of data on thousands of golfers and thousands of golf holes, the factors that affect the difficulty of a golf hole have been evaluated and assigned numerical values that yield an accurate USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating when applied to the entire course.

“The USGA Course Rating System” describes the procedures for:

- Installing the USGA Course Rating System in a region;
- Measuring golf courses;
- Evaluating obstacles and conditions that affect playing length;
- Computing a USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating based on these measurements and evaluations;
- USGA Short Course Rating – Rating courses too short to qualify for a USGA Course Rating; and
- Pace of Play Rating – Determining the appropriate time needed to play a rated course.

In this manual, items and yardages specifically for women are shown in [square brackets].

## SECTION 2 — THE HISTORY OF COURSE RATING

Course rating, like golf, has its origin in the British Isles. The first measure of course difficulty was par. The word par is derived from stocks; i.e., “a stock may be above or below its normal or par figure.” British golf writer A.H. Doleman in 1870 asked Davie Strath and Jamie Anderson, two professionals, what score would be required to win The Belt at the then 12-hole course at Prestwick. Their response was that perfect play should produce a score of 49. Mr. Doleman called this par for Prestwick and when Young Tom Morris scored two strokes over par for three rounds (36 holes) to win The Belt, the term stuck.

Another measure for scoring difficulty of a golf course was “bogey,” which was the expected score of the fictitious Colonel Bogey. About 1890, Mr. Hugh Rotherham of the Coventry Golf Club proposed the concept of a blind opponent in match play. He was called Colonel Bogey by Dr. Thomas Browne of Great Yarmouth. Colonel Bogey was a low handicap golfer who usually made 4 on long par-3 holes and 5 on long par-4 holes but otherwise played nearly flawless golf. Bogey scores ranged from 76 to 80 on most courses.

The first course rating system was developed by the Ladies Golf Union (LGU) under the leadership of Miss Issette Pearson in about 1900. Robert Browning in “A History of Golf” says of the LGU, “Their biggest achievement was the gradual establishment of a national system of handicapping ... No doubt it was uphill work at the start (1893) but within eight or ten years the LGU had done what the men had signally failed to do — had established a system of handicapping that was reasonably reliable from club to club.”

The first USGA Course Rating System was established in 1911. It was proposed by Leighton Calkins who also proposed the first USGA Handicap Committee. Calkins was an officer of the Metropolitan Golf Association and served on the USGA Executive Committee in 1907 and 1908. Calkins’ proposal was that par ratings be based on the play of U.S. Amateur champion, Jerome Travers. Rating courses according to the “expected” score of the national amateur champion became accepted, and course rating was born in America. Calkins was angered, however, by the USGA’s decision to allow clubs to determine their own ratings, calling such a system a “farce” and “useless.” Calkins later won his point, and a USGA Course Rating was issued by regional golf associations as it is today.

By 1914, the USGA rating concept began to dominate articles in British golf magazines. By 1925, a Golf Unions’ Joint Advisory Committee of the British Isles was formed to assign Standard Scratch Scores to golf courses in Great Britain and Ireland. Today, their men’s authority is called the Council of National Golf Unions (CONGU).

In the 1920’s, the Massachusetts Golf Association suggested refinements in course rating methods, and William Langford of Chicago developed a fractional par concept which further refined course ratings. In the 1930’s, Thomas G. McMahon, who was President of the Chicago District Golf Association in 1942 and 1943 and President of the Southern California Golf Association in the early 1960’s, refined Langford’s technique and introduced “differentials” between scores and course ratings.

The USGA Handicap Committee adopted the Massachusetts Golf Association’s recommendations for course ratings for men in 1947. This method called for rating on a hole-by-hole basis where each hole was rated in tenths of a stroke. “The USGA Handicap System” contained descriptions of golf holes that typified holes of a specific rating. The hole ratings were totaled and rounded off to the nearest whole number; i.e., “The rating of the entire course is the total of the separate hole ratings, with the final figure being the nearest whole number, such as 69 or 72, and never in fractions, such as 69.4 or 71.8.”

During this same period, the Chicago District Golf Association endorsed the “fractional par rating method.” The Chicago rating method depended on (1) yardage, (2) course difficulty, and (3) experience. “Course difficulty” was based on a course’s overall character rather than the sum of a hole-by-hole



evaluation. “Experience” meant the observation of the play of expert golfers and comparison of their performance with the existing rating.

Both course rating procedures were eventually approved by the USGA. Both remained in effect until April 1960 when a new single approach was introduced. It involved a “preliminary yardage rating” for each hole which was “modified, if necessary, in the light of significant course conditions, called Rating Factors.” The Chicago District Golf Association continued to use the fractional par method.

In 1963, the USGA introduced another course rating system. It was essentially the procedure developed by the Massachusetts Golf Association modified by principles of the fractional par rating method used by the Chicago District Golf Association with one official yardage rating chart calculated by the USGA.

Another significant change was announced January 1, 1967. Effective that date, course ratings were expressed in decimals and not rounded off to the nearest whole number.

In 1971, William Wehnes of the Southern California Golf Association developed the first “obstacle rating” procedure using plus and minus adjustments by nines, for a number of course obstacles. For a time, this technique was used by both the Northern and Southern California Golf Associations.

In 1977, Lt. Commander Dean Knuth of the Naval Post-Graduate School proposed an improved course rating system that involved numerical rating of 10 characteristics for each hole. These ratings along with the weighting factors for each characteristic provided an adjustment to the distance rating for the course. The method used some elements of decision theory and was intended to be a systematic, quantitative approach to course rating. It was the basis for the present USGA Course Rating System. Knuth eventually became the USGA’s Senior Director of Handicapping.

In May 1978, Dr. Richard Stroud, a consulting member of the Handicap Procedure Committee, wrote a letter to Gordon Ewen, Chairman of the Committee, proposing the concepts of the Slope System. In discussing a 1971 proposal by Dr. Clyne Soley and Trygve Bogevoid for a slope-like approach to handicapping, Stroud wrote, “It should be emphasized that the proposed scheme for selecting course-difficulty parameters is based on length alone. There is a significant chance some more sophisticated methods will prove necessary; i.e., the Knuth method for refining course ratings and a similar procedure for predicting slope.” This proved to be the case, and course rating became a two-number procedure in 1981.

In 1979, the USGA formed the Handicap Research Team (HRT). Charter members of the Team were Trygve Bogevoid, Dean Knuth, Dr. Lou Riccio, Dr. Fran Scheid, Lynn Smith, Dr. Clyne Soley, Dr. Richard Stroud, and Frank Thomas. The HRT researched and refined many aspects of the handicap procedure including course rating. The concepts of expert and bogey ratings emerged. The present USGA Course Rating System, which includes Bogey Rating and Slope Rating, was developed and tested by Knuth.

In 1982, the Colorado Golf Association rated all of its courses using the new procedure, under the leadership of HRT member Dr. Byron Williamson. In 1983, Colorado tested the Slope System with positive results. Five other states joined Colorado in the test during 1984, and others followed in subsequent years.

In 1987, the USGA Course Rating Subcommittee was formed with Joe Luyckx, of the Golf Association of Michigan, as chairman. It included members of the men’s and women’s Handicap Procedure Committees. The primary functions of the Subcommittee were to refine “The USGA Course Rating

System” and “Guides” and to render decisions on course rating problem situations (similar to decisions on “The Rules of Golf,” rendered by the USGA Rules of Golf Committee). Warren Simmons, from the Colorado Golf Association, succeeded Luyckx as chairman in 1992. In 1998, the Subcommittee was changed to a USGA Committee with members appointed by the USGA Executive Committee to include golf association staff and volunteers interested in the policies of the USGA Course Rating System.

Since 1989, the USGA has organized and conducted national course rating calibration seminars for course raters from all over the U.S., and from countries licensed to use the System. In 1997, the USGA conducted two national calibration seminars, one on the East Coast and one on the West Coast. The format was changed to include teams from authorized golf associations throughout the world. At this time, the USGA Handicap Department continues to have multiple seminars and invite teams from authorized golf associations.

In 1993, the USGA, in cooperation with Golf Digest Magazine, developed a program that calculates pace of play timing guidelines for golf courses. Input to the program focuses on course rating factors, hole lengths, cart policies, and other variables that would affect the “time par” for each hole at a particular golf course. Today, authorized golf associations can provide courses with “pace ratings” as well as a USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating.

In 2002, the USGA established guidelines in an effort to provide golf courses that are shorter than 3,000 yards with a USGA Short Course Rating. This rating procedure is very similar in nature to a regular course rating procedure, with the exceptions as outlined in Section 18. The USGA Short Course Handicap Procedure for this section is outlined within “The USGA Handicap System,” Appendix A.

Today every authorized golf association in the United States that rates golf courses, including the territories of Puerto Rico and Guam, is licensed to use the USGA Course Rating System. As of 2012, the countries licensed to utilize the USGA Course Rating System are: Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Cayman Islands, Chile, Chinese Taipei, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, England (Ladies), Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, People’s Republic of China, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Scotland, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, Vietnam and Wales.

## SECTION 3 — DEFINITIONS

### **BOGEY GOLFER**

Defined and described in Section 4.

### **BOGEY RATING**

A Bogey Rating is equal to the average of the better half of a bogey golfer's scores under normal playing conditions.

### **BOGEY YARDAGE RATING**

A Bogey Yardage Rating is the evaluation of the playing difficulty of a course for the bogey golfer based only on yardage.

### **CARRY SAFELY**

In order to carry an obstacle safely, a shot must be able to clear the obstacle by at least 10 yards. When recording a carry distance over an obstacle, the 10 yards should be added to the length of carry. If a golfer cannot carry such an obstacle by 10 yards, it may result in a forced lay up or an alternative line of play.

### **CHUTE**

A chute consists of trees that are positioned such that they can intervene on the flight path of a shot, and the ball must be hit through a narrow opening. Chutes are rated based on the width of the opening between the extending branches of the trees and how far that opening is from the teeing ground, or for a second shot, from the first shot landing zone. Other factors to consider in rating chutes are the density of the foliage (will a ball pass through the tree branches?), the area where a ball might drop if it strikes the trees, and how well the player can recover from that area.

### **CLOSELY BORDERING**

An obstacle or condition is considered closely bordering a landing zone or green if it is within 10 yards in any direction of the outside perimeter of a landing zone or edge of the green.

### **COURSE RATING**

See USGA Course Rating.

### **DESERT**

Desert is extreme rough that contains vegetation (brush, cacti, bushes, trees, etc.) with thorns, stickers, spines, spurs, needles, spikes and the like, that are dangerous and injurious to walk through, let alone play from. Desert plants normally thrive on abundant sunshine and intense heat, and survive with very little moisture. Desert does not normally include dry, gravel-colored ground with innocuous bushes and plants, nor does it include waste areas and sand dunes where desert plants are not present. Desert ratings in the United States are primarily limited to the arid Southwest (west Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and southern California), and are for men only (women rate desert under Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough).

### **EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH**

Effective playing length of a course is the measured length corrected for roll, changes in elevation, forced lay ups and doglegs, prevailing wind, and altitude above sea level.

### **EXTREME ROUGH**

Extreme rough is cool season rough grass in excess of 6 inches in length {4 inches warm season}[5 inches {3 inches} for women], underbrush in trees, or other conditions such as sand dunes (not bunkers),

iceplant, palmettos, tree roots, rocks, lava, desert, heather, gorse, etc., which make it likely the ball will be lost or advanced only with great difficulty. Extreme rough is rated under Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough, and may possibly be rated under Recoverability and Rough or Bunkers.

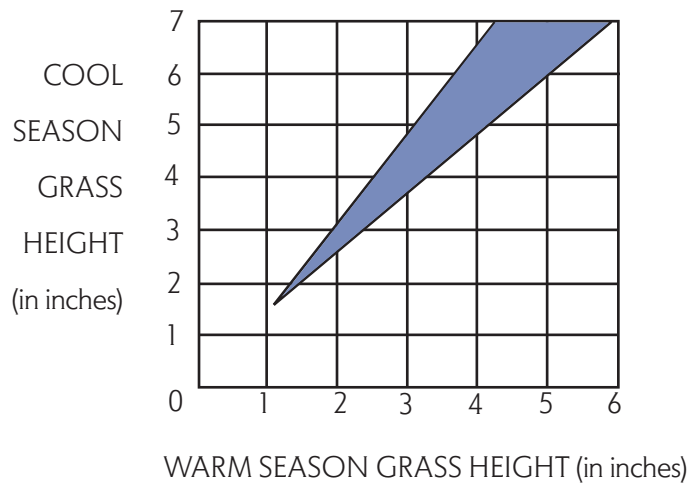
### GRASSES

For rating purposes, grasses used for rough are divided into two categories:

- Cool season rough grasses include perennial ryegrass, Kentucky bluegrass, and poa annua (but not bentgrasses for rating purposes only); and
- Warm season grasses include all types of bermuda, zoysia, St. Augustine and kikuyu, seashore paspalum, buffalo, plus bentgrasses.

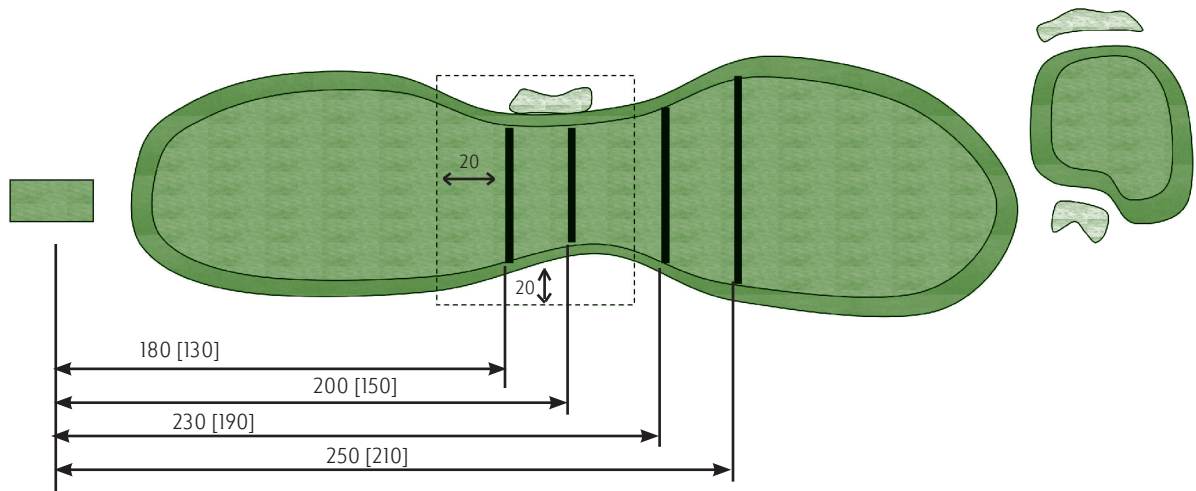
Warm season grasses do not need to be as deep as cool season grasses to cause the same recovery problems. Cool season grasses are assumed throughout this manual; equivalent warm season grasses are shown in {braces}.

The following chart compares the height of cool season grasses to the equivalent height of warm season grasses (shaded area).



## LANDING ZONE

The landing zone is a fairway-wide area extending from where a shot hits the ground to where it comes to rest (i.e., it is generally a rectangle with dimensions equal to the width of the fairway by the length of the roll). Obstacles within 20 yards of the landing zone (short, long, or to either side) are considered to be “near” the landing zone.



## LAY UP

Lay ups are divided into two categories:

- Forced lay up occurs when an obstacle, or a combination of severe obstacles, such as water, dense trees, deep bunkers, extreme rough, or severe topography crosses the fairway or reduces the fairway width in the normal landing zone of the scratch or bogey golfer to less than 15 yards [13 yards]. As a result, the golfer will hit less than a full shot (i.e., he [she] will lay up).
- Lay up by choice occurs when a punitive obstacle or a combination of obstacles near the normal landing zone results in a scratch or bogey golfer choosing to hit less than a full shot. A fairway landing zone that is less than 15 [13] yards wide but without severe obstacles may be a reason for a lay up by choice. The lay up by choice would also be employed, primarily by scratch golfers, in their course management decisions (e.g., laying up to avoid hitting half shots rather than full shots to the target area).

## LINE OF PLAY

Line of play, as defined in “The Rules of Golf,” is the direction that a player wishes his ball to take after a stroke, plus a reasonable distance on either side of the intended direction. The line of play is normally down the center of the fairway. However, when there are severe obstacles on one side of a hole (e.g., a lake along the right edge of the fairway), the line of play is located off center, farther from severe obstacles (unless there are severe obstacles on both sides). When a player is able to cut across a dogleg, the line of play also shifts away from the center, toward the inside of the dogleg.

## **MOUNDS**

A mound has up to four playable sides that impact stance or lie. Mounds in the fairway are rated under Topography. Mounds in the rough or around the green are rated under Recoverability and Rough and are distinctly different from a Rise/Drop adjustment. When considering mounds, the rating team must evaluate downhill, sidehill, and uphill lies on the various sides of the mounds, rough height, and how the mounds will impact scoring. Hollows are essentially inverted mounds and should be rated using the same procedure.

## **NARRATOR**

A narrator is a representative of the club who is knowledgeable about the golf course, such as the golf professional, superintendent, club champion, or Handicap Chairperson, who accompanies raters to assist them in the rating process.

## **NEAR**

An obstacle or condition is considered near a landing zone or green if it is within 20 yards in any direction of the outside perimeter of the landing zone or edge of the green.

## **OBSTACLE FACTORS**

Obstacle factors are features of a course that affect its playing difficulty.

## **OBSTACLE SQUEEZE**

Obstacle squeeze occurs when the same obstacle is present on both sides of a landing zone and a player cannot play away from either side. Obstacle squeeze can occur only in fairway landing zones (and not around the green). Rating values in tables assume the existence of some obstacle squeeze. Upward adjustment of those table values is warranted when obstacle squeeze consists of water hazards, out of bounds/extreme rough, trees, or desert that are situated on both sides of a landing zone within 20 yards of the center of that landing zone or bunkers within 15 yards. Trees along both sides of the line of play can also generate obstacle squeeze (see definitions of Chute and Line of Play).

## **OBSTACLE STROKE VALUE**

Obstacle stroke value is determined for scratch and bogey golfers by totaling the ratings for each obstacle factor, multiplying these totals by relative weighting factors, adding the resulting figures, and applying that sum to a stroke conversion formula. The Scratch and Bogey Obstacle Stroke Values are added to the Scratch and Bogey Yardage Ratings, respectively, to obtain the USGA Course Rating and Bogey Rating.

## **RATING TEAM**

A rating team is a group of at least three trained and experienced raters. Team members must have been trained in course rating procedures, certified and appointed by an authorized golf association to rate courses in accordance with USGA procedures.

## **SCRATCH GOLFER**

Defined and described in Section 4.

## **SIGNIFICANT**

Obstacles are considered to be “significant” if they have been rated at or above average (i.e., rated 4 or greater). Obstacles come “significantly into play” if they lie within the Accuracy Table dimensions of the shot being hit to their location (see Section 4).

## **SLOPE RATING**

In “The USGA Handicap System,” Slope Rating is defined as the USGA’s mark that indicates the measurement of the relative difficulty of a course for players who are not scratch golfers compared to the USGA Course Rating (i.e., compared to the difficulty of a course for scratch golfers). Slope Rating is computed from the difference between the Bogey Rating and the USGA Course Rating (see Section 13 for formula). The lowest Slope Rating is 55 and the highest is 155. A golf course of standard relative playing difficulty has a Slope Rating of 113.

## **STIMPMETER**

A Stimpmeter is a device that measures the speed of greens. The Stimpmeter is a three-foot long, slotted bar used to roll a golf ball onto the green at a constant, reproducible initial velocity. The USGA Green Section makes these instruments available to golf course superintendents, club officials, and authorized golf associations.

## **TIER**

A tier is a plateau. To be tiered, a green must have a minimum of two definite plateaus of surface area, separated by a two-foot or greater elevation difference. The elevation change area must include at least 50 percent of either the width or depth of the green. Two plateaus with one “ramp” equates to two tiers. Three plateaus with two “ramps” equates to three tiers. A ball will not normally remain at rest on the ramp from one tier to another.

## **TEAM LEADER**

An experienced member of each rating team must be designated by the Chairperson of the authorized golf association’s Course Rating Review Committee as the team leader. The team leader must have attended a course rating seminar conducted by the USGA.

## **TRANSITION ZONE**

Defined and described in Section 4.

## **TWEENER**

A “tweener” is a value that falls between two table values. For example, if the table provides rating values of 4 and 6, but not 5, the rater may assign a rating of 5 if the obstacle is more significant than a 4, but less significant than a 6.

## **USGA COURSE RATING**

In “The USGA Handicap System,” USGA Course Rating is defined as the USGA’s mark that indicates the evaluation of the playing difficulty of a course for scratch golfers under normal course and weather conditions. It is expressed as strokes taken to one decimal place, and is based on yardage and other obstacles to the extent that they affect the scoring difficulty of the scratch golfer. A USGA Course Rating is equal to the average of the better half of a scratch golfer’s scores under normal conditions.

## **YARDAGE RATING**

Yardage Rating is the evaluation of the playing difficulty of a course based only on yardage. It is computed by applying the effective playing length to the USGA Yardage Rating formula (see Section 13 for formula).

## SECTION 4 — THE SCRATCH AND BOGEY GOLFER

### 1. DEFINITIONS

#### a. Scratch Golfer — Men

A “scratch golfer” is a player who can play to a Course Handicap of zero on any and all rated golf courses. A male scratch golfer, for rating purposes, can hit tee shots an average of 250 yards and can reach a 470-yard hole in two shots at sea level.

#### b. Scratch Golfer — Women

A “scratch golfer” is a player who can play to a Course Handicap of zero on any and all rated golf courses. A female scratch golfer, for rating purposes, can hit tee shots an average of 210 yards and can reach a 400-yard hole in two shots at sea level.

#### c. Bogey Golfer — Men

A male bogey golfer is a player who has a Course Handicap of approximately 20 on a course of standard difficulty. He can hit tee shots an average of 200 yards and can reach a 370-yard hole in two shots at sea level.

#### d. Bogey Golfer — Women

A female bogey golfer is a player who has a Course Handicap of approximately 24 on a course of standard difficulty. She can hit tee shots an average of 150 yards and can reach a 280-yard hole in two shots.

The following three tables detail shot lengths, Transition Zones, and accuracy patterns for men and women scratch and bogey golfers.

### 2. SHOT LENGTH

The following table shows the average lengths of shots played by men and women scratch and bogey golfers, assuming a level landing area at sea level with average roll conditions. Uphill or downhill landing areas can affect roll, thereby increasing or decreasing overall shot lengths.

SHOT LENGTH TABLE – Men and [Women] (All Distances in Yards)					
Length of Shot		Scratch Golfer		Bogey Golfer	
		Men	[Women]	Men	[Women]
Tee Shot	Carry	230	[190]	180	[130]
	Roll	20	[20]	20	[20]
	<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>[210]</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>[150]</b>
<i>Distance Covered After 1 Shot</i>		<i>250</i>	<i>[210]</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>[150]</i>
2nd Shot	Carry	200	[170]	150	[110]
	Roll	20	[20]	20	[20]
	<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>[190]</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>[130]</b>
<i>Distance Covered After 2 Shots</i>		<i>470</i>	<i>[400]</i>	<i>370</i>	<i>[280]</i>
3rd Shot	Carry	200	[170]	150	[110]
	Roll	20	[20]	20	[20]
	<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>[190]</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>[130]</b>
<i>Distance Covered After 3 Shots</i>		<i>690</i>	<i>[590]</i>	<i>540</i>	<i>[410]</i>



**Note:** In course rating, assume that scratch and bogey golfers generally hit **straight** shots. It may be true that most bogey golfers are right-handed and tend to slice the ball off to the right of a target, or that they work the ball from left to right to the target. However, to rate obstacles higher because all the trees are on the left and all the other trouble is on the right would be inappropriate. This is *not* a right-handed rating procedure.

Also, it is understood that the scratch golfer utilizes course management in playing the golf course and can intentionally curve a shot to the left or right as necessary to position himself [herself] better for the next shot. However, for course rating purposes, assume the scratch and bogey golfers hit straight shots.

### 3. TRANSITION ZONE

On a hole where a long shot can barely reach the center of the green, the Green Target value is high (from 4 to 10, depending on green size). When a long shot cannot reach the center of the green and a short pitch shot remains, the Green Target value is low (normally 2). When the hole length falls between these two extremes, rather than forcing a rating team to choose one or the other Green Target value, an intermediate value between the long and short Green Target ratings is determined, using the “Transition Zone” concept.

A Transition Zone is the area just beyond the average distance a scratch or bogey golfer can expect to hit with consistency. On the tee shot, it is 10 yards deep; on two or more shots, it is 20 yards deep.

Following is a table showing the various Transition Zones for men and women:

TRANSITION ZONE TABLE – Men and [Women]*				
Number of Strokes	Distance from Tee (in Yards)			
	Scratch Golfer		Bogey Golfer	
	Men	[Women]	Men	[Women]
Tee Shot	251-260	[211-220]	201-210	[151-160]
2nd Shot	471-490	[401-420]	371-390	[281-300]
3rd Shot	691-710	[591-610]	541-560	[411-430]

\* When the altitude is 2,000 feet or higher, use table on pages 42-43.

When the center of a green lies within this zone, the golfer has about a fifty percent chance of reaching the center of the green, provided there are no punitive obstacles in front of the green. Accordingly, it would be inaccurate to base the Green Target rating on a shot of less than 20 yards. The recommendation for rating a hole that falls into the Transition Zone is to apply the average of the long shot Green Target rating and the short shot Green Target rating. This value is provided at the bottom of the Green Target Rating Table.

When the rating team determines that significantly more (or less) than half the time the center of the green can be reached, it is appropriate to adjust the 50/50 average Green Target value plus or minus one (higher when the long shot reaches the green well over half the time; lower when it does not). In other words, when the center of the green is near the front of the Transition Zone, rounding up or adding one to the 50/50 average Green Target rating value is appropriate. When the center of the green is near the back of the Transition Zone, rounding down or subtracting one from the 50/50 average Green Target rating value is appropriate.

An alternate approach is to use a weighted average of the long and short Green Target rating values. For example, if it is determined that two-thirds of the time the center of the green can be reached with the long shot, two high values and one low value can be summed, then divided by three, to determine a weighted average Green Target. If the long shot Green Target value is 6 and the short shot Green Target value is 2, rather than 4  $(=(6+2)/2)$ , a weighted value of 5  $(=(6+6+2)/3)$ , rounded) should be

used. A similar process should be used for rating Topography, Fairway, Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough, Water Hazards, Trees, and Desert, as follows:

- (1) Rate the obstacle assuming the hole is played with a long shot just to short of the green, followed by a short approach to the center of the green.
- (2) Rate the obstacle assuming the hole is played with a long approach shot to the center of the green.
- (3) Determine the average of rating (1) and rating (2) (or weighted average, if appropriate) to get the Transition Zone rating for the obstacle.

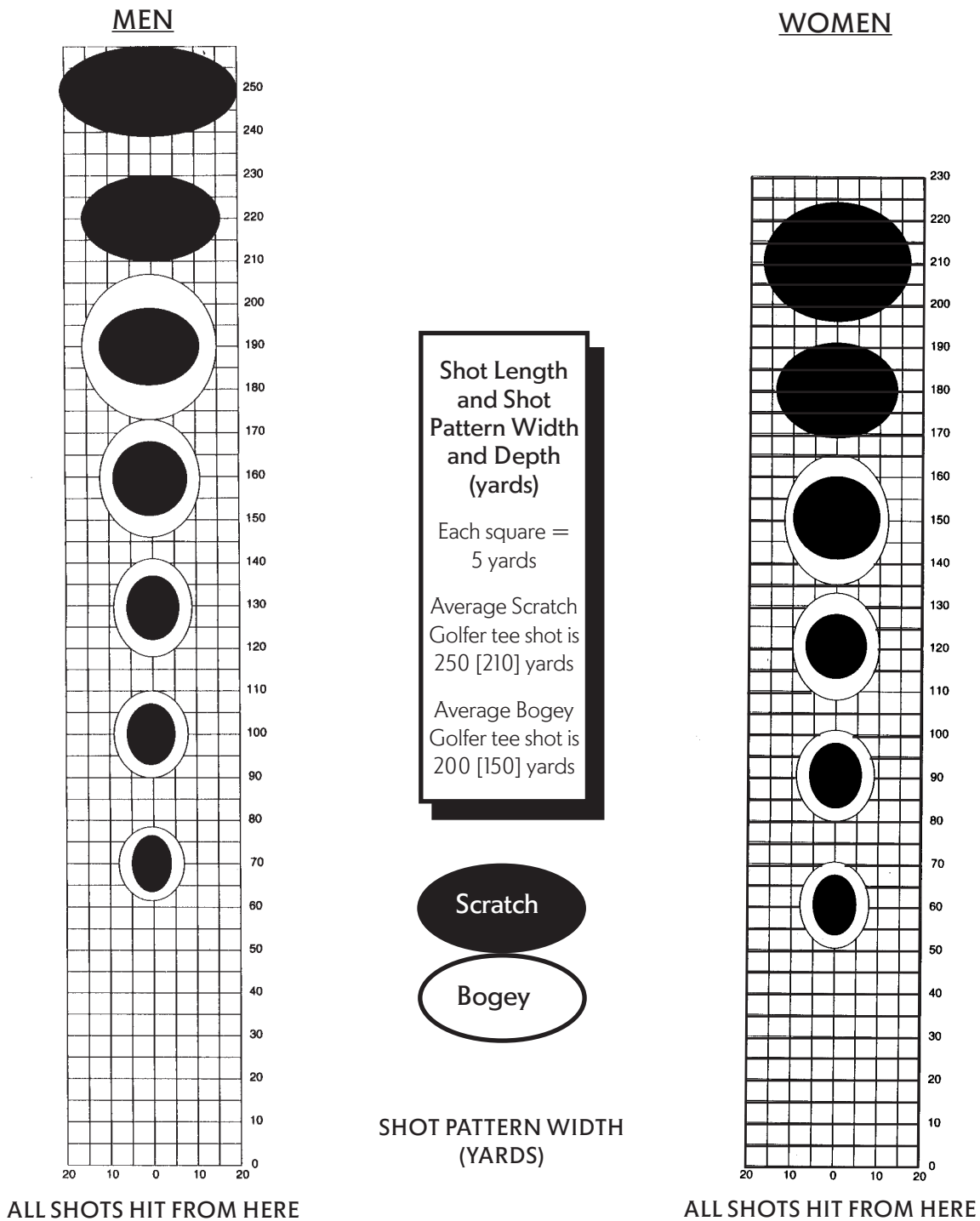
Because Recoverability and Rough and Bunker ratings depend on the Green Target rating, apply the averaged Green Target rating to the R&R Rating Table or the Greenside Bunker Rating Table.

There are some conditions under which the Transition Zone is not used even though the hole length falls within Transition Zone yardages. If the team consensus is that the player **cannot** reach the center of the green because of an effective length factor (roll, elevation, dogleg/forced lay up, and prevailing wind) or any obstacle, then a Transition Zone rating **should not** be applied. Similarly, if the team consensus is that the player **can** reach the center of the green half of the time even though the hole length falls outside the Transition Zone, then the Transition Zone concept **should** be applied. (See *Decisions 4-3/1 and 4-3/2*.)

#### 4. ACCURACY PATTERN

The Accuracy Table below prescribes the dimensions of the area into which a scratch or bogey golfer is expected to hit shots of various lengths 67 percent of the time. It is used to assist in evaluating the effect of obstacles around the target (e.g., if the scratch golfer has a 160-yard [130-yard] approach shot, an obstacle within 8½ yards of the center of the green is considered a significant factor).

ACCURACY TABLE – Men and [Women] (Dimensions of Expected Landing Area 2/3 of the Time – in Yards)								
Length of Shot	Scratch Golfer				Bogey Golfer			
	Men		[Women]		Men		[Women]	
	Width	Depth	Width	Depth	Width	Depth	Width	Depth
40	—	—	[9]	[13]	—	—	[14]	[17]
50	—	—	[10]	[14]	—	—	[15]	[18]
60	—	—	[11]	[14]	—	—	[16]	[19]
70	9	13	[11]	[14]	14	17	[16]	[20]
80	10	14	[12]	[15]	15	18	[17]	[21]
90	11	14	[12]	[15]	16	19	[17]	[22]
100	11	14	[13]	[15]	16	20	[18]	[23]
110	12	15	[14]	[16]	17	21	[19]	[24]
120	12	15	[15]	[16]	17	22	[20]	[25]
130	13	15	[17]	[17]	18	23	[21]	[27]
140	14	16	[18]	[17]	19	24	[22]	[28]
150	15	16	[20]	[18]	20	25	[24]	[30]
160	17	17	[23]	[19]	22	27	—	—
170	18	17	[26]	[20]	24	28	—	—
180	20	18	[28]	[22]	26	30	—	—
190	23	18	[30]	[24]	29	34	—	—
200	26	19	[32]	[26]	33	37	—	—
210	29	19	[34]	[28]	—	—	—	—
220	32	20	—	—	—	—	—	—
230	35	20	—	—	—	—	—	—
240	38	20	—	—	—	—	—	—
250	41	21	—	—	—	—	—	—



### 5. OBSTACLES “DO NOT EXIST”

Obstacle values normally decrease as their distance from the target increases. If an obstacle is more than 60 [50] yards to the left and right of the line of play and more than 60 [50] yards to the left, right, and beyond the center of the green, generally it should not be considered a factor for either the scratch or the bogey golfer (i.e., it “does not exist” on the hole and **should be rated zero**). (See *Decision 4-5/1.*)

### 6. BOGEY GOLFER CANNOT PLAY THE HOLE

Sometimes a hole has an obstacle that the bogey golfer cannot carry or play from, such as a lake, canyon, or expanse of desert off the tee. This situation may also occur in a scenario that requires a shot longer than the bogey golfer, as defined, is able to hit in the air (e.g., a long carry from a landing zone to a green fronted by water). When there is no bail-out area adjacent to such an obstacle, the bogey golfer “cannot play” the hole under the Rules of Golf.

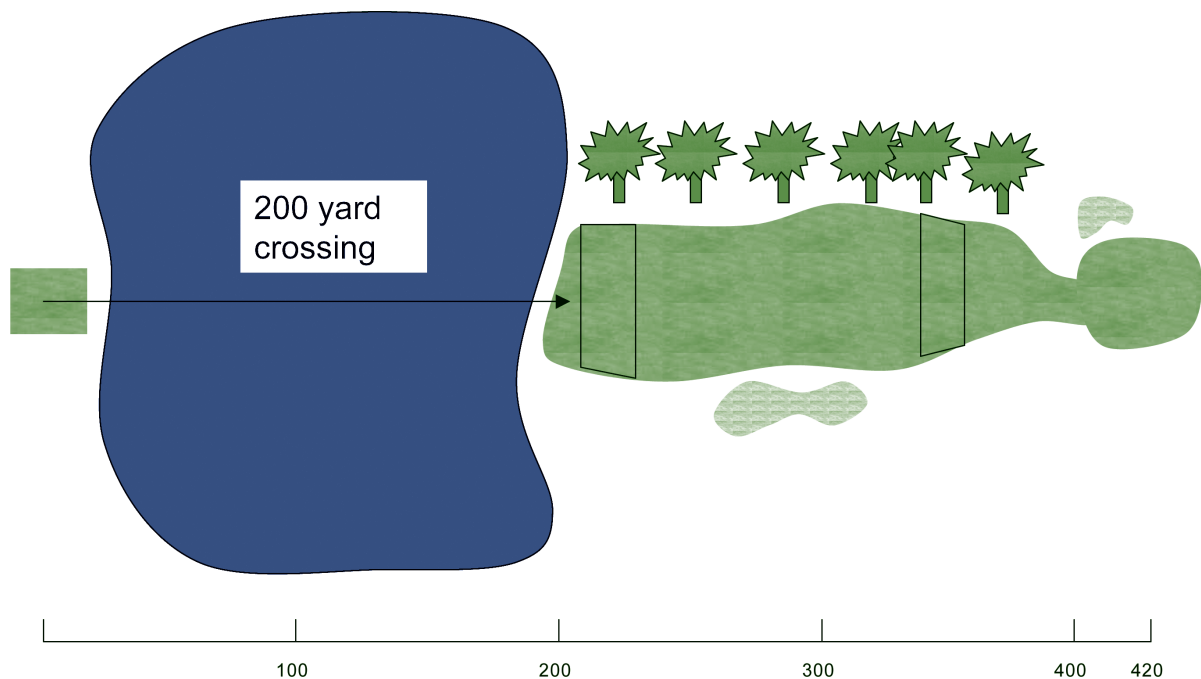
Most frequently this situation arises in rating back tees from which a typical bogey golfer will never play. Nonetheless, a Bogey Rating for the hole is needed so that an appropriate Slope Rating can be determined for those golfers, between scratch and bogey, who can play the hole.

To get a bogey rating for this hole that would allow the rater to determine an appropriate Slope Rating, evaluate obstacles as if the bogey golfer had been able to carry the obstacle safely (usually by 10 yards).

Rate all the lateral obstacles from the safe landing area as if the area were the actual landing zone. For the obstacle(s) that must be carried, it is not necessarily appropriate to assign a value of 10. Instead, use the highest available table value (See Multiple Tees on page 34 and apply all applicable adjustments).

If the safe landing area is fairway, then measure the width of the fairway at this point and use this table value. If the safe landing area is not fairway, use the scratch Fairway table value and add one unit. Apply all applicable adjustments that relate to this area.

To determine the next bogey landing zone on a three-shot hole, assume that the original carry obstacle does not exist and rate from the mathematical landing zone. For example, on a 420-yard hole for men, the second bogey landing zone is 50 yards from the center of the green. The bogey golfer’s second shot ordinarily ends up 370 yards from the tee. When evaluating obstacles near this landing zone use the next to bottom row (full second shot length) as a guide to enter the tables (i.e., assume a full second shot to the landing zone 50 yards from the center of the green).



This procedure only applies if there is no realistic place from which the bogey golfer can play. If there is a bail-out area, rate the hole as if the bogey golfer hits to this area. A tee pad short of the trouble is not a realistic bail-out area.

On a par-3 hole where the bogey golfer cannot reach the green, and there is no bail-out area, use the scratch Green Target value and add two.

## SECTION 5 — RATING GOLF COURSES

### 1. AUTHORIZED GOLF ASSOCIATIONS TO RATE COURSES

All courses must be rated in accordance with USGA approved procedures by a course rating team representing an authorized golf association. Authorized golf associations ensure that each member golf club is issued a USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating for all tees that are reasonably expected to be played by either men or women. Additionally, golf associations may be authorized upon request by the USGA to issue a USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating to a golf club within its geographic jurisdiction that is not a member of any golf association. If a golf club is a member of two or more golf associations that cover the same territory, a joint rating team is suggested.

A club may not rate its own course. If a club is unable to obtain a rating from an authorized golf association, the USGA Handicap Department should be contacted. A golf club cannot use the USGA Handicap System until it has been issued a USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating by an authorized golf association. For USGA handicap purposes, a club must accept and use the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating that the association has assigned. If a club disagrees with its ratings, it may request that the golf association review the ratings.

### 2. AUTHORIZED GOLF ASSOCIATIONS TO RE-RATE COURSES

An authorized golf association must periodically review ratings of courses and revise them as necessary. Newly constructed courses change rapidly in the first few years and must be re-rated within five years of the initial Effective Rating Date. Authorized golf associations must subsequently re-rate member and non-member golf clubs at a minimum of every 10 years thereafter. Any USGA Course Rating, Bogey Rating, and Slope Rating is no longer valid if it is more than five years old from the initial Effective Rating Date or more than 10 years old from any subsequent Effective Rating Date. The USGA may grant an extension only in exceptional cases.

### 3. AUTHORIZED GOLF ASSOCIATION COURSE RATING PROGRAM

An experienced person should be in charge of the course rating program and be the Chairperson of the Course Rating Review Committee. That person should enlist course rating volunteers and establish the rating teams. An experienced member of each rating team must be designated by the Chairperson as the team leader. The team leader must have attended a course rating seminar conducted by the USGA. Each seminar includes an in-depth review of “The USGA Course Rating System” and a rating exercise that provides raters with the opportunity to determine obstacle values while they are under supervision.

It is recommended that authorized golf associations establish orientation/training programs for those individuals who wish to become raters. When possible, this training should include an on-course rating exercise, and perhaps even a written examination. Annual refresher training and review sessions for experienced raters are also very helpful to ensure rating accuracy and consistency.

Once the rating teams have been formed and trained, the Chairperson should develop a schedule for rating the various courses. It is recommended that some courses of average difficulty be rated first to provide necessary experience. When all rating teams have rated about 10 courses, a calibration seminar, at which each rating team rates the same course, should be conducted, and obstacle ratings should be compared. If one rating team deviates sharply from the others, the Chairperson should correct the problem.

If rating teams are assigned to specific geographical areas, it is important to have interaction between raters in different areas in order to maintain consistent ratings.

## 4. COMPOSITION OF A COURSE RATING TEAM

A course rating team should be composed of at least three trained and experienced individuals. A team may be assisted by a club representative, preferably a player with a low Handicap Index (or the club professional), who can inform the team of any unusual course conditions, including wind. Team members should have a practical knowledge of both a scratch golfer and a bogey golfer. Generally, the best course raters are avid golfers who are or have been low handicap players. High handicap golfers often find it difficult to evaluate the ability of the scratch golfer. It is helpful, however, to have one bogey golfer on the rating team, because the low handicap player often overestimates the ability of the bogey golfer. Rating teams should be composed of those who are capable of fully grasping the USGA Course Rating System and can make themselves available for rating duties.

## 5. MODIFICATION OF COURSES

### a. Temporary Changes

When temporary tees and/or greens are used, the club must notify the authorized golf association. The authorized golf association will decide whether or not scores made under those conditions are to be accepted for handicap purposes, and whether the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating should be modified temporarily. The club has a responsibility to notify its members that when a hole is not played due to construction, the score for that hole must be par plus any handicap strokes the player is entitled to on that hole.

When a course is using a temporary green (that is not an alternate permanent green), the club should be advised to inform the players to post par plus any handicap strokes the player is entitled to receive on that hole. The par plus method should also be used when a course rotates the holes being renovated so that the course changes many times over the length of the renovation.

If temporary tees are being used or an alternate permanent green is being used, the authorized golf association should recommend the following:

- If the overall change in yardage is minimal (less than 100 yards) it may be possible to adjust tees on holes not being modified to keep the approximate overall yardage the same. This will not require a temporary rating to be issued.
- If the modification will last two months or less, the authorized golf association should use Section 5-2g of “The USGA Handicap System” to calculate a temporary USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating.
- If the modification will last more than two months, the authorized golf association should change the yardages used in the calculation of the USGA Course Rating and Bogey Rating while still using the obstacle rating values previously determined by the rating team to calculate a temporary USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating.

### b. Permanent Changes

The club must notify the authorized golf association when permanent changes are made to the course. Permanent changes to the course require the authorized golf association to review the current USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating and to determine whether a re-rating is necessary.

## SECTION 6 — MEASURING GOLF COURSES

### 1. GENERAL

Because yardage is the predominant factor in determining ratings, accurate measurement of each hole is essential. Scorecard yardage is not acceptable as a sole source of measurement and must be verified. Measurements are made to determine horizontal distance from the teeing ground to the center of the green along the intended line of play. This means that line of sight uphill or downhill measurements must be corrected to horizontal distances. For example, on a downhill hole the recorded distance is that from the teeing ground to a point in the air above the center of the green, that point being level with the tee.

If two or more sets of tees are in common use, separate measurements and yardage markers must be established. The movable tee markers used to designate the teeing ground (see “The Rules of Golf,” Definitions) need to be consistent in color or design for each hole and distinguishable from other tee markers. The actual color, design, or other method for identifying a particular set of tee markers is up to the Committee in charge of the course in consultation with the Handicap Committee. Course Handicap Tables, scorecards, and signage where scores are posted should use the same terminology in referring to the various tees. This material should include the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating for each set of tees to make it easy for players to convert a Handicap Index to a Course Handicap before play and then to post a score for handicap purposes, complete with Ratings, after play.

### 2. APPROVED METHODS OF MEASURING GOLF COURSES

#### a. Use of Electronic Equipment

With just a few hours of training, a person can learn how to measure a course with an approved electronic measuring device (EMD). An 18-hole course with three sets of tees can be measured in about three hours. The EMD must be accurate to within 6 inches up to 250 yards when used for hole measurements.

#### b. Use of the Global Positioning System

This method can be used to measure golf courses if the Global Positioning System (GPS) is accurate to within 6 inches up to 250 yards.

### 3. MEASURING

#### a. Starting Point: Permanent Markers

Accurate permanent marker placement is imperative in the rating process. **Permanent markers are to reflect an average placement of the movable tee markers over time.** Incorrectly placed markers will make it difficult for the golf course staff to keep the effective course difficulty constant and in line with the ratings issued when setting up the course each day.

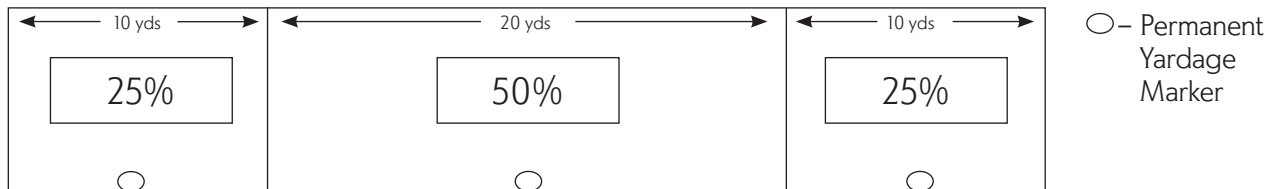
Permanent marker placement is more likely to have a greater impact on ratings than green speed, rough height, and other course maintenance practices. Courses should pay attention to this issue and are encouraged to consult the authorized golf associations in the area for assistance in determining accurate placement.

When a single tee pad is designated for one set of tees, placement of the permanent marker at the middle of the tee pad is appropriate. This maximizes the ability to use the entire tee pad and reflects an average of movable marker placement over time.

When more than one set of tee markers uses a single tee pad, consider the percentage of a course’s existing or anticipated play from each set of tees when determining permanent marker placement. Allocate the percentage of play for each tee and place each permanent marker at the mid-point of



each of the allocated areas. For example, a 40-yard teeing area is shared by three sets of tees. The club determines that 25 percent of play will be from the forward tees, 50 percent from the middle tees, and 25 percent from the back tees. Allocation would then have the first 10 yards of the teeing area dedicated to the forward tees, the middle 20 yards to the middle tees, and the final 10 yards to the back tee. The permanent marker should be at the mid-point of each of these three areas (*The following diagram depicts this example*).



The USGA recommends using percentages and mid-points to determine marker placement and stresses that at no time should a permanent marker be less than two yards from the front of a teeing area or less than four yards from the back of a teeing area.

On a nine hole course, if separate tees or tee markers are used for each nine of an 18-hole round, separate measurements and permanent markers must be established for each nine. The permanent markers (and their respective tee markers) for each nine should be uniquely identifiable.

### b. How to measure

Each hole must be measured horizontally (air line) to the nearest yard by surveying instruments, an EMD, or GPS from the permanent marker for every tee to the center of the green. Yardages on the scorecard should accurately reflect this measurement. Only trained individuals may perform course measurement, subject to review by the authorized golf association that issues the Ratings to the golf club. Yardages on the scorecard should accurately reflect these measurements. It is very helpful to have course staff available to answer any questions on course setup.

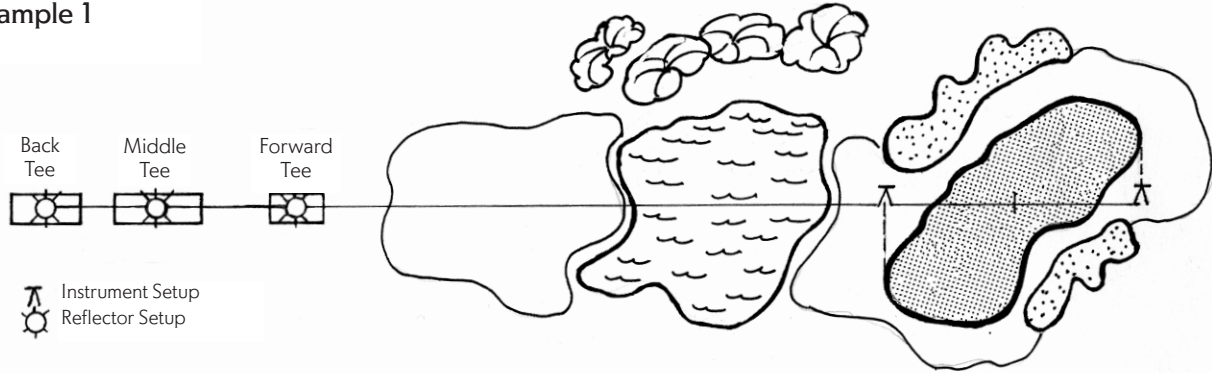
A hole with a dogleg must be measured on a straight line from each permanent marker to the center of the fairway at the pivot point. If the pivot point is not easily discernable, select a pivot point that is approximately 250 [210] yards from the most commonly played tee for each gender. The measurement must continue from that point on a straight line to the center of the green or the next pivot point, if applicable. If a dogleg causes a hole to play effectively shorter or longer for a scratch or bogey golfer, the rating team should make the appropriate adjustment under Dogleg/Forced Lay up in the Effective Playing Length Factors.

### c. Par-3 Hole or Straight Par 4/5

In measuring a par-3 hole (*see Example 1*), the EMD is set up at the back center of the green and readings are taken to the reflector at each permanent marker. The EMD is then moved to the front center of the green, and readings to each marker are taken. The two readings to each marker are then averaged to determine the distance from each marker to the center of the green. An alternative is to set the EMD at the front center of the green and measure to all markers, and measure to the back center of the green, then add one-half the green depth to each tee reading. A straight par-4/5 hole is measured using the same procedure, but may require an additional measurement point along the center line of the hole.

Note that the measuring device is set up on a center line perpendicular to the front and back edges of the green.

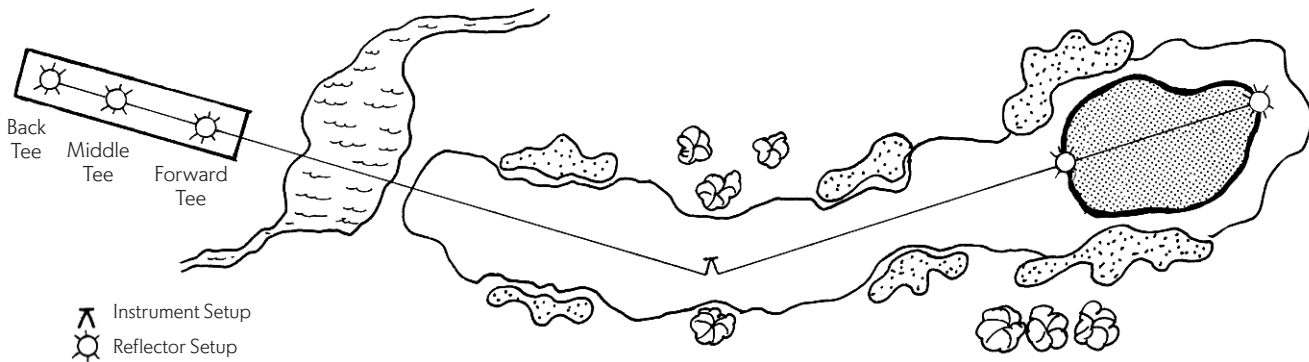
**Example 1**

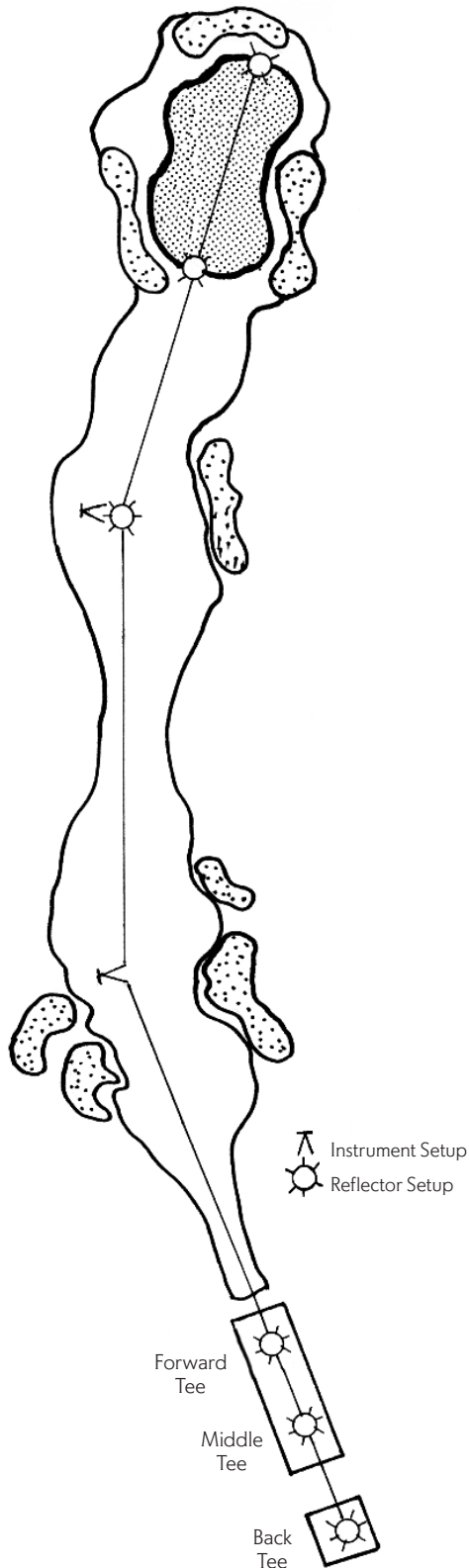


**d. Par-4 Hole**

On a par-4 hole (See Example 2, below), the EMD generally should be set up in the fairway at the pivot point. A measurement should be taken from the setup point to each of the permanent markers. Then measurements should be taken to the front and back edges of the green; these measurements should be averaged to determine the distance from the setup point to the center of the green. The distance from the setup point to the markers should then be added to the distance from the setup point to the center of the green to determine the length of the hole from each tee.

**Example 2**



**Example 3****e. Par-5 Hole**

When measuring a par-5 hole (see *Example 3, left*), two setups are usually required. The first setup should be at the first pivot point, and the second setup should be at the second pivot point, if applicable.

Readings should be taken from the first setup point to the permanent markers and to the setup point of the second pivot point. The instrument should then be moved to the setup point at the second pivot point from which readings to the front and back edges of the green should be taken and then averaged. To determine the length of the hole, add the distances from (1) each marker to the first setup point, (2) the first setup point to the second setup point, and (3) the second setup point to the center of the green.

**4. MEASUREMENTS FOR COURSE RATERS**

In addition to measuring hole lengths from all tees, the measuring team can greatly assist the course raters who will follow by determining:

- Width and depth of each putting green;
- Widths of landing zones for scratch and bogey golfers for each hole; and
- Distances required to carry obstacles off the tee or from the various landing zones.

## SECTION 7 — FORMS

### 1. RATING COURSES 3,000 YARDS OR LONGER

Three forms are used in rating courses 3,000 yards or longer. Samples are contained in Appendix A.

a. **USGA Course Rating Form 1**, entitled “Effective Playing Length and Obstacle Evaluation,” is a two-sided form used on the golf course to record information useful to the rating procedure (fairway widths, green dimensions, carry distances, etc.), the ratings for each obstacle, and the effective length corrections. The obstacle ratings and length corrections for each hole are entered in the appropriate boxes (holes 1-9 are on the front side of the form; holes 10-18 are on the back). The 10 obstacles are rated on a scale of 0 to 10. Scratch obstacle ratings are recorded for each hole in the left columns, and bogey ratings are recorded in the right (bold outlined) columns.

For example, if the scratch rating for an obstacle is 5 and the bogey rating is 7, the entry is written as:

5	<b>7</b>
---	----------

or, if the scratch lay up is 30 yards and the bogey golfer does not lay up, the entry is written as:

30	<b>0</b>
----	----------

Altitude of 2,000 feet or more should be recorded in the box provided in the lower left corner of the Form 1.

b. **USGA Course Rating Form 2**, entitled “Obstacle Stroke Value Calculations,” is used to convert obstacle ratings to obstacle stroke values. Obstacle rating totals from Form 1 are weighted, added, and applied to conversion formulas to yield obstacle stroke values for scratch and bogey golfers. Results are transferred to Form 3 [3W].

c. **USGA Course Rating Form 3 [3W]**, entitled “USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating Calculations,” is used to calculate the Effective Playing Lengths for scratch and bogey golfers, Yardage Ratings for scratch and bogey golfers, USGA Course Rating, Bogey Rating, and Slope Rating.

Calculations on Forms 2 and 3 [3W] for each tee can be completed with a calculator in about 15 minutes. An electronic course rating program is available to authorized golf associations from the USGA. This program calculates the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating from all tees, calculates nine-hole ratings, and runs various reports.

### 2. RATING SHORT COURSES

Three forms are also used in rating short courses (see *Section 18*). Samples are contained in Appendix A.

- a. **USGA Short Course Rating Form 1.**
- b. **USGA Short Course Rating Form 2.**
- c. **USGA Short Course Rating Form 3 [3W].**

### 3. PACE RATING

**USGA Pace Rating Form PR1**, entitled “Data Form for USGA Pace Rating Procedure,” is used in conjunction with the USGA Pace Rating procedure as outlined in Section 19.

# SECTION 8 — EVALUATION OF OBSTACLES AND CORRECTIONS TO EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH

## 1. GENERAL

The Yardage Rating is based on the effective playing length of the course, which may be substantially different from its measured length. Consideration is given to five effective playing length correction factors, outlined in Section 11.

Modification of the Yardage Rating is based on the extent to which 10 obstacle factors affect scoring ability of the scratch and bogey golfer. On each hole, each obstacle factor is evaluated on a scale of 0 to 10, following the guidelines in Section 12.

## 2. OBSTACLE RATING SUMMARY TABLE

The two factors to be considered in evaluating an obstacle are:

- The likelihood of the obstacle coming into play; and
- The difficulty of recovering from the obstacle.

Each factor should be given equal weight.

The obstacle rating scale can be summarized as follows:

OBSTACLE RATING SUMMARY TABLE	
Rating	Evaluation
0	Obstacle does not exist.
1	Obstacle exists but is generally out of play.
2	Obstacle is much less significant than average.
3	Obstacle is less significant than average.
4	Obstacle is of average significance.
5	Obstacle is more significant than average.
6	Obstacle is much more significant than average.
7 to 10	Obstacle is of extreme significance.

For example, if a par-4 hole with formidable bunkers in the landing zone requires a long approach shot to a small green surrounded by deep bunkers, the Bunkers rating value should be in the 7 to 10 range.

## 3. RATINGS

Obstacles must be evaluated separately for both the scratch and the bogey golfer on the basis of their coming into play.

- For Roll and each of the 10 obstacle factors, begin by entering the rating table for the scratch golfer, then re-enter the table for the bogey golfer.
- Adjust the rating table values up or down for both the scratch and bogey golfers as prescribed in the adjustments section.
- Consider further adjustments for par-3 and par-5 holes, if appropriate.
- When a bogey golfer cannot reach a par-4 hole in two shots, rate the hole as a par-5 (three-shot) hole for the bogey golfer.

- When a bogey golfer cannot reach a par-3 hole in one shot, rate the hole as a par-4 (two-shot) hole, except there is no Fairway rating value. Use the par-3 obstacle weighting.

Examples of most rating values have been provided in the rating tables in Section 11 and Section 12; however, any number from 0 to 10 may be used. A “tweener” value, as defined in Section 3 may be used if appropriate.

Each adjustment has been accompanied by an alphabetical or numerical identifier. These identifiers should be useful to raters in scanning the page of “The USGA Course Rating System Guide” to assure all adjustments are considered, in discussing how they arrived at their final obstacle ratings (e.g., “table value plus adjustments L, M, and R”), and they may even be recorded on Form 1 for the record. A table listing all the adjustment “alpha-numeric codes” is found in Section 8-6.

Some adjustments are accompanied by an asterisk, indicating that they apply to a specific shot and not to the overall rating of the hole. Shot-specific adjustments are listed ahead of generalized adjustments and are applied in that order (asterisked adjustments first, followed by those without asterisks). Under Recoverability & Rough and Bunkers only, shot specific adjustments are cumulative (e.g., two lay ups on a hole would result in two –1 adjustments, or a total adjustment of –2 for R&R).

Obstacle ratings of 3, 4, and 5 would be expected about half of the time on an average golf course.

- A rating of 10 would normally be expected on less than one percent of the holes.
- A rating of zero should be assigned when the obstacle “does not exist” on the hole (i.e., when it is more than 60 [50] yards left and right of the line of play and more than 60 [50] yards left, right, and beyond the center of the green.)

Even the easiest golf course has some obstacle values. In fact, some obstacles cannot be rated zero. They are:

- Fairway and Recoverability & Rough (minimum 1);
- Green Target (minimum 2); and
- Green Surface (minimum 3).

The obstacle factors with minimum values, such as Fairway, are rated 4 under average conditions. Other obstacle factors without minimum values, such as Topography and Bunkers, are rated 4 only when they present a significant problem.

Obstacles must be rated under the assumption that play is in accordance with the Rules of Golf. (See *Decision 8-3/1*.)

- When the edge of trees or extreme rough is marked with red stakes to speed up play even though there is no lateral water hazard present, do not rate these areas as Water Hazards (they are Trees, R&R, and/or Extreme Rough).
- When play is not permitted from an environmentally sensitive area, as defined in Appendix I in “The Rules of Golf:”
  - If free relief is given, consider the area to be ground under repair and rate from the various drop areas; or,
  - If there is a one-stroke penalty for relief from the area, rate the area as if it were a water hazard or lateral water hazard; or,
  - If there is a stroke and distance penalty, rate the area as Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough.

The obstacle evaluation of two courses with very different characteristics can lead to the same result. For example, a course which is flat and has no water hazards, but has narrow fairways and deep rough, might have an obstacle evaluation of one stroke over the Yardage Rating. Another course, which has wide fairways and no rough, but has many water hazards and topography that presents problems, might have the same overall obstacle evaluation.

#### 4. SYMBOLS USED IN RATING TABLES

Some adjustments are provided in table format to cut down on verbiage and streamline the rating process. In all tables, the following symbols are used to save space:

SYMBOLS USED IN RATING TABLES		
Symbol	Meaning	Example
"	Inches	6" is read as "six inches."
'	Feet	3' is read as "three feet."
<	Less Than	< ¼ is read as "less than one quarter."
>	Greater Than	> 30 is read as "greater than 30."
{ }	Warm Season Grass Height	> 6" {> 4"} is read as "greater than six inches cool season grass, or greater than four inches warm season grass."
[ ]	Women's Value	5 [6] is read as "five for men; six for women."

When two or more adjacent columns have "Greater Than" symbols, the table values are not cumulative (e.g., > 5' next to > 10' next to > 20' means "greater than 5 feet, up to and including 10 feet" in the left-hand column, "greater than 10 feet, up to and including 20 feet" in the middle column, and "greater than 20 feet" in the right-hand column).

#### 5. BOGEY RATINGS

Bogey values are recorded as absolute values. For example, a scratch rating of 4 and a bogey rating of 5 are recorded as:

4	5
---	---

Bogey rating values may be different from scratch rating values for many reasons. Besides driving the ball much shorter (which leads to different landing zones for scratch and bogey golfers), the bogey golfer is much less successful than the scratch golfer at hitting fairways and greens. Around the green the bogey golfer is not nearly as effective in getting up and down from the rough or bunkers. The bogey golfer hits the ball into trouble more often and cannot recover as well as the scratch golfer can. Rating tables take into account many of these factors. Most tables are entered for the scratch golfer from the left and for the bogey golfer from the right. Entry from the right is at shorter shot lengths and at smaller Green Target ratings than entry on the same line from the left, so bogey ratings for similar entry criteria are higher than for scratch. In addition, the System automatically compensates for the difference in ability in two other ways:

- The obstacles are weighted differently for the scratch and for the bogey golfer (e.g., Trees are weighted at 9 percent for the scratch golfer and 14 percent for the bogey golfer); and
- A different multiplier is used to convert obstacle ratings to a stroke value (i.e., 0.11 is used for scratch golfers and 0.26 for bogey golfers, because scratch golfers avoid and overcome obstacles more than twice as well as bogey golfers).

### 6. ADJUSTMENT ALPHABETICAL/NUMERICAL IDENTIFIER CODES

Each adjustment has been accompanied by an alphabetical or numerical identifier. These identifiers should be useful to raters in scanning the page of the Course Rating Guide to assure all adjustments are considered, in discussing how they arrived at their final obstacle ratings (e.g., “table value plus adjustments L, M, and R”), and they may even be recorded on Form 1 for the record. Following is a table listing all the adjustment “alpha-numeric codes.” Those adjustments that relate to a specific shot (e.g., tee shot, second shot, etc.) are identified by an asterisk. **All other adjustments are general in nature and are made after the shot specific adjustments are applied.**

ADJUSTMENT ALPHA-NUMERIC CODES			R	T	F	T	R	B	O	W	T	D	S	P	
			O	O	A	A	&	U	B	A	R	E	S	U	
			L	P	I	R	R	N	/	T	E	S	R	Y	
			L	O	R	G	E	K	E	E	E	E	F	C	
				W	A	T	R	E	R	R	S	R	A	H	
				Y			S					T	C	E	
Key:		X = Scratch and bogey adjustment													
		T = Scratch and bogey adjustment, in table format													
		B = Bogey adjustment only													
		B = Bogey adjustment only, in table format													
		Z = Transition Zone concept applies to obstacle													
		* Denotes shot-specific adjustment													
Code	Code Name	Description													
A	Above Average	Bogey golfer has <b>ABOVE AVERAGE</b> Desert rating value (Men only)							B						
B	Bounce*	Conditions near water, OB/extreme rough, or desert cause a ball to <b>BOUNCE</b> into or away from the obstacle							X	X		X			
C	Carry*	Player must <b>CARRY</b> rough or bunker to reach the target					B	X							
D	Depth	<b>DEPTH</b> of bunker is other than assumed <b>DEPTH</b>						T							
E	Extreme	Position or feature of obstacle makes recovery <b>EXTREMELY</b> difficult						X							
F	Firmness	Green is very <b>FIRM</b> or very soft				X									
G		(Reserved for future use)													
H		(Reserved for future use)													
I	Inconsistent*	Conditions are <b>INCONSISTENT</b> relative to the table value					X				X				
J	Jeopardy*	Player can play away from the obstacle without <b>JEOPARDY</b>							X	X	X	X			
K		(Reserved for future use)													
L	Lay up*	Player employs <b>LAY UP</b> (forced or by choice) on one or more shots			X		X								
M	Mounds*	<b>MOUNDS</b> and/or hollows are present near the fairway/green					X								
N	No	<b>NO</b> fairway bunkers are within 20 yards of landing zone(s) or on a par 3						X							
O	Obstructed*	Shot to green is <b>OBSTRUCTED</b> by trees or other obstacles			B	X					X				
P	Percentage*	Appropriate <b>PERCENTAGE</b> of the table value is used							X	X		X			
Q	Squeeze*	Obstacle <b>SQUEEZE</b> exists; player cannot play away						X	X	X	X	X			
R	Rise/DRop	<b>RISE/DROP</b> around green is other than assumed <b>RISE/DROP</b>					X								
S	Surrounded*	Green is closely <b>SURROUNDED</b> by water					X				T				
T	Tiered	If green is <b>TIERED</b>				X								B	
U	Unpleasant	<b>UNPLEASANT</b> lies or roll of putts caused by poor turf condition			X		X							X	
V	Visibility*	Green surface or flagstick is not <b>VISIBLE</b>				X									
W	Width*	Fairway <b>WIDTH</b> is adjusted by dogleg, contour, obstacles, etc.			X										
X	EXtraordinary	<b>EXTRAORDINARY</b> obstacle ratings generate high Psychological rating													T
Y	Two waYs*	Obstacle is in play two <b>WAYS</b> on a single shot							X	X		X			
Z	Zone	Transition <b>ZONE</b> concept is used		Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z		
2	2 times	Obstacle is in play <b>TWO</b> or more times	X				X	X	X	X	X	X			
3	Par 3	Bogey golfer cannot reach green of a <b>PAR-3</b> hole in one shot					B								



## 7. COMBINING AND WEIGHTING PRINCIPLES

In some situations an obstacle, because of its nature or location, can have more effect than is normally accredited to that obstacle. When these circumstances occur, that particular feature of the golf course is evaluated as that obstacle, and is subject to being rated under a second obstacle category. Following is a table listing these situations and the categories in which they are evaluated (they are also identified on the respective obstacle pages here and in the Guide):

SITUATIONS RATED UNDER TWO OBSTACLE CATEGORIES		
Situation	Rated As	Also Rated As
Extreme rough	OB/Extreme Rough	R & R
Extreme rough interfering with the swing or blocking the recovery shot	Bunkers	OB/Extreme Rough
Water hazard closely surrounds the green	Water Hazard	R & R
Trees overhanging the fairway	Trees	Fairway
A tree overhanging or in front of a green	Trees	Green Target
Prepared "waste areas"	R & R	Bunkers
Above average bogey rating for desert	Desert	OB/Extreme Rough
Lay up	Fairway	R & R
Tiered Green	Green Target	Green Surface (Bogey)

Sometimes water hazards, OB/extreme rough, or desert come into play **two different ways on a single shot** (e.g., the extreme rough must both be crossed to reach the target and avoided laterally at the target landing zone). In rating these situations, evaluate the water, OB/extreme rough, or desert both from a crossing standpoint and from a lateral standpoint, take the higher value and if both ratings are 5 or greater (table value plus adjustments), adjust upward one unit using the Two waYs (Y) adjustment.

Sometimes an obstacle, such as Topography, is **not uniform throughout the landing zone** (e.g., part of the fairway has only a minor stance problem while the rest is significantly awkward). In these situations, do not rate for the most severe condition. Instead, determine a weighted average of the varying conditions and apply that average to the rating table, or rate the various conditions and take a weighted average. For example, in rating Topography, if  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the fairway has minor stance problems with the green 10 feet uphill (rated 2) and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the fairway has significantly awkward stance problems with the green 20 feet uphill (rated 6), a rating of 3 would be appropriate ( $\frac{3}{4}$  of 2 plus  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 6 equals a rating of 3).

Sometimes the length of a forced carry depends on the direction of play. Determine the average carry length or apply the Percentage (P) adjustment to the maximum carry.

Sometimes the **severity of an obstacle** near a landing zone is **not uniform** (e.g., extreme rough or desert has areas where recovery is impossible and other areas where there is no problem recovering). In these situations, determine an average condition before applying it to the rating table or determine a weighted average of the separate rating values, or use the Percentage (P) adjustment.

## 8. OBSTACLE RATING MEASUREMENTS

### a. Pacing

Fairway widths, green dimensions, and distances from targets or edges of greens to obstacles can be measured with sufficient accuracy by pacing. Raters should calibrate their paces by stepping off known yardages (e.g., between marked sprinkler heads, from 150-yard markers to 100-yard markers, or to the

center of the green, etc.). The common tendency is to step less than 36 inches and thus to overestimate actual yardages. Time can be saved in pacing to water, out of bounds, etc., by starting at the edge of the fairway and pacing to the obstacle, then adding the result to half of the fairway width. A similar procedure may save time pacing at the green.

### b. Grass Heights

Grass heights can be measured by placing a pencil down into the grass and noting the average length of the blades of grass. A ruler is printed along the outside edge of the back cover of the Guide. Types of grasses (cool season and warm season) are described in the Definitions section (see page 6).

The rating team should not be misled by current conditions if the rating is done at some time other than midseason and should confer with the course superintendent regarding midseason grass heights. For example, if rating bermudagrass rough in Arizona in the summer when it is green and lush during the off season, evaluate it as though it were brown and dormant as it is during the winter in midseason.

### c. Carry

When a player must carry an obstacle such as a water hazard or a ravine filled with extreme rough, use the “carry” distance from the Shot Length Table in Section 4. To carry the obstacle safely, assume the shot clears the obstacle by 10 yards. If conditions are such that more distance is necessary to keep the ball from rolling back into the hazard, then such distance should be added to the carry. Note the average maximum carry distances for scratch and bogey golfers’ first and subsequent shots in the table in Section 4. For example, a bogey golfer’s second or third shots only carry 150 [110] yards (not the full 170 [130] yards, which includes roll).

### d. Lay up

When a player is **forced** to lay up because of obstacles crossing the fairway, assume that player lays up 10 yards short of the trouble.

When a scratch golfer **chooses** to lay up, use the above procedure, or lay up the player to a spot that would still allow for a relatively easy shot to the green or next landing zone. This spot is often marked with numerous divots indicating a preferred distance for players to select.

### e. Roll

The values published in the Roll Rating Table in Section 11-1 provide guidance on how far a ball will roll on fairways with various surface conditions. The conditions are usually similar from hole to hole; however, there are situations where a fairway condition may change requiring a shift to another row in the table (e.g., poor drainage on one hole makes it soft when all other fairways are average).

The roll rating values, when converted to effective length corrections, predict the impact on scoring that variations from normal roll will produce. Excessive roll shortens the effective playing length of the hole, but not to the extent that playing from a shorter set of tees does. The conversion factor of 3.5 yards per point of Roll rating (see Section 13 and Decision Appendix A/1) was the result of regression analysis on scoring versus fairway conditions. A firm fairway results in shorter approach shots when tee shots are hit straight, but also allows shots hit slightly off line to roll deeper into trouble. A soft fairway increases the effective length of the hole, but also keeps errant shots more in play.

### f. Approach Shot

To determine the approach shot length, start with the length of the hole and subtract the distance the player has covered to reach the landing zone (see the Shot Length Table on page 10). On a par

4, subtract the tee shot length; on a par 5, subtract the combined length of the first and second shots. Take into account factors that change the tee shot and second shot lengths, such as lay up, roll, etc. Consideration may be given to prevailing wind and elevation changes that can be so significant as to move into another row, up or down, on the Green Target Rating Table. For example, if the fairway is firm and tee shots roll 10 yards more than normal, subtract 10 yards from the normal approach shot length. Conversely, if a player lays up (forced or by choice) to a position that is 30 yards short of where a full shot would have been if there were no punitive obstacles or dogleg, add 30 yards to the normal approach shot length.

On a par-3 hole where the bogey golfer cannot reach the green in one shot, **rate the area short of the green under Recoverability and Rough and Topography**. Base the Green Target rating on the short approach shot or, if the Transition Zone concept is applicable, by using an average of the long and short approach shot ratings (see *Section 4-3 and Decision 12-4d/1*).

#### g. Fairway

The width of the fairway is measured perpendicular to a line along which the hole is designed to be played. Should the fairway need to be measured at a point where there is a bend in the line of play (i.e., a dogleg) the fairway width is measured along the line bisecting the angle formed by the bend in the line of play.

When the fairway has been “contour cut” (curved borders with the rough), use an average width in the landing zone. When the fairway width is reduced by an obstacle(s) (bunkers, water hazards, etc.), measure the width at the narrowest point and use that measurement exclusively as the fairway width of that landing zone rather than using an average width.

When a swath of rough grass along the edge of the fairway has been cut to a height between fairway height and rough height, half of that **intermediate cut** will be considered fairway, the other half will be considered rough with height equal to the regular rough height. This has the effect of increasing the fairway width by the width of the intermediate cut on one side or the other.

#### h. Bunkers

The **depth** of a greenside bunker (**Depth (D)** adjustment) is measured from points where most recovery shots are made to a height that would get the ball onto any part of the green surface. The depth of a fairway bunker (**Extreme (E)** adjustment) is measured from points where most recovery shots are made to a height that would get the ball out of the bunker on a line of play to the next target (landing zone or green). The fact that the Stimpmeter is 3 feet long may be helpful in estimating bunker depth.

When there are many bunkers of **various depths** in play, start with a rating for the deepest, but temper that rating by evaluating which bunkers come most into play and how difficult they are to recover from, lowering the initial adjustment accordingly, if appropriate.

Bunkers that **closely border** a green are normally those within 10 yards of the edge of the green. Consider the terrain between the green and the bunkers. For example, a shot that misses the green by 8 yards and bounces into a bunker that is 12 yards from the green should be considered to border closely.

The fraction of the green **closely bordered** by bunkers can be determined by walking the circumference of the green and counting the number of paces where bunkers border the green (see *Decision 8-8h/1*). Divide the number of paces where bunkers closely border the green by the circumference to find the ratio. The circumference of a traditionally shaped green (if not fully paced) can be estimated as just over 3 times the average diameter. For example, if 30 yards of the green’s edge

is bordered by bunkers, on a green with an average diameter of 27 yards (times 3 equals an 81-yard circumference), the ratio is 30/81, or between  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

When bunkers must be **carried** to reach a green, the scratch rating value is adjusted upward only if the approach shot is from a distance where the scratch Green Target value is above average (5 or greater). For the bogey golfer, there is an upward adjustment for any bogey Green Target value. Bunkers must be carried when they protect more than half of the green.

When bunkers must be **carried** to reach a fairway landing zone, the bunkers must be within 20 yards of the near edge of the landing zone for the table value of a scratch golfer to be adjusted upward. Bunkers anywhere along the line of play of a bogey golfer warrant adjustment of the Bunker table value if they must be carried.

### i. Trees

Rating trees is a two-step process. Measure the distance from the center of the scratch and bogey landing zones to trees from their extending branches or bases at eye level or below.

Enter the Trees Rating Table using this distance and the length of the shot to the landing zone. The table assumes that trees present an extreme problem for recovery for the **scratch golfer** (do not attempt to evaluate how well a bogey golfer will recover from the trees). If recovery is less than extreme, the rater must then determine the **recovery reduction** to apply to the table value (minor, moderate, significant).

Points to consider when determining the difficulty of recovery:

- Number, height, and density of trees near the landing area;
- Density of the foliage;
- Presence of low-hanging branches that impact swing;
- Conditions under the trees that impact the lie of the ball;
- Conditions along the line of play from the trees (intervening water, bunkers, etc.);
- Length of the shot to be played from the trees to the green; and
- Whether the next shot is to the green or another landing zone (*see Decision 12-8b/1*).

Tree conditions along the line of play that are different from those at the landing zone are evaluated using the **Inconsistent (I)** adjustment.

To evaluate the effect of a **chute**, consider the width of the narrowest portion of the chute (call it “W”) and how far that portion of the chute is from the spot where the shot is being hit (call it “D”). The ratio of “D” divided by “W” is helpful in assigning an adjustment to the Trees rating table value. A ratio of less than 5 will normally not qualify as a chute. Ratios of 5 to 12 or more qualify for adjustments of +1 to +4 (*see Chute Table on page 62*). Consider the density of the foliage (will a ball pass through the tree branches?), the area where a ball might drop if it strikes the trees, and how well the player can recover from that area. If the shot can easily be hit under or over the trees, decrease the adjustment by 1 or 2 units.

### j. Desert (Men only)

On desert courses, the desert is rated in lieu of Trees (or if both trees and desert exist, in addition to Trees). Rating Desert is a two-step process. Ratings are based on the length of the shot to, and the lateral distance

from, the center of the landing zone, or in the case of desert that must be carried, the length of the shot needed to carry the desert safely (usually by 10 yards). These rating values are then modified by a **recovery reduction** that takes into account the difficulty for a **scratch golfer** to play a ball from the desert to the next landing zone or the green.

The table assumes the desert presents an extreme problem for recovery by the scratch golfer (do not attempt to evaluate how well a bogey golfer will recover from the desert). If the recovery is less than extreme, the rater must then determine the recovery reduction to apply to the table (minor, moderate, significant).

Points to consider when determining the difficulty of recovery:

- Density and species of the desert foliage;
- Danger presented by the types and proximity of the desert plants;
- Conditions between desert plants that impact the lie of the ball;
- Length of the shot to be played from the desert to the green; and
- Whether the next shot is to the green or another landing zone (see *Decision 12-8b/1*).

#### k. Green Surface

Measure the green speed on several holes with a **Stimpmeter**. The best procedure is to find a level area on the green and roll three golf balls in one direction, marking the starting and average ending points with a coin, tee, or pencil, then roll the balls in the opposite direction. If the average roll back is within 18 inches of the roll in the first direction, the average of these two lengths is a good measure of the green speed.

To help find a level area, lay the Stimpmeter flat on the green and place a ball in the V-shaped groove. The movement of the ball will indicate whether the area is reasonably level.

When there is no level area on the green, or when it is desirable to measure the speed of a sloped area, find an area of uniform surface (a tilted flat area). Try to avoid concave or convex surfaces. Also avoid measuring crossways on a slope, as the ball will curl downhill. Roll the balls straight down the slope to get  $S(\text{down})$ , then roll them straight back up the slope to get  $S(\text{up})$ . To determine green speed, apply the measurements to the following formula:

GREEN SPEED CORRECTED FOR GREEN SLOPE
$S(\text{level}) = (2 \times S(\text{down}) \times S(\text{up})) \div (S(\text{down}) + S(\text{up}))$

In other words, the level Stimpmeter reading is equal to twice the product of the up and down readings, divided by their sum. When  $S(\text{down})$  is two to three times  $S(\text{up})$ , the green is considered to be **moderately sloped**; when  $S(\text{down})$  is more than three times  $S(\text{up})$ , the green is considered to be **steeply sloped**.

Many raters have inscribed 1-foot or 6-inch lengths along the side of the bar to assist in determining length of roll. The Stimpmeter is three feet long; the top of the golf ball holding slot is six inches from the end of the bar. For example, 8'6" would be three end-to-end Stimpmeter lengths less the distance from the end of the bar to the ball-holding slot.

## 9. OBSTACLES BEHIND THE GREEN

Obstacles behind the green are generally less important than those of a similar nature to the side or in front of the green. Obstacles behind the green should be downplayed in the rating process in the following situations:

- If the Accuracy Table pattern for a given approach shot does not extend beyond the dimensions of the green (as is the case for almost all Green Targets rated 6 or less), two-thirds or more of the player's shots will hit the green. Of those that miss the green, statistically less than a quarter will be over the green. One-fourth of one-third amounts to only about 8 percent of the shots going over the green.
- On long shots the ball lands short of the target and rolls to the Accuracy Pattern dimensions, bringing obstacles in front of the green more into play than those behind.
- When the green falls in the Transition Zone, the player normally cannot hit the ball far enough to end up over the green.
- A mis-hit shot will typically be short of the green (with the exception of bladed short iron shots).

While an adjustment of -1 is not listed among the adjustments for any obstacle behind the green, it is often appropriate. As a rule, raters should consider lowering an obstacle rating 1 or 2 units if the obstacle exists **only** behind the green.

## SECTION 9 — PRE-RATING PREPARATION

Before rating a course, the team leader should check the course measurement records and record the hole lengths on Form 1. If information on how the course, or a particular hole, was measured is available, it should be supplied to the rating team.

On Form 1, place an “X” in the Fairway row of the columns for par-3 holes. This helps separate par-3 ratings from par-4 and par-5 ratings when rating values are totaled across the columns for each nine holes.

The “Approach Shot Length” line on Form 1 should be completed as follows:

- Determine the approach shot distance for the scratch golfer by subtracting 250 [210] yards from the length of a par-4 hole, and 470 [400] yards from the length of a par-5 hole; and
- Determine the approach shot distance for the bogey golfer by subtracting 200 [150] yards or 370 [280] yards from the length of a par-4 hole, and 370 [280] yards or 540 [410] yards from the length of a par-5 hole.

If it is determined that these distances must be increased or decreased because of effective length correction factors or lay up by choice, the appropriate value should be written on the “adjusted approach” line on Form 1.

For a course at or above 2,000 feet elevation, fill in the Altitude box provided on the Form 1. The approach shot distances must be adjusted because the ball travels farther at high altitudes. Write increased shot lengths in the boxes labeled “Scratch1,” “Scratch2,” “Bogey1,” etc. Use the High Altitude Shot-Length Tables for men and women in Section 11.

The following preparatory information, if obtained in advance from the club or provided by the measuring team, should be recorded on Form 1:

- Approach shot lengths and landing zone distances from the green;
- The width and depth of each putting green;
- The fraction of the green closely bordered by bunkers;
- The widths of scratch and bogey landing zones for each hole;
- The distances required to carry obstacles off the tee or from the various landing zones;
- The types and heights of grasses on the course; and
- The effective length correction data (roll, elevation changes, etc.).

If this information has not previously been determined, it should be measured and recorded as the course is rated.

On the day a course is to be rated, the club should place the tee markers at the permanent yardage markers from which measurements were made and cut the holes in areas commonly used for maximum play. They must avoid the tendency to set up the course abnormally difficult.

A narrator from the club, such as the golf professional, superintendent, club champion, or Handicap Chairperson, should assist the team while they rate the course. The narrator’s commentary on how each hole is normally played can be helpful in the evaluation of obstacles. The rating team should avoid being swayed by the club representative’s natural tendency to overstate obstacle difficulty because of pride in the course. The team must maintain an objective attitude and compare obstacle evaluations with those of other courses.

## SECTION 10 — RATING PROCEDURE

### 1. CONDITIONS WHEN RATING

A course must be rated as if normal midseason playing conditions exist (i.e., conditions at the time of year when most rounds are played per day). In most areas, midseason conditions with respect to fairways, length of rough, foliage, and speed of the greens exist in the month of July. It is recommended that the rating team consult with the golf course superintendent and the narrator for their views as to whether normal midseason conditions exist. If seasonal conditions vary from midseason conditions, consider using a weighted average or the Percentage (P) adjustment to account for the differences in conditions. This should only be done when the seasonal conditions exist during the active season for posting scores. If the superintendent is available, it is beneficial for that individual to accompany the rating team for the first few holes to help evaluate the fairways, rough, foliage, and green speeds.

### 2. MULTIPLE TEES

A USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating from each set of permanent yardage markers should be established. A rating established from the back tees would be a false foundation for handicaps computed from the middle tees, and vice versa. If the distance between permanent markers exceeds 25 [20] yards, separate obstacle ratings are required. Otherwise, an obstacle rating from the tees most commonly played is sufficient, and the difference in the USGA Course Rating between those tees and other tees equals the difference in the Yardage Rating. When rating a hole where there are multiple teeing grounds for a given set of tee markers (e.g., two or three separate teeing grounds for the middle tee markers), raters should average the various hole lengths and obstacle ratings. This may be done by mentally envisioning a tee at the average location of all the teeing grounds and rating from there, or by rating from all of the teeing grounds used and averaging the results.

Authorized golf associations have the option to calculate a USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating for tees 7,000 [6,000] yards or longer without collecting separate rating values. Use the obstacle ratings and effective playing length correction factors for both the scratch and bogey golfer from the nearest set of tees less than 7,000 [6,000] yards. Then, apply the Yardage Rating for both the scratch and bogey golfer using the actual yardages for each hole on the set of tees 7,000 [6,000] yards or longer. The authorized golf association has the option to apply the same procedure for tees 4,800 [4,000] yards or shorter, assuming there is a set of tees above 4,800 [4,000] yards to use for the obstacle rating. This procedure cannot be used on any set of tees under 3,000 yards. (*See Decision 10-2/1.*)

### 3. COMPOSITION OF RATING TEAM

A rating team must be comprised of at least three trained and experienced raters. They must have been trained in course rating procedures and appointed by an authorized golf association to rate courses in accordance with USGA procedures. One of the individuals must be designated as the team leader. The team leader must have attended a course rating seminar conducted by the USGA.

### 4. EQUIPMENT

Each member of a rating team must be equipped with “The USGA Course Rating System Guide” (summary sheets must not be used). It is recommended that each team member have a pencil with an eraser and a clipboard to hold Form 1. Some raters may choose to affix Form 1 to the cover of the Guide, thus eliminating the need for a clipboard. The top section of Form 1, including hole lengths and par, is to be completed in advance. Ensure that hole lengths are accurate; scorecard yardage is not acceptable as a sole source of measurement and must be verified.



## 5. ON-COURSE PROCEDURES

On each hole, the team members should stand on the tee to determine the difficulty of the tee shot for bogey and scratch golfers. Evaluate any crossing of obstacles, obstacles that exist, and any tee-to-green elevation differences.

The team should then move to the landing zones of bogey and scratch golfers to evaluate the obstacles in those areas and discuss how the hole will be played. A team member should measure the width of the fairway and the distance from the center of the fairway to out of bounds, trees, or other obstacles. The firmness and tilt of the fairway should be evaluated. The approach shot to the green should be viewed from the landing zones and evaluated.

The team should then move to the green, evaluate the obstacles around the green and determine its effective diameter. The team should also evaluate the green from a putting standpoint, determine the green speed using the Stimpmeter, and evaluate the contour of the green. Finally the team should move to the rear of the green and look back up the fairway to review the hole from that position. Elevation changes, if any, can also be estimated from there.

As the team members move from one position to another, they should discuss obstacle factors and share information on measurements. They should consider the likelihood of obstacles coming into play, and the difficulty of recovery when necessary. They should be guided by what will **probably** happen, not by the extremes of what **could** happen. They should follow the obstacle evaluation guidelines and effective length correction guidelines discussed above (see *Section 8*).

The Green Target rating may be agreed upon by any raters who are assigned to the same set of tees, and then each member should evaluate the other obstacles independently. During the evaluation of a hole, team members should not discuss obstacles in terms of numerical ratings. They should not record rating values on Form 1 until the entire hole has been evaluated from all positions. They should record widths, lengths, fractions, and other measurements in the boxes provided, but defer final judgment of rating values until they have seen all features of the hole.

After the hole has been reviewed from all positions, team members should independently enter rating values on Form 1. When this has been done, the team leader may state, or call on other members of the team to state scratch and bogey obstacle ratings (e.g., “Topography: 4 for scratch and 5 for bogey”). Other team members should then state their ratings. When evaluating the same tee, it is important that they agree within one unit of the rating of each obstacle. If any members disagree by two or more units, they should state the reasons for their conclusions. If there is disagreement, the team leader is responsible for the team’s arrival at a consensus within one unit on each obstacle, and that decision is final. The team leader’s consensus Form 1 will be used by the authorized golf association to determine the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating.

As the team progresses, obstacle ratings on each hole should be compared to those assigned on earlier holes. The team should frequently refer to the rating guidelines to ensure that the team does not deviate from rating standards.

An experienced, efficient rating team should take about four hours to rate an average 18-hole golf course. As another option to save time, if there are enough raters available, an acceptable practice is to send a group of three off the front nine and another group of three to rate the back nine.

After rating, it is recommended that the rating team play the course for greater insight. Playing a course while rating is not permitted, but team members may hit shots from selected positions to aid in evaluations. Playing the course after rating it can be beneficial in better evaluating the obstacles, especially Green

Target and also the rough and putting surfaces. Consideration should be given to how various factors affect play during the playing season. After playing the course, the rating team may decide to modify some of the obstacle ratings.

Some rating teams have found playing before rating to be more beneficial than playing afterwards. They have found the team gains insight useful to the rating process. A disadvantage is that the team members who play poorly might be influenced to inflate the rating, and those who play well might do the opposite. Rating teams may use either sequence.

If the golf course is crowded, an alternative is to rate the course backward from the 18th green to the 18th tee and so on. One advantage is that the rating team risks distracting a group of players only once. Another advantage is that the Green Target is measured and rated first, and therefore the obstacles dependent on Green Target are easier to rate.

Predictions of ratings must not be made by the rating team to the club because ratings must be reviewed and approved by the golf association's Course Rating Review Committee.

Contact the USGA Handicap Department if any questions arise that cannot be resolved by the authorized golf association.

## SECTION 11 — EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH FACTORS

The effective playing length of a hole may be substantially different from its measured length. Determining the effective playing length results in greater accuracy in course rating.

There are five factors that must be considered in determining effective playing length.

- **Roll** is an evaluation of how far the full shots for scratch and bogey golfers roll, and the effect that roll has on the playing length of the course.
- **Elevation** is a measure of how changes in elevation from tee to green affect the playing length of the hole.
- **Dogleg/Forced Lay up** is a measure of how much longer or shorter a hole plays because it has a bend (allowing players to cut the corner or forcing them to lay up), or because it has obstacles, such as water or deep bunkers, crossing the fairway in the players' landing zones (which force the scratch or bogey golfer to hit less than a full shot).
- **Prevailing wind** is a measure of the effect of constant wind on seaside and plains courses and/or other courses unprotected from the wind.
- **Altitude** is an evaluation for courses at 2,000 feet or more altitude that will play shorter than their measured length because shots fly farther in the thin air.

Each of these factors is discussed in the pages that follow.

Data that impacts playing length may be provided by the club in advance and then corrected if necessary during the rating process. Effective length correction is important when any of the five factors affect the playing length of the course.

### 1. ROLL

#### a. General

Adjustment for roll is evaluated on par-4 and par-5 holes and for bogey golfers on par-3 holes that they cannot reach in one shot. Several factors affect roll. Soft fairways will result in less roll than firm fairways. A ball hit to a downhill landing zone rolls farther than one hit into an upslope. A scratch or bogey golfer's full shot to a level area of average firmness will roll between 15 and 25 yards (20 yards average).

If the ball hits into a soft, steep upslope, the maximum table rating value for minimum roll is +4 (this adds yardage to the effective playing length). If the ball hits on a firm downslope, the maximum table rating value for maximum roll is -4 (this subtracts yardage from the effective playing length).

If a golfer lays up or hits less than a full tee shot, use the appropriate fairway condition row. Do not attempt to evaluate the average amount of distance the ball will roll.

Roll rating value range is -5 to 5 on any given hole.

#### b. Roll Rating Table

To estimate the roll, determine whether the tee shot landing zones are soft, average, or firm, and whether the ball hits on an uphill, level, or downhill slope.

Determine the scratch rating value, then re-enter the table to determine the bogey rating value.

For example, if the scratch golfer hits a full tee shot over a hill onto a firm downslope (rating -4) while the bogey player hits a full tee shot into the hill (rating 0), the entry on Form 1 would be:

- 4	0
-----	---

ROLL RATING TABLE				
Fairway Condition	Average Amount of Roll (in yards) <b>Scratch or Bogey</b>	Nature of Tee Shot Landing Zone		
		Downhill	Level	Uphill
Firm	> 25	-4	-2	0
Average	15-25	-2	0	2
Soft	< 15	0	2	4

**c. Adjustments (Scratch and Bogey Ratings)**

(2) In play 2twice

- +1 If subsequent full shots result in less cumulative roll than the assumed 15-25 yards per shot.
- or -1 If subsequent full shots result in more cumulative roll than the assumed 15-25 yards per shot.

**d. Par-3 Holes**

The Roll rating on par-3 holes is zero unless the bogey golfer cannot reach the center of the green in one shot. In this case, Roll is evaluated for the bogey golfer only. When the landing zone is not cut to fairway height, consider the amount of expected roll and enter the appropriate row.

**e. Par-5 (Three-Shot) Holes**

Evaluate roll at subsequent full shot landing zones in addition to the roll of the tee shot. If subsequent full shots result in more (or less) cumulative roll than the assumed 15-25 yards per shot, apply the In play 2twice (2) adjustment.

**2. ELEVATION**

**a. General**

Uphill holes play longer than level holes; downhill holes play shorter. There must be an adjustment when the elevations of the teeing ground and the green differ by 10 feet or more. Valleys or hills between tee and green should not be considered under the Elevation category; they may, however, affect roll, stance, or lie **and should be evaluated under Roll and/or Topography.**

Tee-to-green elevation differences in feet for each hole can be provided by the club. Topographical charts may provide such information. If the information is not available, the rating team must estimate the difference and agree within 10 feet. The procedure for estimating elevation differences between tee and green is as follows: On a downhill hole, estimate the height of the trees near the green and compare the tops of the

trees with the height of the tee. On an uphill hole, reverse the process. To estimate tree height, envision people or flagsticks stacked one on another from the ground to the top of the tree. Heights can also be estimated from nearby buildings (one story of a building is normally about 10 feet).

### b. Elevation Ratings

Record the actual or estimated elevation difference in feet (rounded to the nearest 10 feet) from tee to green in the block on Form 1. Enter a plus value if the hole is uphill and a minus value if it is downhill. For example, if the hole is 25 feet uphill from tee to green, record +30 (this adds yardage to the effective playing length). If the hole is approximately 15 feet downhill from tee to green, record -20 (this subtracts yardage from the effective playing length). If the hole is 8 feet uphill from tee to green, record a zero (elevation change must be at least 10 feet).

### c. Par-3 Holes

The maximum value that may be entered on an uphill par-3 hole is +40. The largest negative value that may be entered on a downhill par-3 hole is -40.

## 3. DOGLEG/FORCED LAY UP

### a. General

Adjustment is required if the effective length of a hole is different from the measured length because of a dogleg or forced lay up. Separate adjustments are made for scratch and bogey golfers.

Scratch adjustment for a dogleg is usually a plus value because the dogleg generally increases the playing length. Dogleg holes are measured from the tee to the center of the fairway at the pivot point and from there to the green. If the pivot point is less than 250 [210] yards from the tee, the hole will play longer for the scratch player than a straight-away hole of the same length because, once a tee shot passes the pivot point, the ball will no longer be going directly toward the hole. Such a condition will cause the scratch player to use less than a driver on the tee shot. When the pivot point is between 200 and 250 [150 and 210] yards from the tee, the bogey golfer will not have a dogleg adjustment, and in fact may have to cut the corner to aim toward the green on the second shot.

Record a zero if the golfer's landing zone is near the pivot point of the dogleg (and the hole plays no longer than its measured length).

Record a minus value if the player normally "cuts" the dogleg to make the hole play effectively shorter than it measures.

There are two types of lay up.

- **Forced lay up** occurs when an obstacle, or a combination of severe obstacles, such as water, dense trees, deep bunkers, extreme rough, or severe topography crosses the fairway or reduces the fairway width in the normal landing zone to less than 15 yards [13 yards]. As a result, the scratch or bogey golfer will be forced to hit less than a full shot (i.e., lay up). In this instance a Dogleg/Forced Lay up correction must be made because the effective playing length of the course has been increased.
- **Lay up by choice** occurs when a punitive obstacle or a combination of obstacles near the normal landing zone results in a scratch or bogey golfer **choosing** to hit less than a full shot. A fairway landing zone less than 15 [13] yards wide without severe obstacles may be a reason for a lay up by choice. The lay up by choice would also be employed primarily by scratch golfers in their course management decisions (e.g., laying up to avoid having to hit half shots rather than full shots to the target area). In this type of lay up, a Dogleg/Forced Lay-up correction is **not** made.

In either case the rating team must evaluate the obstacles as they affect the lay-up landing zone for the scratch and bogey golfer, not as they affect a full shot landing zone. In addition, the evaluation of the green as a target and obstacles around the green must be based on a longer approach shot distance. The same applies to a dogleg hole on which the scratch or bogey golfer hits less than a full tee shot.

When a player is **forced** to lay up because of obstacles crossing the fairway, assume a lay up to 10 yards short of the trouble.

When a scratch golfer **chooses** to lay up, use the above procedure, or lay up the player to a spot that would still allow for a relatively easy shot to the green or next landing zone. This spot is often marked with numerous divots indicating a preferred distance for players to select.

**Note:** There may be situations where the overall lay up is a combination of forced lay up and lay up by choice.

### b. Dogleg/Forced Lay-up Ratings

To record a Dogleg or Forced Lay-up rating on Form 1, enter the actual yardage by which the dogleg or forced lay-up situation makes the hole play longer than a straight-away or unobstructed hole of the same length. Normally, if the scratch lay-up is 50 yards or less on the tee shot, the bogey golfer will not lay up. Be sure to record the bogey Dogleg/Forced Lay-up rating accordingly. For example, if the scratch golfer lays up 40 yards and the bogey golfer does not lay up, the entry on Form 1 would be:

+40	0
-----	---

Plus values increase effective playing length; minus values decrease it. The largest Dogleg/Forced Lay-up value allowed on any given hole is **+/- 50 yards**.

### c. Par-3 Holes

Record zero for the scratch golfer. If the bogey golfer cannot reach the green in one shot, a lay-up value may apply.

### d. Par-5 (Three-Shot) Holes

A dogleg/forced lay up on a second shot should be rated the same as one on a tee shot. If a double dogleg, a combination of a dogleg and a forced lay up, or a pair of forced lay ups exist, determine the two yardages and add them (maximum sum of adjustments is **+/- 50 yards** on any given hole).

## 4. PREVAILING WIND

### a. General

Except as provided below, adjustment for wind should be made only on seaside courses, courses in the plains states not protected by trees, and other open courses where the wind is prevalent and generally blows in the same direction. Adjustment should be made based on average daily wind speed and direction at midseason. Upwind or downwind adjustments should only be made on holes that are within 30 degrees of being directly upwind or downwind; other holes should be rated for crosswind.

If a hole plays upwind, a value of plus 1 to 10 should be recorded; if a hole plays crosswind, a value of 0 to 5 should be recorded; if a hole plays downwind, a value of 0 to minus 4 should be recorded. If wind is generally a factor but there is no prevailing wind, a value of plus 1 on every other hole, or a total of plus 9, should be assigned.

Wind increases the effect of other obstacles. If wind is generally a factor and an obstacle could be rated a particular value or one unit higher, consider choosing the higher value.

For courses where wind is not a factor, the wind correction section of Form 1 should be lined out.

Prevailing wind speeds above 12 miles per hour are seldom observed in the continental United States. In rare instances where wind is generally a factor and exceeds 12 mph, a value of plus 1 on every hole, or a total of plus 18, can be assigned. The local weather service can provide information on prevailing wind speed and direction. Many local airports also have an air rose that can provide daily average wind speed and direction.

### b. Prevailing Wind Rating Table

Use the Prevailing Wind Rating Table below to determine rating values.

PREVAILING WIND RATING TABLE – Men and Women			
Wind Speed (Miles Per Hour)	Rating		
	Downwind	Crosswind	Upwind
0	0	0	0
1 to 4	0	0	1
5 to 9	-1	1	2
10 to 12	-2	2	4
13 to 16	-3	3	6
17 to 19	-4	4	8
20 or more	-4	5	10

## 5. ALTITUDE

### a. General

At courses 2,000 feet or more above sea level, corrections must be made to the effective playing length of the course because golf shots travel farther in the thin air. In addition, landing zones where obstacles must be evaluated are farther from the tee and approach shots to the green are shorter than they would be on similar holes at sea level. Likewise, Transition Zones are farther from the tee.

Adjustments are made only on par-4 and par-5 holes where full tee shots are played. On holes where there is a dogleg or forced lay up that forces the scratch player to hit less than a full tee shot, no altitude correction is made. If the lay up is by choice, make an altitude correction.

The correction reduces the effective playing length of a course by the length of a player's tee shot (250 [210] yards) times the number of par-4 and par-5 holes where full tee shots are required (generally 14) times seven percent (0.07) times the course altitude (in feet) divided by 5,000 (feet). For example, on a typical course with four par-3 holes at 6,000 feet, the correction is 294 yards [247 yards]:

$$250 [210] \times 14 \times 0.07 \times 6000 \div 5000 = 294 [247] \text{ yards}$$

Course length is reduced by this amount (and further adjusted for roll, elevation changes from tees to greens, doglegs, forced lay ups, and prevailing wind) before it is entered in the USGA Yardage Rating formula.

There is no separate effective length calculation needed for male bogey golfers because, even though they hit shorter full shots than scratch golfers, they hit more of them (counting fairway wood shots). The male scratch effective length correction for altitude applies to male bogey golfers as well.

[For bogey women, no altitude correction is made — they do not hit the ball high enough or hard enough for the altitude to make any appreciable difference. Their effective playing length, before the other corrections are made for roll, elevation changes, etc., is the measured length of the course.]

**Note:** If rating a course at 2,000 feet or above and determining whether a player can carry an obstacle safely, it is assumed that the carry distance for a golfer is 20 yards less than the total altitude-adjusted shot length. For example, at 5,000 feet above sea level, a scratch male golfer is assumed to carry the ball 248 yards (268 -20) on the tee shot. Accordingly, the bottom row used for determining if a forced lay up is required would need to be adjusted to reflect this concept in the tables under Water Hazards, Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough, and Desert.

**b. High Altitude Shot Length Adjustment Table**

Use the following tables to determine where landing zones and Transition Zones are located when scratch and bogey golfers hit full tee shots on courses at high altitude. [Bogey women golfer landing zones and Transition Zones are not changed by altitude (see Section 4).]

HIGH ALTITUDE SHOT LENGTH TABLE – Men (All Shot Lengths Are in Yards From the Tee)										
Altitude	Scratch Golfer				Bogey Golfer					
	Drive		Two Shots		Drive		Two Shots		Three Shots	
	Length	Transition	Length	Transition	Length	Transition	Length	Transition	Length	Transition
< 2,000 Ft.	250	251-260	470	471-490	200	201-210	370	371-390	540	541-560
2,000 Ft.	257	258-267	483	484-503	206	207-216	380	381-400	555	556-575
2,500 Ft.	259	260-269	486	487-506	207	208-217	383	384-403	559	560-579
3,000 Ft.	261	262-271	490	491-510	208	209-218	386	387-406	563	564-583
3,500 Ft.	262	263-272	493	494-513	210	211-220	388	389-408	566	567-586
4,000 Ft.	264	265-274	496	497-516	211	212-221	391	392-411	570	571-590
4,500 Ft.	266	267-276	500	501-520	213	214-223	393	394-413	574	575-594
5,000 Ft.	268	269-278	503	504-523	214	215-224	396	397-416	578	579-598
5,500 Ft.	269	270-279	506	507-526	215	216-225	398	399-418	582	583-602
6,000 Ft.	271	272-281	509	510-529	217	218-227	401	402-421	585	586-605
6,500 Ft.	273	274-283	513	514-533	218	219-228	404	405-424	589	590-609
7,000 Ft.	275	276-285	516	517-536	220	221-230	406	407-426	593	594-613
7,500 Ft.	276	277-286	519	520-539	221	222-231	409	410-429	597	598-617
8,000 Ft.	278	279-288	523	524-543	222	223-232	411	412-431	600	601-620
8,500 Ft.	280	281-290	526	527-546	224	225-234	414	415-434	604	605-624
9,000 Ft.	281	282-291	529	530-549	225	226-235	417	418-437	608	609-628



<b>HIGH ALTITUDE SHOT LENGTH TABLE – Women</b> (All Shot Lengths Are in Yards From the Tee)				
Altitude	Scratch Golfer			
	Drive		Two Shots	
	Length	Transition	Length	Transition
< 2,000 Ft.	<b>210</b>	211-220	<b>400</b>	401-420
2,000 Ft.	<b>216</b>	217-226	<b>411</b>	412-431
2,500 Ft.	<b>218</b>	219-228	<b>414</b>	415-434
3,000 Ft.	<b>219</b>	220-229	<b>417</b>	418-437
3,500 Ft.	<b>220</b>	221-230	<b>420</b>	421-440
4,000 Ft.	<b>222</b>	223-232	<b>422</b>	423-442
4,500 Ft.	<b>223</b>	224-233	<b>425</b>	426-445
5,000 Ft.	<b>225</b>	226-235	<b>428</b>	429-448
5,500 Ft.	<b>226</b>	227-236	<b>431</b>	432-451
6,000 Ft.	<b>228</b>	229-238	<b>434</b>	435-454
6,500 Ft.	<b>229</b>	230-239	<b>436</b>	437-456
7,000 Ft.	<b>231</b>	232-241	<b>439</b>	440-459
7,500 Ft.	<b>232</b>	233-242	<b>442</b>	443-462
8,000 Ft.	<b>234</b>	235-244	<b>445</b>	446-465
8,500 Ft.	<b>235</b>	236-245	<b>448</b>	449-468
9,000 Ft.	<b>236</b>	237-246	<b>450</b>	451-470

## SECTION 12 — OBSTACLE FACTORS

The 10 obstacle factors are detailed in this section. The men’s and women’s rating procedures are similar, but yardages and rating values are sometimes different. In these cases, women’s variations from the men’s values are in [brackets]. On each page there is a general statement, a rating table, factors which warrant adjustment to the rating table, and instructions for par-3 and par-5 holes, when pertinent.

To rate each obstacle:

- Begin with the rating table (enter the table for the scratch golfer; re-enter the table for the bogey golfer);
- Adjust these table ratings up or down for both the scratch and bogey golfers as prescribed in the adjustments section (shot-specific (indicated with an asterisk) adjustments first, then general); and
- Consider further adjustments for par-3 or par-5 holes, if appropriate.

When a bogey golfer cannot reach a par-4 hole in two shots, rate the hole as a par-5 (three-shot) hole for the bogey golfer. When a bogey golfer cannot reach a par-3 hole in one shot, rate the hole as a par-4 (two-shot) hole for the bogey golfer, except there is no Fairway rating value.

Obviously, each unique situation cannot be covered, so **good judgment is required**. It has been noted before, but is worth repeating, that the rating team members should look at **probable** conditions, not extremes, and they should be guided by what will probably happen, not by what **could** happen.

The following is an example of the normal rating procedure:

- A par-3 hole is being evaluated for bunkers;
- The rating team has decided upon a scratch Green Target rating of 4 and a bogey Green Target rating of 6; and
- Forty percent of the green is closely bordered by 3-foot to 5-foot deep bunkers, situated primarily across the front of the green (an evaluation of the various bunkers resulted in an effective bunker depth of 4 feet).

BUNKER RATING EXAMPLE		
Factors/Adjustments	Scratch Golfer (Green Target Rating is 4)	Bogey Golfer (Green Target Rating is 6)
> ¼ to ½ of Green Closely Bordered		
Table Rating	3	5
Adjustments:		
(C) Carry	0	+1
(D) Depth	+1	+1
(N) None	-1	-1
Ratings	3	6
Entry on Form I	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>

## 1. TOPOGRAPHY

### a. General

Topography is a factor if the stance or lie in the landing zone is affected by slopes or mounds, or the shot to the green is uphill or downhill, making club selection more difficult. Outside of landing zones, slopes, hills, or mounds in the rough and around greens **are taken into account by the Recoverability and Rough rating**, not Topography.

The nature of the player’s stance and the lie of the ball in the landing zones for both the scratch and bogey golfer must be evaluated. Determine the elevation difference between the green and the landing zone from which the approach shot will be played to the green. Consider the nature of the shot to be played (e.g., an uphill lie to an elevated target is much easier than a downhill lie to the same target).

Assign a zero value only on level par-3 holes with no elevation change from tee to green. Minimum value on par-4 and par-5 holes is one. Use the Almost Level with Fairway row unless the change in elevation is at least 10 feet from the approach shot landing zone to the green. For example, if the hole is 8 feet uphill (or downhill) from the tee to the green, use the Almost Level with Fairway row.

### b. Topography Rating Table

This table provides ratings for both scratch and bogey golfers. Use this table to determine the scratch rating value, then re-enter the table to determine the bogey rating value. If the bogey player cannot reach the green in two shots on a par-4 hole, apply the principles used in evaluating par-5 holes to determine the bogey rating value.

TOPOGRAPHY RATING TABLE – Men and Women						
Change in Elevation (in feet) from Approach Shot Landing Zone to Green		Stance or Lie in Landing Zone				
Uphill	Downhill	Par-3 Hole	Minor Problem	Moderately Awkward	Significantly Awkward	Extremely Awkward
Almost Level with Fairway		0	1	3	4	5
+10	-10	1	2	4	5	6
+20	-20	2	3	5	6	7
+30	-30	3	4	6	7	8
+40 or More	-40 or More	4	5	7	8	9

### c. Par-3 Holes

Use the left-hand “stance or lie” column (Par-3 Hole) and rate Topography based on the elevation difference between the tee and the green. For holes that the bogey golfer cannot reach in one shot, rate Topography as on a par-4 hole.

### d. Par-5 (Three-Shot) Holes

For shots from landing zone to landing zone, use the top row (Almost Level with Fairway) and rate Topography based on stance or lie difficulty only. Rate the approach shot to the green the same as for a par-4 hole. Rate each of the individual landing zones and use the highest rating.

## 2. FAIRWAY

### a. General

Fairway is an evaluation of the difficulty of keeping the ball in the fairway from tee to green. Fairway ratings are based on fairway width in all landing zones, hole length, and nearby trees, hazards, and punitive rough.

The minimum rating for Fairway on par-4 and par-5 holes is 1. There is no Fairway rating on par-3 holes even when the bogey golfer cannot reach the green in one shot. When a player cannot reach the fairway from the tee and the area short of the fairway presents a significant problem (e.g., water, extreme rough, etc.), rate the hole in accordance with the procedure outlined in Sections 4-6 (see page 14).

### b. Fairway Rating Table

This table provides ratings for both scratch and bogey golfers. The values are based on fairways that are generally level and in good condition. Determine the fairway width at the scratch landing zone and apply that value to the table. Re-enter the table using the fairway width at the bogey landing zone.

FAIRWAY RATING TABLE – Men and [Women]						
Hole Length (in Yards)	Fairway Width (in Yards)					
	> 50 [> 45]	40-50 [35-45]	30-39 [30-34]	25-29 [25-29]	20-24 [20-24]	< 20 [< 20]
< 340 [< 270]	1	1	2	3	4	6
340-379 [270-309]	1	2	3	3	5	7
380-425 [310-355]	2	3	4	4	6	8
> 425 [> 355]	2	3	4	5	7	9

### c. Adjustments (Scratch and Bogey Ratings)

- (L) Lay up\*                    -1     If the player lays up (forced or by choice).
- (W) Width\*                    +1 or +2     If the fairway width is effectively reduced by (1) a dogleg, (2) overhanging tree branches, (3) contour or tilt so that the shot must be played to one side, (4) severe obstacles on one side (dense trees, deep bunkers, nearby water hazard, out of bounds, or extreme rough), or (5) none of the tee shot landing zone is visible from the tee and it is difficult to determine the line of play.
- or -1     When width is effectively increased by hillsides or mounding closely bordering the edge of the fairway and balls will bounce back into the fairway.
- or -1 or -2     When there is a narrow landing zone (causing a high table value) where shots can be hit from the rough as easily as those from the fairway.
- (U) Unpleasant                +1     If the turf condition is poor, unless preferred lies are in effect throughout the season.

**(Bogey Ratings Only)**

(O) Obstructed\* +1 or +2 If a dogleg requires a tee shot in excess of 200 [150] yards in length for a clear shot to the green.

**d. Par-3 Holes**

Fairway ratings are not applicable (“X” out the Fairway block on Form 1). On holes where the bogey golfer cannot reach the green in one shot, areas short of the green **are taken into account by the Recoverability and Rough rating** for the bogey golfer. (See Section 8-8f.)

**e. Par-5 (Three-Shot) Holes**

Rate each of the individual landing zones (table value plus adjustments) and use the highest rating.

**3. GREEN TARGET****a. General**

The Green Target factor is an evaluation of the difficulty of hitting the green with the approach shot. Primary considerations are target size, length of shot, how well the green holds, and the difficulty of normal hole locations.

To determine the approach shot length, subtract the distance the player has covered after the first or second shot from the length of the hole (see the *Shot Length Table, page 10*). Take into account factors that change the tee shot and second shot lengths, such as lay up, roll, etc. Consideration may also be given to prevailing wind and elevation changes that can be so significant as to move into another row, up or down (see Sections 8-8 and 11).

If the approach shot falls in the Transition Zone, use the bottom row of the Green Target Rating Table (Transition). This table value may be adjusted up or down one point when the center of the green is near the front or back of the Transition Zone. Alternately, the rater may use a weighted average of the long and short approach shot rating values (see Section 4-3).

The minimum rating for Green Target is 2.

**b. Green Target Rating Table**

This table provides ratings for both scratch and bogey golfers for shots of various lengths to greens of various sizes. Enter the table from the left to determine the rating for the scratch golfer and re-enter the table from the right to determine the bogey golfer rating. Bogey ratings are usually different from scratch ratings.

Table values are based on greens which are (1) generally flat, (2) of average firmness, and (3) generally circular or oval in shape. The effective diameter of a circular or oval green is the average of the width and depth. On an extended oval green where one dimension is more than two times as long as the other, use a weighted average as the effective green diameter (see examples A & B on page 49).

In determining the effective diameter of a crowned green, ignore any portion of the green where a ball, if placed, rolls off the green.

The effective diameter of an oddly shaped or tiered green may be determined by overlaying the green with two or more circles (or ovals) that generally cover the typical hole placements, and averaging the diameters of these circles (ovals). This **circle concept** should be used primarily when the green cannot be described by an average diameter or when a player cannot putt from one part of the green to a

commonly used hole location on another part of the green (see further explanation and examples on pages 49-50).

Columns are numbered (1) through (7) for convenience in referring to effective green diameter.

GREEN TARGET RATING TABLE – Men and [Women] (Assumes Green is Generally Flat and of Average Firmness)								
Scratch Golfer Shot Length (Yards)	Effective Diameter of Green (in Yards)							Bogey Golfer Shot Length (Yards)
	(7) > 36	(6) 32-36	(5) 27-31	(4) 22-26	(3) 18-21	(2) 13-17	(1) < 13	
< 60 [ $< 30$ ]	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	< 30 [ $\leq 20$ ]
60-79 [30-49]	2	2	2	3	3	4	4	30-44 [21-34]
80-99 [50-69]	2	2	3	3	4	4	4	45-59 [35-49]
100-119 [70-89]	2	2	3	4	4	4	5	60-74 [50-64]
120-139 [90-109]	2	3	4	4	4	5	6	75-89 [65-79]
140-159 [110-129]	2	3	4	4	5	6	7	90-109 [80-94]
160-179 [130-149]	3	3	4	5	6	7	7	110-129 [95-104]
180-199 [150-169]	3	4	5	5	6	7	8	130-149 [105-114]
200-219 [170-184]	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	150-164 [115-124]
220-240 [185-200]	4	5	6	7	8	8	9	165-180 [125-140]
> 240 [ $> 200$ ]	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	> 180 [ $> 140$ ]
50/50 Transition Zone Rating Value	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5 or 5.5	5.5 or 6	50/50 Transition Zone Rating Value

**c. Adjustments (Scratch and Bogey Ratings)**

- (V) Visibility\*
  - +1 If less than half of the green surface is visible.
  - or +2 If the shot to the green is blind (i.e., the top of the flagstick is not visible).
- (O) Obstructed\*
  - +1 If the approach to the green is obstructed by a tree in front of, or overhanging the green.
- (T) Tiered
  - +1 If the green is tiered (see definition in Section 3).
- (F) Firmness
  - +1 If the green is unusually firm (i.e., it is difficult to penetrate the surface with a tee).
  - or -1 If the green is unusually soft (i.e., a tee easily penetrates the surface).

**d. Par 3 Holes**

If the bogey golfer cannot reach the green in one shot and there is no bail-out area, use the scratch Green Target value and add two. (See “Bogey Golfer Cannot Play The Hole,” Section 4-6.)

**ODDLY SHAPED GREENS — Explanation and Examples**

Effective diameters of “oddly shaped” greens may not be equal to the average of the width and depth. In some cases, one dimension is weighted more than the other. In other cases, the “circle concept” is applied. A long, narrow green is evaluated as in examples A and B below.

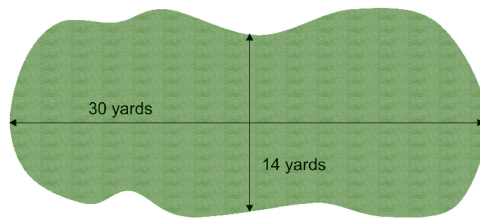
The “circle concept” involves overlaying circles (or ovals) of various sizes on unusually-shaped greens, then determining a weighted average of the circles’ (or ovals’) diameters to get an effective green diameter (EGD).

The circle concept should be used when a player cannot putt from one part of the green to another (see examples C, D, and E). Consideration must be given to commonly used hole locations, and the assumption that hole locations are at least four yards from the edge of the green.

Do not use the circle concept on a tiered green if there is no problem putting from one tier to another (i.e., if the Stimpmeter reading is 8' 5" or less, or if the transition from tier to tier is not severe — see example F).

**When in doubt, do not use the “circle concept.”**

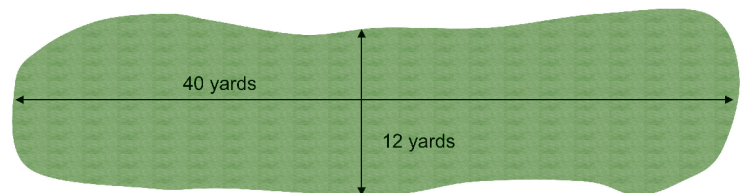
A.



If one dimension is more than two times (but less than or equal to three times) the other dimension, add two short dimensions and one long dimension, then divide by three. Do not use the circle concept.

A green is 14 yards deep and 30 yards wide.  
 $EGD = (14+14+30)/3 = 19$

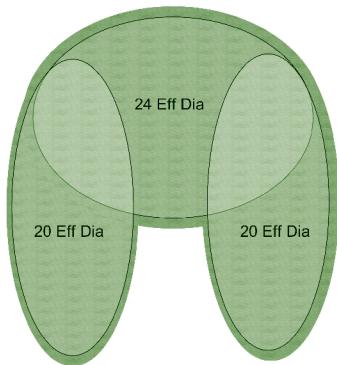
B.



If one dimension is more than three times the other dimension, add three short and one long, then divide by four. Do not use the circle concept.

A green is 12 yards deep and 40 yards wide.  
 $EGD = (12+12+12+40)/4 = 19$

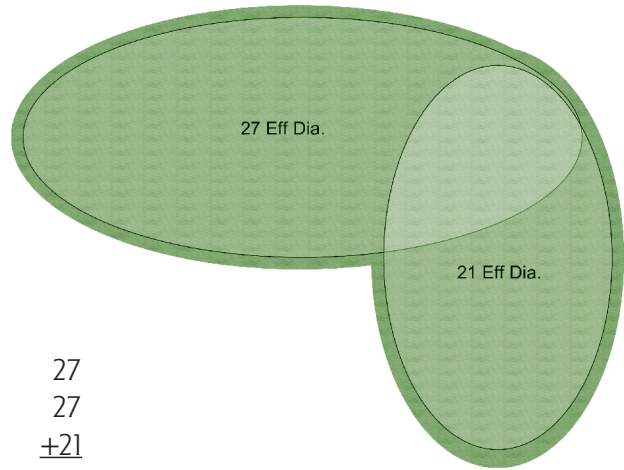
C.



$$\begin{array}{r} 24 \\ 20 \\ \hline +20 \\ 64 \div 3 = 21 \text{ average} \end{array}$$

Due to the odd shape of this green, the circle concept should be applied. If the hole locations are distributed evenly, then an average may be used. If one portion of the green is used more frequently, a weighted average may be used (see example E).

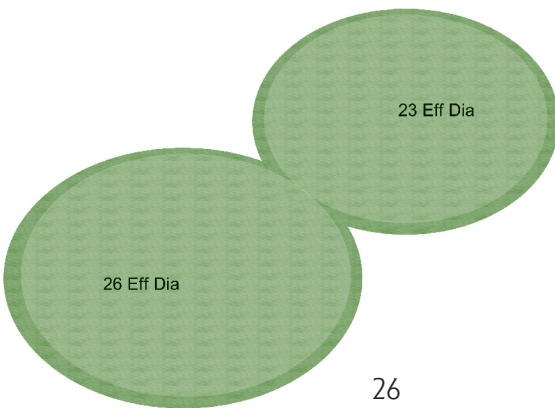
E.



$$\begin{array}{r} 27 \\ 27 \\ \hline +21 \\ 75 \div 3 = 25 \text{ average} \end{array}$$

This oddly shaped green has a smaller portion that is used only about 33% of the time. Therefore, the larger portion is weighted at 67%.

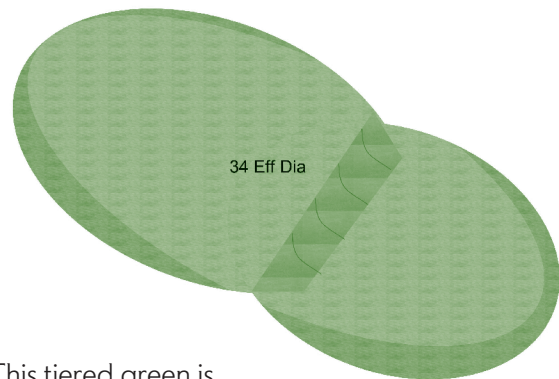
D.



$$\begin{array}{r} 26 \\ +23 \\ \hline 49 \div 2 = 25 \text{ average} \end{array}$$

Clearly, there are two relatively equal portions of this green, where a player cannot putt from one portion to another.

F.



This tiered green is best described by an average diameter (not by two circles) and applying the Tiered (T) adjustment.



## 4. RECOVERABILITY AND ROUGH

### a. General

Recoverability and Rough (R&R) is the evaluation of the probability of missing the tee shot landing zone and the green, and the difficulty of recovering if either, or both, is missed. Consideration should be given to the difficulty of getting the ball close to the hole with a shot from around the green. Factors to be considered are the difficulty of the green as a target (as reflected in the Green Target rating), rise or drop around the green, mounding along the fairway and at the green, the type and height of rough grasses, conditions such as sand dunes, waste areas (not bunkers), brush, iceplant, palmettos, hardpan, tree roots, swales, rocks, lava, desert, heather, and gorse. Also consider the difference (if any) of rough in a specific landing zone compared to the general rough height.

Cool season rough in excess of 6" [5"] in length {4" [3"] warm season}, underbrush in trees, or other factors listed above, which make it likely the ball will be lost or advanced only with great difficulty, should be rated under this category **as well as the Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough category**. Prepared "waste areas" **are rated as Bunkers** as well as under Recoverability and Rough. If a water hazard qualifies for a +2 or +3 Surrounded (S) adjustment, **rate it under Recoverability and Rough** as well as the Water Hazard category. When determining an Inconsistent (I)\*, Mounds (M)\*, or Rise and DRop (R) adjustment at the green, the general guideline is to evaluate up to 10 yards from the edge of the green. The minimum rating for Recoverability and Rough is 1.

### b. Recoverability and Rough Rating Table

This table provides ratings for both scratch and bogey golfers. It considers both cool season grasses and warm season grasses (see *Definitions, page 6*). Warm season grass heights are shown in {braces}. The table assumes the rise and/or drop around the green is 5 feet or less. Determine the scratch and bogey Green Target ratings to establish a measure of the probability that the rough will come into play. Then apply the general height of the rough grass for the golf course. Apply these values to the table to determine the scratch and bogey rating values.

Enter the table from the left with the scratch Green Target rating to determine the scratch R&R rating value. Re-enter the table from the right with the bogey Green Target rating to determine the bogey R&R rating value.

RECOVERABILITY AND ROUGH RATING TABLE – Men and [Women] (Assumes a 5' or Less Rise and/or Drop Around the Green)							
Scratch Green Target Rating	Average Rough Height (in Inches) – Cool Season Type Grass (Warm Season Type Grass in {Braces})						Bogey Green Target Rating
	Fairway Height	< 2" {< 1"}	2" to 3" {1" to 2"} [2" to 2½"] [1" to 1½"]	> 3" to 4" {> 2" to 3"} [> 2½" to 3½"] [> 1½" to 2"]	> 4" to 6" {> 3" to 4"} [> 3½" to 5"] [> 2" to 3"]	> 6" {> 4"} [> 5"] [> 3"]	
2 or 3	1	1	3	4	6	7	2
4	1	2	4	5	7	8	3
5 or 6	2	3	5	6	8	9	4 or 5
7 or 8	3	4	6	7	9	10	6 or 7
9 or 10	4	5	7	8	10	10	8 to 10

**c. Adjustments (*Scratch and Bogey Ratings*)**

- (L) Lay up\*                    -1     If the player lays up (forced or by choice).
- (I) Inconsistent\*            +1     If the rough is inconsistent – near a landing zone or closely bordering the green it is much more severe than the rough height of the course (e.g., 2" {1"} longer vs. rough height of the course).
  - or -1     If the rough is inconsistent – near a landing zone or closely bordering the green it is much less severe than the rough height of the course (e.g., 2" {1"} shorter, or if the rough around the green has areas cut to fairway height that allow for easier recovery shots).
- (M) Mounds\*                 +1     If grass mounds or hollows are present near the fairway landing zone or closely bordering the green. Consider their number, location, and severity (rough height, stance and lie problems).
- (R) Rise/DRop                +1     If more than ½ the green (excluding bunkers) is closely bordered by a rise and/or drop greater than 5'.
  - or +2     If more than ½ the green (excluding bunkers) is closely bordered by a rise and/or drop greater than 10'.
- (S) Surrounded                +1     If a Surrounded (S) adjustment of +2 has been applied to Water Hazard.
  - or +2     If a Surrounded (S) adjustment of +3 has been applied to Water Hazard.
- (U) Unpleasant                +1     If more than ½ the green (excluding bunkers) is closely bordered by sloping ground cut to fairway height that results in shots just missing the green ending up in areas farther from the green making recovery more difficult.
  - or +1     If extensive areas of hardpan are near the green.
- (2) In play 2**twice**            +1     If the rough height closely bordering two or more landing zones on a par-5 (three-shot) hole is at least 4" [3 ½"] {3" [2"]} warm season).

**(Bogey Ratings Only)**

- (C) Carry\*                    +1 to +4     If carry over rough (not water, out of bounds, or extreme rough) is required to reach the target — see the following table:

BOGEY CARRY ADJUSTMENT TABLE – Men and [Women]				
Length of Carry Required to Reach Target (in yards)	Average Rough Height (in Inches) – Cool Season Type Grass (Warm Season Type in {Braces})			
	< 2" {< 1"} [same]	2" to 3" {1" to 2"} [2" to 2½" {1" to 1½"}]	> 3" to 4" {> 2" to 3"} [> 2½" to 3½" {> 1½" to 2"}]	> 4" to 6" {> 3" to 4"} [> 3½" to 5" {> 2" to 3"}]
100 to 160 [70 to 120]	0	0	+1	+2
> 160 [> 120]	0	+1	+3	+4

(3) Par 3	+1	If the bogey golfer cannot reach the green of a par-3 hole in one shot and the area short of the green is at least 20 yards wide and is cut to fairway height.
	or +2	If the bogey golfer cannot reach the green of a par-3 hole in one shot and the area short of the green is less than 20 yards wide and is cut to fairway height, or no such area exists.

**d. Par-3 Holes**

If the bogey golfer cannot reach the green in one shot, **rate the area short of the green under Recoverability and Rough** by using the Par 3 (3) adjustment. Also, use the Par 3 (3) adjustment if the bogey golfer lays up. Base the Green Target rating on the short approach shot or, if the Transition Zone concept is applicable, by averaging the long and short approach shot ratings (see Section 4-3).

**e. Par-5 (Three-Shot) Holes**

The extra shot(s) required on a par-5 (three-shot) hole offers an extra opportunity for scratch and bogey golfers to get into trouble. Additional adjustment to the table value may be required for those situations affected by the additional shot(s). This would apply to Lay-up\* (L) adjustments (e.g., two lay ups would be -2), Mounds\* (M) adjustments, and for Inconsistent\* (I) adjustments. For the bogey golfer, Carry\* (C) adjustments are additive as well. All other adjustments apply to the hole in general.

**5. BUNKERS**

**a. General**

Consider the size of the bunkers and their proximity to target areas rather than simply the number of bunkers. Evaluate how bunkers reduce the size of the landing zone both on the tee shot and the approach to the green. Evaluate the difficulty of recovering from the bunkers that are in play (e.g., fairway bunkers with compacted sand are much easier to play from than those with soft, fluffy sand; and bunkers with no lips or front banks offer much easier recovery than those with lips and severe faces).

So-called “waste areas” **are rated as Bunkers** as well as in the Recoverability and Rough category, even though they are considered to be “through the green” under the Rules of Golf. Grass hollows, even if they were bunkers at one time, **are rated only under Recoverability and Rough**.

Bunkers within 20 yards of the landing zone are considered to be “near” the landing zone. The landing zone is as wide as the fairway and includes all the area where the ball hits and rolls under normal conditions.

Bunkers within 10 yards of the edge of the green are **normally** considered **closely bordering** the green.

When there are many bunkers of various depths in play, start with a rating for the deepest, but temper that rating by evaluating which bunkers come most into play and how difficult they are to recover from, lowering the initial adjustment accordingly, if appropriate.

Assign a zero value if no fairway and greenside bunkers exist on the hole (i.e., if there are no bunkers within 60[50] yards of the line of play and the center of the green). If there is no table value (i.e., if there are no greenside bunkers), but a fairway bunker(s) exists on the hole, rate as follows:

Scratch and Bogey Golfer	Minimum Bunker rating is 1
	Apply appropriate adjustments (Extreme (E), etc.) only if the fairway bunker is “near” (within 20 yards of) the landing zone.

**b. Greenside Bunker Rating Table**

This table provides ratings for greenside bunkers of average difficulty (i.e., a depth of 3 [2] feet or less) closely bordering the green. The table is based on how much of the green is closely bordered by bunkers and on the Green Target ratings for both scratch and bogey golfers.

For par-4 and par-5 holes, the table assumes the existence of bunker(s) near (within 20 yards of) a fairway landing zone for the scratch golfer and anywhere along the line of play for the bogey golfer.

Enter the table from the left to determine scratch ratings. Re-enter the table from the right to determine bogey ratings.

GREENSIDE BUNKER RATING TABLE – Men and [Women]					
(Assumes There Are Bunker(s) Near a Fairway Landing Zone and Bunker Depth is 3 [2] Feet or Less)					
Scratch Green Target Rating	Fraction of Green Closely Bordered by Bunkers				Bogey Green Target Rating
	> 0 to ¼	> ¼ to ½	> ½ to ¾	> ¾	
2	1	2	2	3	–
3	2	2	3	4	2
4	2	3	4	5	3
5 or 6	3	4	5	6	4 or 5
7 or 8	4	5	6	7	6 or 7
9 or 10	4	6	7	8	8 to 10

**c. Adjustments (Scratch and Bogey Ratings)**

- (Q) Squeeze\*
  - +1 If obstacle squeeze exists because bunkers are within 15 yards of the center of a fairway landing zone on **both** sides (this does not apply at the green except when greenside bunkers also qualify as fairway bunkers).
  - or +2 If obstacle squeeze exists because bunkers are within 10 yards of the center of a fairway landing zone on **both** sides (this does not apply at the green except when greenside bunkers also qualify as fairway bunkers).
- (C) Carry\*
  - +1 If the player must carry a greenside bunker(s) which protects more than half the green (Green Target rating for the scratch golfer must be **5** or greater, but it may be any value for the bogey golfer).
  - or +1 If the player must carry a bunker(s) to reach a fairway landing zone (the bunker(s) must be near the landing zone for the scratch golfer, but anywhere along the line of play for the bogey golfer).
- (E) Extreme
  - +1 or +2 If pot bunkers, fairway bunkers at least 6' [5'] deep, or other unusual bunker features make recovery extremely difficult (e.g., extreme rough interferes with the swing or blocks the recovery shot, railroad ties or stacked sod shore up the bank, or a large bunker or series of bunkers on the line of play generates long bunker shots over sand to the green, etc.).
- (D) Depth
  - +1 to +4 If the depth of greenside bunkers is more than 3 [2] feet. Consider their number, location, and the difficulty of recovery – see the following table:

GREENSIDE BUNKER DEPTH ADJUSTMENT TABLE – Men and [Women]				
Bunker Depth (Feet)				
3' [2'] or less	> 3' [> 2']	> 6' [> 5']	> 10' [> 8']	> 15' [> 12']
0 (assumed)	+1	+2	+3	+4

- (N) None                      -1      If there are no fairway bunkers on a two (or more) shot hole anywhere along the line of play for the bogey golfer or near (within 20 yards of) the scratch golfer’s landing zone(s).
- or -1      Reduce the table value by one for par-3 holes (since there is no “fairway” on a par-3 hole). This may not apply to the bogey golfer who cannot reach the green in one shot.
- (2) In play twice              +1      If there are fairway bunkers near (within 20 yards of) two or more landing zones on a par-5 (three-shot) hole.

**d. Par-3 Holes**

If the bogey golfer cannot reach the green in one shot, greenside bunkers may qualify as “fairway” bunkers, even though there is no “fairway” on a par-3 hole. Otherwise, reduce the table value by one for a par-3 hole (i.e., use the **None (N)** adjustment).

**e. Par-5 (Three-Shot) Holes**

The extra shot(s) required on a par-5 (three-shot) hole offers an extra opportunity for scratch and bogey golfers to get into bunkers if they exist near both landing zones. Additional adjustment to the table value may be required for those situations affected by the additional shot(s). Two shots that both must carry bunkers or must land between bunkers on both sides of a narrow fairway may require two **Carry\* (C)** or **Squeeze\* (Q)** adjustments, respectively (e.g., two carries would be +2). All other adjustments apply to the hole in general.

**6. OUT OF BOUNDS/EXTREME ROUGH**

**a. General**

The rating for out of bounds depends on the proximity of the boundary to the center of the landing zone or green. Cool season rough grass in excess of 6” [5”] in length {4” [3”] warm season}, heavy underbrush in trees, or other conditions such as sand dunes (not bunkers), iceplant, palmettos, tree roots, rocks, lava, desert, heather, gorse, etc., are also rated under this category because a ball in such “extreme rough” is likely to be lost or virtually unplayable. Such areas may also be **rated under Recoverability and Rough**. For men, if Desert is rated above average for the bogey golfer, **rate it under OB/Extreme Rough as well**.

If out of bounds or extreme rough exists near the tee shot landing zone and at the green, the probability of a ball coming to rest out of bounds or in the rough is greater than if the condition exists in only one of these areas. It follows that, if a boundary exists the entire length of the hole, the boundary will come into play more often on a par-5 hole than on a par-4 hole, and more often on a par-4 hole than on a par-3 hole. Out of bounds or extreme rough near either side of a tee shot landing zone or close to the back of an elevated green is considered a significant obstacle.

A ball hit toward a boundary marked with white stakes is more likely to go out of bounds than a similar

shot hit toward a fence or wall marking the boundary. Out of bounds is a more significant factor if the ground slopes toward a boundary.

Assign a zero value if out of bounds or extreme rough does not exist on the hole (i.e., is not within 60 [50] yards of the line of play and the center of the green). Assign a rating of 1 or more if out of bounds and/or extreme rough exists on the hole.

**b. Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough Rating Table**

This table provides ratings for scratch and bogey golfers for out of bounds and extreme rough, taking into consideration the length of the shot and the distance of the boundary/rough edge from the center of the landing zone, or in the case of an area that is out of bounds or contains extreme rough and must be carried, the length of the shot needed to **carry** the obstacle safely (usually by 10 yards).

Enter the table from the left to determine scratch ratings. Re-enter the table from the right to determine bogey ratings.

Enter the table twice for a single shot that must both cross out of bounds or extreme rough and avoid it laterally in the landing zone or at the green, and use the higher value. Apply the Two waYs\* (Y) adjustment, if appropriate.

OUT OF BOUNDS/EXTREME ROUGH RATING TABLE – Men and [Women]							
(All Distances in Yards)							
Scratch Golfer Shot Length (to Target or to Carry Safely)	Scratch Crossing OB/ER Rating	Distance of Out of Bounds or Extreme Rough from Center of Target Landing Zone				Bogey Crossing OB/ER Rating	Bogey Golfer Shot Length (to Target or to Carry Safely)
		40-60 [50]	30-39	20-29	< 20		
< 90 [< 70]	1	1	1	1	2	2	< 50 [< 40]
90-129 [70-99]	2	1	2	2	3	3	50-79 [40-69]
130-159 [100-124]	3	1	2	3	4	4 [5]	80-109 [70-84]
160-189 [125-149]	4	1	2	4	5	5 [6]	110-139 [85-99]
190-209 [150-174]	5 [6]	1	2	4	6	6 [8]	140-159 [100-114]
210-230 [175-190]	6 [8]	2	3	5	7	7 [9]	160-180 [115-130]
> 230 [> 190] (Full Tee Shot)	Forced Lay up†	2	4	6	8	Forced Lay up†	> 180 [> 130] (Full Tee Shot)

† If rating a course at 2,000 feet or above and determining whether a player can carry an obstacle safely, it is assumed that the carry distance for a golfer is 20 yards less than the total altitude-adjusted shot length. (See note in Section 11-5.)

**c. Adjustments (Scratch and Bogey Ratings)**

- (B) Bounce\*                    +1        If conditions increase the likelihood that a ball will bounce out of bounds or into extreme rough (such as a cart path or sloping ground). Do not use if the distance from the center of the target landing zone is less than 20 yards.
- or -1        If conditions decrease the likelihood that a ball will bounce or fly out of bounds or into extreme rough (such as a tree, fence, or other obstacle).

(P) Percentage*	%	If an expanse of extreme rough contains areas that are not extreme, or if an OB or extreme rough crossing is only partial, or if conditions vary from season to season, consider using an appropriate percentage of the table value to determine the shot rating value.
(J) Jeopardy*	-1	If a player can play away from a boundary/extreme rough without jeopardy (this does not apply at the green). Only use the Jeopardy adjustment if the rating (table value plus adjustments) is <b>5</b> or greater.
(Q) SQueueze*	+1	If obstacle squeeze exists because out of bounds or extreme rough is within 20 yards of the center of a fairway landing zone on <b>both</b> sides. Only use the SQueueze adjustment if the rating (table value plus adjustments) is <b>5</b> or greater.
	or +2	If obstacle squeeze exists because out of bounds or extreme rough is within 15 yards of the center of a fairway landing zone on <b>both</b> sides. Only use the SQueueze adjustment if the rating (table value plus adjustments) is <b>5</b> or greater.
(Y) Two waYs*	+1	If OB or extreme rough comes into play two ways on a single shot (must be crossed and also borders the target landing zone) and both values (table value plus adjustments) are <b>5</b> or greater, add 1 unit to the higher rating.
(2) In play 2wice	+1 or +2	If out of bounds or extreme rough comes into play on two or more shots (each rating must be <b>5</b> or greater (table value plus adjustments); adjustment is made to the highest of the separate shot evaluations). Add all values of <b>5</b> or greater. If they total 11 or less, +1; if they total 12 or more, +2.
<i>(Bogey Men's Ratings Only)</i>		
(A) Above Average	+1 or +2	If the bogey golfer has an above average Desert rating of 5 or 6 (+1) or 7 to 10 (+2).

## 7. WATER HAZARDS

### a. General

The rating for a water hazard depends on its distance from the landing zone or green and, in the case of a hazard crossing a hole, the problem involved in playing over the hazard. The water hazard rating is to be applied on any hole on which there is a water hazard or lateral water hazard. If the club, in order to speed up play, has marked extreme rough, brush, trees, or desert as lateral water hazards when no natural water course is present, the markings must be disregarded by the rating team. Rating must be done in accordance with the Rules of Golf and the areas rated for what they truly are.

If a water hazard qualifies for a +2 or +3 Surrounded (S) adjustment, **rate it under Recoverability and Rough** as well. Consider conditions that can decrease or increase the likelihood of the water hazard coming into play from the edge of the green when determining distance (e.g., a downslope can increase the likelihood; an intervening bunker can decrease the likelihood).

A deep hazard filled with water from which a shot cannot be played may be more difficult than a hazard which is normally dry. If the ground slopes toward a water hazard, the hazard is of greater significance.

Assign a zero value if water does not exist on the hole (i.e., is not within 60 [50] yards of the line of play and the center of the green). Assign a rating of 1 or more if a water hazard exists on the hole.

**b. Water Hazard Rating Table**

This table provides ratings for scratch and bogey golfers for both lateral and crossing water hazards, taking into consideration the length of the shot and the distance of the hazard boundary from the center of the landing zone; or in the case of a water hazard that must be carried, the length of the shot needed to **carry** the hazard safely (usually by 10 yards).

Enter the table from the left to determine scratch ratings. Re-enter the table from the right to determine bogey ratings.

Enter the table twice for a single shot that must both cross water and avoid it laterally in the landing zone or at the green, and use the higher value. Apply the Two waYs\* (Y) adjustment, if appropriate.

WATER HAZARD RATING TABLE – Men and [Women] (All Distances in Yards)								
Scratch Golfer Shot Length (to Target or to Carry Safely)	Scratch Crossing Water Hazard Rating	Distance of <i>Lateral Water Hazard</i> from Center of Target Landing Zone					Bogey Crossing Water Hazard Rating	Bogey Golfer Shot Length (to Target or to Carry Safely)
		40-60 [50]	30-39	20-29	15-19	< 15		
< 90 [ $< 70$ ]	1	1	1	2	2	3	2	< 50 [ $< 40$ ]
90-129 [70-99]	2	1	1	2	3	4	3	50-79 [40-69]
130-159 [100-124]	3	1	2	3	4	4	4	80-109 [70-84]
160-189 [125-149]	4	1	2	3	4	5	5	110-139 [85-99]
190-209 [150-174]	5 [6]	1	2	4	4	5	6 [7]	140-159 [100-114]
210-230 [175-190]	6 [8]	2	3	4	5	6	7 [9]	160-180 [115-130]
> 230 [ $> 190$ ] (Full Tee Shot)	Forced Lay up†	2	3	4	5	7	Forced Lay up†	> 180 [ $> 130$ ] (Full Tee Shot)

† If rating a course at 2,000 feet or above and determining whether a player can carry an obstacle safely, it is assumed that the carry distance for a golfer is 20 yards less than the total altitude-adjusted shot length. (See note in Section 11-5.)

**c. Adjustments (Scratch and Bogey Ratings)**

- (B) Bounce\*
  - +1 If conditions increase the likelihood that a ball will bounce into the water hazard (such as a cart path or sloping ground). Do not use if the distance from the center of the target landing zone is less than 15 yards.
  - or -1 If conditions decrease the likelihood that a ball will bounce or fly into the water hazard (such as a tree, bunker, or other obstacle).



(P) Percentage*	%	If a water hazard is very narrow, or only borders part of the landing zone, or is dry most of the time and can be played from, or if the water crossing is only partial, consider using an appropriate percentage of the table value to determine the shot rating value.
(J) Jeopardy*	-1	If a player can play away from a water hazard without jeopardy (this does not apply at the green). Only use the Jeopardy adjustment if the rating (table value plus adjustments) is 5 or greater.
(Q) Squeeze*	+1	If obstacle squeeze exists because water is within 20 yards of the center of a fairway landing zone on <b>both</b> sides (this does not apply at the green — see the Surrounded (S) table). Only use the Squeeze adjustment if the rating (table value plus adjustments) is 5 or greater.
	or +2	If obstacle squeeze exists because water is within 15 yards of the center of a fairway landing zone on <b>both</b> sides (this does not apply at the green — see the Surrounded (S) table). Only use the Squeeze adjustment if the rating (table value plus adjustments) is 5 or greater.
(Y) Two ways*	+1	If a water hazard comes into play two ways on a single shot (must be crossed and also borders the target landing zone) and both values (table value plus adjustments) are 5 or greater, add 1 unit to the higher rating.
(S) Surrounded*	+1 to +3	If the green is closely surrounded by a water hazard (Green Target rating value must be 5 or greater for scratch, but may be any value for the bogey golfer), use the following table:

GREEN SURROUNDED BY WATER HAZARD ADJUSTMENT TABLE – Men and Women				
Fraction of Green Bordered by Water Hazard	Proximity of the Water Hazard to the Edge of the Green (In Yards)			
	> 20	11 to 20	5 to 10	< 5
¼ to ½	0	0	+1	+2†
> ½	0	+1	+2†	+3†

† Also apply the Surrounded (S) adjustment under R&R

(2) In play twice	+1 or +2	If water hazards come into play on two or more shots (each rating must be 5 or greater (table value plus adjustments); adjustment is made to the highest of the separate shot evaluations). Add all values of 5 or greater. If they total 11 or less, +1; if they total 12 or more, +2.
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## 8. TREES

### a. General

The rating for trees depends on their size and density, their distance from the center of the landing zone or green, the length of the shot to that target, and the difficulty of recovering. Bushes, palmettos, gorse, cacti, scrub oak, and the like become trees when their height exceeds 6 feet. A few large and

strategically placed trees may deserve a higher rating than a large number of trees, which have less effect on play.

Trees overhanging, or otherwise reducing the effective width of the fairway, may also be rated **under the Fairway category**. A tree in front of or overhanging a green may also be rated **under the Green Target category**.

Assign a zero value if trees do not exist on the hole (i.e., are not within 60 [50] yards of the line of play and the center of the green). Assign a rating of 1 or more if trees exist on the hole.

### b. Trees Rating Table

Rating trees is a two-step process. Measure the distance from the center of the scratch and bogey landing zones to trees from their extending branches or bases at eye level or below.

Enter the Trees Rating Table using this distance and the length of the shot to the landing zone. The table assumes that trees present an extreme problem for recovery for the **scratch golfer** (do not attempt to evaluate how well a bogey golfer will recover from the trees, even when determining a bogey rating).

If recovery is less than extreme, the rater must then determine the **recovery reduction** to apply to both the scratch and bogey table values as follows (amounts of reductions are detailed near the bottom of the Trees Rating Table):

— Minor Problem

- Scratch golfer can get on or near the green most of the time (76-100%)
- Scratch golfer can reach the next fairway landing zone most of the time

— Moderate Problem

- Scratch golfer can get on or near the green about half the time (26-75%)
- Scratch golfer can advance the ball more than half the distance to the next fairway landing zone

— Significant Problem

- Scratch golfer can rarely get on or near the green (1-25%)
- Scratch golfer can advance the ball up to half the distance to the next fairway landing zone

— Extreme Problem

- Scratch golfer cannot get on or near the green (0%)
- Scratch golfer must pitch out laterally

Points to consider when determining difficulty of recovery:

- Number, height, and density of trees near the landing area;
- Density of the foliage at midseason;
- Presence of low-hanging branches that impact swing;

- Conditions under the trees that impact the lie of the ball;
- Conditions along the line of play from the trees (intervening water, bunkers, etc.);
- Length of the shot to be played from the trees to the green; and
- Whether the next shot is to the green or another landing zone (see *Decision 12-8b/1*).

Tree conditions along the line of play that are different from those at the landing zone are evaluated using the Inconsistent (I) adjustment.

Enter the table from the left to determine scratch ratings. Re-enter the table from the right to determine bogey ratings (remember the recovery reduction in both cases is based on the scratch golfer’s ability).

TREES RATING TABLE – Men and [Women] (All Distances in Yards; Assumes Extreme Recovery Problems)							
Scratch Golfer Shot Length	Distance of Trees from Center of Target Landing Zone						Bogey Golfer Shot Length
	40-60	30-39	20-29	15-19	10-14	< 10	
< 90 [ $< 70$ ]	1	1	1	2	3	4	< 50 [ $< 40$ ]
90-129 [70-99]	1	1	2	2	3	4	50-79 [40-69]
130-159 [100-124]	1	2	2	3	4	5	80-109 [70-84]
160-189 [125-149]	2	2	3	4	5	6	110-139 [85-99]
190-209 [150-174]	2	3	4	5	6	7	140-159 [100-114]
210-230 [175-190]	3	4	5	6	7	8	160-180 [115-130]
> 230 [ $> 190$ ] (Full Tee Shot)	4	5	6	7	8	9	> 180 [ $> 130$ ] (Full Tee Shot)
Table values assume no chance of reaching the green and a lateral pitch out is required.							
Recovery Problems for Scratch Golfer				Minor	Moderate	Significant	Extreme
Recovery Reduction				-4	-3 or -2	-1	0 (Assumed)

**c. Adjustments (Scratch and Bogey Ratings)**

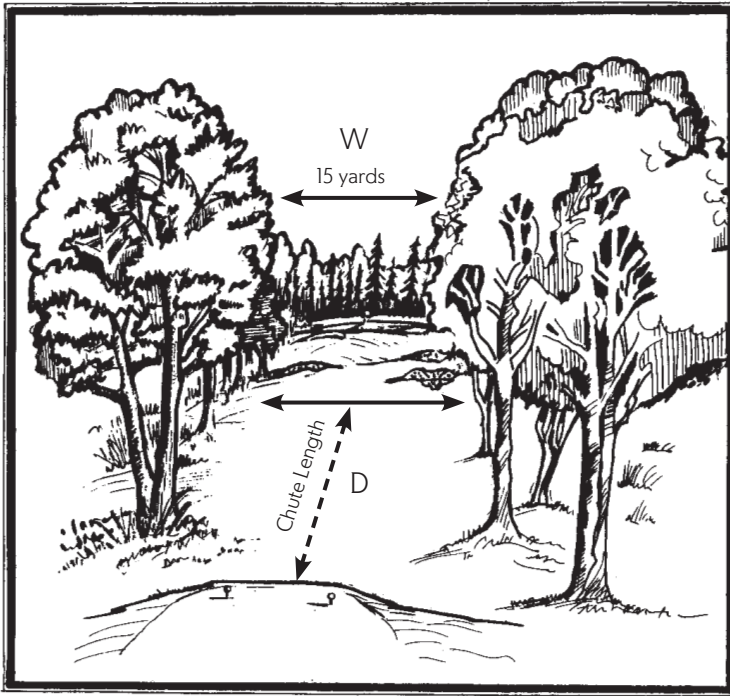
- (O) Obstructed\* +1 or +2 If trees obstruct the shot to the target (e.g., if a dogleg requires a tee shot in excess of 200 [150] yards in length for a bogey golfer to have a clear shot to the green).
- (I) Inconsistent\* +1 or +2 If there are significantly more trees along the line of play than at the landing zone or green (do not use if a chute adjustment has been applied).  
or -1 If there are significantly fewer trees along the line of play than at the landing zone or green.
- (J) Jeopardy\* -1 If the player can play away from the trees without jeopardy (this does not apply at the green). Only use the Jeopardy adjustment if the rating (table value, adjusted for recovery, plus adjustments) is 5 or greater.

- (Q) Squeeze\*
  - +1 If obstacle squeeze exists because trees are within 20 yards of the center of a fairway landing zone on **both** sides. Only use the Squeeze adjustment if the rating (table value, adjusted for recovery, plus adjustments) is **5** or greater.
  - or +2 If obstacle squeeze exists because trees are within 15 yards of the center of a fairway landing zone on **both** sides. Only use the Squeeze adjustment if the rating (table value, adjusted for recovery, plus adjustments) is **5** or greater.
  - +1 to +4 If a shot must be hit through a narrow chute. The amount of adjustment depends on the width and length of the chute (see *Chute Table below*).
- (2) In play twice +1 or +2 If trees come into play on two or more shots (each rating must be **5** or greater (table value, adjusted for recovery, plus adjustments); adjustment is made to the highest of the separate shot evaluations). Add all values **5** or greater. If they total 11 or less, +1; if they total 12 or more, +2.

The following table prescribes the evaluation of a “chute.” The width (“W”) defines the distance between extending tree branches at the narrowest portion of the chute. The distance (“D”) represents how far it is from the area where the shot is being hit to the point where the chute exists (i.e., where “W” is measured). Evaluate the distance (“D”) from where the shot is being hit to the chute and then how wide (“W”) the chute is. The rating adjustment is reflected at the bottom of the table.

CHUTE TABLE — Men and Women					
Width (“W”) (yards)	Distance from where shot is being hit (“D”) (yards)				
2	< 10	10-13	14-17	18-21	> 21
4	< 20	20-27	28-35	36-43	> 43
6	< 30	30-41	42-53	54-65	> 65
8	< 40	40-55	56-71	72-87	> 87
10	< 50	50-69	70-89	90-109	> 109
12	< 60	60-83	84-107	108-131	> 131
14	< 70	70-97	98-125	126-153	> 153
16	< 80	80-111	112-143	144-175	> 175
18	< 90	90-125	126-161	162-197	> 197
20	< 100	100-139	140-179	180-219	> 219
22	< 110	110-153	154-197	> 197	
24	< 120	120-167	168-215		
26	< 130	130-181	> 181		
28	< 140	140-195			
30	< 150	150-209			
32	< 160	160-223			
34	< 170	≥ 170			
<b>Rating Adjustment</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+1</b>	<b>+2</b>	<b>+3</b>	<b>+4</b>

Before applying the Chute Table rating adjustment value, consider the density of the foliage (will a ball pass through the tree branches?), the area where a ball might drop if it strikes the trees, and how well the scratch player can recover from that area. If the shot can easily be hit over or under the trees, decrease the adjustment by one or two units.



#### d. Par-3 Holes

If the bogey golfer cannot reach the green in one shot, rate trees for both the first and second shots and use the higher value.

### 8A. DESERT (MEN ONLY)

#### a. General

On desert courses, the desert is rated in lieu of Trees (or if both trees and desert exist, in addition to Trees). For a definition of desert, see Section 3.

Desert ratings are based on desert foliage size and density, shot length to reach the landing zone (fairway or green), distance to the desert from the center of the fairway or green, shot length to carry over the desert, and difficulty of recovery from the desert.

Assign a zero value if desert does not exist on the hole (i.e., is not within 60 yards of the line of play and beyond the center of the green). Assign a rating of 1 or more if desert exists on the hole.

#### b. Desert Rating Table

Rating Desert is a two-step process. Ratings are based on the length of the shot to, and the lateral distance from, the center of the landing zone, or in the case of desert that must be carried, the length of the shot needed to **carry** the desert safely (usually by 10 yards). These rating values are then modified by a **recovery reduction** that takes into account the difficulty for a **scratch golfer** to play a ball from the desert to the next landing zone or the green.

The table assumes the desert presents an extreme problem for recovery by the **scratch golfer** (do not attempt to evaluate how well a bogey golfer will recover from the desert). If the recovery is less than

extreme, the rater must determine a **recovery reduction** to apply to both the scratch and bogey table values, as follows (amounts of reduction are detailed near the bottom of the Desert Rating Table):

— **Minor Problem**

- Scratch golfer can get on or near the green most of the time (76-100%)
- Scratch golfer can reach the next fairway landing zone most of the time

— **Moderate Problem**

- Scratch golfer can get on or near the green about half the time (26-75%)
- Scratch golfer can advance the ball more than half the distance to the next fairway landing zone

— **Significant Problem**

- Scratch golfer can rarely get on or near the green (1-25%)
- Scratch golfer can advance the ball up to half the distance to the next fairway landing zone

— **Extreme Problem**

- Scratch golfer cannot get on or near the green (0%)
- Scratch golfer must pitch out laterally

Points to consider when determining the difficulty of recovery:

- Density and spacing of desert foliage;
- Danger presented by the types and proximity of the desert plants;
- Conditions between desert plants that impact the lie of the ball;
- Length of the shot to be played from the desert to the green; and
- Whether the next shot is to the green or another landing zone (see *Decision 12-8b/1*).

Enter the table from the left for the scratch golfer. Re-enter the table from the right to determine bogey ratings.

Enter the table twice if desert must both be crossed and also borders the target landing zone or green on a single shot, applying a scratch golfer's recovery reduction to each value. Use the higher value, and apply the Two ways\* (Y) adjustment, if appropriate.

If both trees and desert exist on a hole, rate both obstacles and take the higher value. If both ratings are **5** or greater, add 1 unit.

If the bogey rating (table value, including recovery reduction, plus adjustments) is **5** or greater, apply the **Above Average (A)** adjustment **under Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough for the bogey golfer only**.

<b>DESERT RATING TABLE – Men Only</b> (All Distances in Yards; Assumes Extreme Recovery Problems)									
Scratch Golfer Shot Length to Target or to Carry Safely	Scratch Crossing Desert Rating	Distance of Desert from Center of Target Landing Zone (Fairway or Green)						Bogey Crossing Desert Rating	Bogey Golfer Shot Length to Target or to Carry Safely
		40-60	30-39	20-29	15-19	10-14	< 10		
< 90	<b>1</b>	1	1	1	2	3	4	<b>2</b>	< 50
90-129	<b>2</b>	1	1	2	2	3	4	<b>3</b>	50-79
130-159	<b>3</b>	1	2	2	3	4	5	<b>4</b>	80-109
160-189	<b>4</b>	2	2	3	4	5	6	<b>6</b>	110-139
190-209	<b>5</b>	2	3	4	5	6	7	<b>8</b>	140-159
210-230	<b>6</b>	3	4	5	6	7	8	<b>10</b>	160-180
> 230 (Full Tee Shot)	<b>Forced Lay up†</b>	4	5	6	7	8	9	<b>Forced Lay up†</b>	> 180 (Full Tee Shot)
Table values assume no chance of reaching the green and player must pitch out laterally or take an unplayable lie.									
Recovery Problems for Scratch Golfer				Minor	Moderate	Significant	Extreme		
Recovery Reduction				-3	-2	-1	<b>0 (Assumed)</b>		

† If rating a course at 2,000 feet or above and determining whether a player can carry an obstacle safely, it is assumed that the carry distance for a golfer is 20 yards less than the total altitude-adjusted shot length. (See note in Section 11-5.)

**c. Adjustments (Scratch and Bogey Ratings)**

- (B) **Bounce\***                      +1     If conditions increase the likelihood that a ball will bounce into the desert (such as a cart path or sloping ground). Do not use if the distance from the center of the target landing zone is less than 10 yards.
- or -1     If conditions decrease the likelihood that a ball will bounce or fly into the desert (such as a tree, bunker, or other obstacle).
- (P) **Percentage\***                      %     If the desert contains areas that are not extreme, or if a desert crossing is only partial, consider using an appropriate percentage of the table value (including recovery reduction) to determine the shot rating value.
- (J) **Jeopardy\***                      -1     If a player can play away from the desert without jeopardy (this does not apply at the green). Only use the **Jeopardy** adjustment if the rating (table value, including recovery reduction, plus adjustments) is **5** or greater.
- (Q) **SQqueeze\***                      +1     If obstacle squeeze exists because desert is within 20 yards of the center of a fairway landing zone on both sides. Only use the **SQqueeze** adjustment if the rating (table value, including recovery reduction, plus adjustments) is **5** or greater.
- or +2     If obstacle squeeze exists because desert is within 15 yards of the center of a fairway landing zone on both sides. Only use the **SQqueeze** adjustment if the rating (table value, including recovery reduction, plus adjustments) is **5** or greater.

(Y) Two ways*	+1	If desert comes into play two ways on a single shot (must be crossed and also borders the target landing zone) and both values (table value, including recovery reduction, plus adjustments) are <b>5</b> or greater, add 1 unit to the higher rating.
(2) In Play twice	+1 or +2	If desert comes into play on two or more shots (each rating must be <b>5</b> or greater (table value, including recovery reduction, plus adjustments); adjustment is made to the highest of the separate evaluations). Add all values of <b>5</b> or greater. If they total 11 or less, +1; if they total 12 or more, +2.

## 9. GREEN SURFACE

### a. General

The Green Surface factor is an evaluation of the difficulty of a green from a putting standpoint. Green speed and surface contouring are the main factors. The size of the green should be considered irrelevant in evaluating putting difficulty.

Use a Stimpmeter to measure the speed of greens (*see Section 8k for how to use the Stimpmeter*). Rating teams should consult with the golf course superintendent before rating a course to determine the average midseason Stimpmeter readings. The rating team should verify the green speed by spot-checking several greens. Consideration should be given to when the greens were last mowed and seasonal variations.

The minimum rating for Green Surface is 3.

### b. Green Surface Rating Table

This table provides rating values for various Stimpmeter readings and green surface characteristics. The slope or tilt of a green is measured by comparing the Stimpmeter readings for downhill versus uphill putts.

- A green with a **relatively flat** surface is one with minor knolls and swales that cause only a few subtle breaks.
- A green with a **moderately contoured** surface is one with knolls and swales that cause many subtle breaks.
- A green with a **highly contoured** surface is one with large knolls or deep swales or numerous shelves designed for hole locations.
- A **tiered green** is considered at least moderately contoured.
- **Gently, moderately, and steeply sloped** greens are defined in the table based on the amount of roll downhill versus uphill from the Stimpmeter.
- A green which has been divided into three or more circles because of surface contours or tiers in order to rate Green Target is considered to be a highly contoured green when rating Green Surface even though it is relatively flat in each of the hole location areas.

Measure green speed and evaluate surface characteristics, then enter the table to determine the scratch rating. Values in parentheses are bogey rating values. A tiered green requires that a Tiered (T) adjustment be applied for both scratch and bogey golfers **under Green Target**.



GREEN SURFACE RATING TABLE – Men and Women			
Stimpmeter Speed	Contour of Green Surface		
	Relatively Flat or Gently Sloped	Moderately Contoured or Moderately Sloped	Highly Contoured or Steeply Sloped
6'11" or Less	3	4	5
7' to 8'5"	4	5	6
8'6" to 9'11"	5	6	7 (8)
10' to 10'11"	6	7 (8)	8 (9)
11' to 11'11"	7	8 (9)	9 (10)
12' or More	8	9 (10)	10
Amount of Roll Downhill For Each Foot of Roll Uphill	< 2'	2' to 3'	> 3'
	<i>i.e., &lt; 2:1</i>	<i>i.e., 2:1 to 3:1</i>	<i>i.e., &gt; 3:1</i>

Note: Table values in parentheses are bogey ratings.

**c. Adjustments (*Scratch and Bogey Ratings*)**

- (U) Unpleasant +1 If green is in poor condition and well struck putts routinely miss the hole (such conditions must prevail all season long).
- or +1 If the circle concept has been applied to determine effective green diameter because a player cannot putt from one part of the green to another.

**(Bogey Ratings only)**

- (T) Tiered +1 If the green is tiered (*see definition in Section 3*).

**10. PSYCHOLOGICAL**

**a. General**

Psychological is an evaluation of the cumulative effect of the other obstacles on a player’s score.

The location of many punitive obstacles close to a target area creates uneasiness in the mind of the player and thus affects his or her score.

- Assign a rating of zero unless there are at least 3 obstacles rated 5 or greater, the ratings of which total 20 or more points.
- On the first and last holes, assign a value of 2, or if there is a table value, add 2 points to that table value.
- On a 9-hole course assign or add a value of 2 on the 1st hole, 0 on the 9th hole, 0 on the 10th hole, and 2 on the 18th hole.

**b. Psychological Rating Table**

This table provides ratings for both scratch and bogey golfers, based on the number and magnitude of above average ratings in all the other categories.

After rating the hole for the other nine obstacles:

- Count the number of scratch obstacles rated 5 or greater;
- Total the scratch obstacles rated 5 or greater;
- Then apply this count and this sum to the table.
- Repeat the procedure for bogey obstacle ratings.

**Note:** The bogey Psychological rating can be less than the scratch if there are lower bogey obstacle ratings (e.g., a Psychological rating of 4 for scratch and 0 for bogey is possible). The entry on Form 1 would be:

4	0
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PSYCHOLOGICAL RATING TABLE – Men and Women									
Number of Obstacles Rated 5 or Greater	Sum of Obstacle Values Rated 5 or Greater								
	3	20-21	22-23	24-25	26-27	x	28	x	29
4	20-21	22-24	25-27	28-30	31-33	34-36	x	37	> 37
5	25-26	27-28	29-30	31-33	34-36	37-39	40-42	43-45	> 45
6	x	30-31	32-33	34-36	37-39	40-42	43-45	46-48	> 48
7	x	x	35-36	37-39	40-42	43-45	46-48	49-51	> 51
8	x	x	40-41	42-43	44-45	46-48	49-51	52-54	> 54
9	x	x	x	45-46	47-48	49-51	52-54	55-57	> 57
Psychological Rating	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**c. Adjustments (Scratch and Bogey Ratings)**

(X) Extraordinary If other obstacle(s) have been rated 10 — see the following table:

EXTRAORDINARY PSYCHOLOGICAL RATING ADJUSTMENT TABLE – Men and Women	
Number of Obstacles Rated 10	Minimum Psychological Rating
1	5
2 or More	9

**(Bogey Women’s Ratings Only)**

(X) Extraordinary The minimum Psychological rating for women bogey golfers is dependent on the bogey women’s OB/ER or Water Hazard rating — see the following table:

BOGEY OB/ER OR WATER HAZARD EXTRAORDINARY PSYCHOLOGICAL RATING ADJUSTMENT TABLE – [Women Only]	
Bogey OB/ER or Water Hazard Rating	Minimum Bogey Psychological Rating
[5]	[3]
[6]	[6]
[7 or more]	[10]

## SECTION 13 — USGA COURSE RATING AND SLOPE RATING CALCULATIONS

A USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating are determined by authorized golf associations based on the following calculations.

### 1. EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH CORRECTION

#### a. Roll

All scratch roll rating values are added and applied to the following formula to determine the scratch roll effective length correction; similarly, all bogey roll rating values are added and applied to the following formula to determine the bogey roll effective length correction:

#### ROLL EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION FORMULA

$$ROLL LENGTH = ROLL TOTAL \times 3.5$$

#### b. Elevation

All elevation ratings (differences in feet) are added and applied to the following formula to determine the elevation effective length correction:

#### ELEVATION EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION FORMULA

$$ELEVATION LENGTH = ELEVATION TOTAL \times 0.23$$

#### c. Dogleg/Forced Lay up

All scratch dogleg/forced lay-up ratings (actual yardage adjustments) are added to determine the scratch dogleg/forced lay up effective length correction; similarly, all bogey dogleg/forced lay-up ratings (actual yardage adjustments) are added to determine the bogey dogleg/forced lay up effective length correction.

#### d. Prevailing Wind

All prevailing wind ratings are added and applied to the following formula to determine the prevailing wind effective length correction:

#### PREVAILING WIND EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION FORMULA

$$WIND LENGTH = WIND TOTAL \times 6$$

#### e. Altitude

Altitude adjustment is applied only when the golf course is 2,000 feet or more above sea level. Apply the golf course altitude (in feet) and total number of par-4 and par-5 holes (N) to the following formula to determine the altitude effective length correction [scratch women's yardage is in brackets; **no adjustment** is made for bogey women]:

#### ALTITUDE EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION FORMULA

$$ALTITUDE LENGTH = N \times 250 [210] \times (-0.07) \times ALTITUDE \div 5000$$

#### f. Effective Playing Length

Effective Playing Length (EPL) is the actual measured length of the course plus all of the corrections noted in a. through e., above. There are separate EPLs for scratch and bogey players. The appropriate EPL is used in the two yardage rating formulas to generate scratch and bogey yardage ratings.

When the measured length of the course is between 3,000 yards (the minimum for a USGA Course Rating) and 4,800 yards [3,600], an adjustment must be made to account for the fact that players are not hitting very many full shots. This adjustment is made before adding the effective length corrections noted above:

EXECUTIVE COURSE EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION FORMULA	
<i>EXECUTIVE COURSE EPL</i> (men)	$= (0.633 \times \text{MEASURED LENGTH}) + 1760$
<i>EXECUTIVE COURSE EPL</i> (women)	$= (0.7 \times \text{MEASURED LENGTH}) + 1080$

## 2. YARDAGE RATING

### a. Scratch Yardage Rating

Scratch Yardage Rating (SYR) is determined by dividing the scratch effective playing length of the course by 220 [180] and adding 40.9 [40.1] to the resulting figure.

SCRATCH YARDAGE RATING FORMULAS	
<i>SYR</i> (men)	$= ((\text{scratch})EPL(\text{men}) \div 220) + 40.9$
<i>SYR</i> (women)	$= ((\text{scratch})EPL(\text{women}) \div 180) + 40.1$

### b. Bogey Yardage Rating

Bogey Yardage Rating (BYR) is determined by dividing the bogey effective playing length of the course by 160 [120] and adding 50.7 [51.3] to the resulting figure.

BOGEY YARDAGE RATING FORMULAS	
<i>BYR</i> (men)	$= ((\text{bogey})EPL(\text{men}) \div 160) + 50.7$
<i>BYR</i> (women)	$= ((\text{bogey})EPL(\text{women}) \div 120) + 51.3$

## 3. OBSTACLE STROKE VALUE

### a. Weighting of Obstacle Factors

Some obstacle factors have more impact on scoring than others. The relative importance of each factor is shown in the table below. The impact of each factor is different for scratch and bogey golfers, and for par-3 holes as opposed to par-4 and par-5 holes. The par-3 obstacle weighted values total only 0.80 rather than 1.00 because obstacles on par-3 holes are only about 80 percent as important as they are on par-4 and par-5 holes.

WEIGHTING OF OBSTACLE FACTORS				
Obstacle	Scratch Golfer		Bogey Golfer	
	Par-4/5	Par-3	Par-4/5	Par-3
Topography	.10	.08	.12	.08
Fairway	.11	.00	.09	.00
Green Target	.09	.09	.06	.07
Recoverability and Rough	.14	.13	.15	.13
Bunkers	.07	.06	.10	.10
Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough	.10	.08	.09	.07
Water Hazards	.14	.13	.14	.11
Trees	.09	.07	.14	.11
Green Surface	.11	.11	.08	.09
Psychological	.05	.05	.03	.04
Total	1.00	.80	1.00	.80

**b. Scratch Obstacle Stroke Value**

On Form 1, the scratch ratings for each obstacle are added across to obtain a par-3 total and a par-4/par-5 total for the scratch golfer. Each total is then transferred to Form 2 and multiplied by the appropriate scratch relative weight factor incorporated in Form 2 (and shown above). The total of the weighted scratch obstacle values for par-4 and par-5 holes is combined with the total of the par-3 weighted scratch obstacle values. Scratch Obstacle Stroke Value (SOSV) is this grand total multiplied by 0.11, less 4.9.

SCRATCH OBSTACLE STROKE VALUE FORMULA
$SOSV = ((TOTAL\ SUM\ OF\ WEIGHTED\ SCRATCH\ OBSTACLES) \times 0.11) - 4.9$

For example, the Scratch Obstacle Stroke Value for a weighted scratch obstacle sum of 54.5 would be:

$$(54.5 \times 0.11) - 4.9 = 6.0 - 4.9 = 1.1 \text{ strokes.}$$

**c. Bogey Obstacle Stroke Value**

On Form 1, the bogey ratings for each obstacle are added across to obtain a par-3 total and a par-4/par-5 total for the bogey golfer. Each total is then transferred to Form 2 and is multiplied by the appropriate bogey relative weight factor incorporated in Form 2 (and shown above). The total of the weighted bogey obstacle values for par-4 and par-5 holes is combined with the total of the par-3 weighted bogey obstacle values. Bogey Obstacle Stroke Value (BOSV) is this grand total multiplied by 0.26, less 11.5.

BOGEY OBSTACLE STROKE VALUE FORMULA
$BOSV = ((TOTAL\ SUM\ OF\ WEIGHTED\ BOGEY\ OBSTACLES) \times 0.26) - 11.5$

For example, the Bogey Obstacle Stroke Value for a weighted bogey obstacle sum of 55.3 would be:

$$(55.3 \times 0.26) - 11.5 = 14.4 - 11.5 = 2.9 \text{ strokes.}$$

**4. USGA COURSE RATING AND SLOPE RATING**

**a. USGA Course Rating**

USGA Course Rating (CR) is obtained by adding the Scratch Obstacle Stroke Value to the Scratch Yardage Rating.

USGA COURSE RATING FORMULAS
$CR_{(men)} = SOSV_{(men)} + ((scratch)EPL_{(men)} \div 220) + 40.9$
$CR_{(women)} = SOSV_{(women)} + ((scratch)EPL_{(women)} \div 180) + 40.1$

For the example above, if the scratch effective playing length is 6,250 yards, the USGA Course Rating for men is:

$$1.1 + (6250 \div 220) + 40.9 = 70.4.$$

**b. Bogey Rating**

Bogey Rating (BR) is obtained by adding the Bogey Obstacle Stroke Value to the Bogey Yardage Rating.

BOGEY RATING FORMULAS
$BR_{(men)} = BOSV_{(men)} + ((bogey)EPL_{(men)} \div 160) + 50.7$ $BR_{(women)} = BOSV_{(women)} + ((bogey)EPL_{(women)} \div 120) + 51.3$

For the example above, if the bogey effective playing length is 6,220 yards, the Bogey Rating for men is:

$$2.9 + (6220 \div 160) + 50.7 = 92.5.$$

**c. Slope Rating**

Slope Rating is the difference between the Bogey Rating and the USGA Course Rating multiplied by 5.381 [4.24] and rounded to the nearest whole number.

SLOPE RATING FORMULAS
$SLOPE_{(men)} = 5.381 \times (BR_{(men)} - CR_{(men)})$ $SLOPE_{(women)} = 4.24 \times (BR_{(women)} - CR_{(women)})$

In the example above, the Slope Rating for men is:

$$5.381 \times (92.5 - 70.4) = 119.$$

**d. Alternative 18-hole USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating Calculation**

An 18-hole USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating can also be determined by combining the USGA Course Rating from each nine and averaging the Slope Rating from each nine (with .5 rounding up to the next whole number). For example, if the front nine has a 36.0 USGA Course Rating and a 120 Slope Rating and the back nine has a 35.5 USGA Course Rating and 123 Slope Rating, the 18-hole USGA Course Rating would be 71.5 and the 18-hole Slope Rating would be 122. The procedure for determining nine-hole ratings can be found in Section 16.

## SECTION 14 — POST RATING PROCEDURES

### 1. REVIEW

The rating team's results must be submitted to a Course Rating Review Committee for final evaluation. The Course Rating Review Committee should be composed of association staff members and the most experienced team leaders. This Committee should check all calculations for accuracy and compare the results with those of other courses. The association should inform the club as to the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating only after approval by the Course Rating Review Committee.

Authorized golf associations may not arbitrarily alter ratings that they believe are out of line. If they believe a rating is incorrect, the course must be re-rated. The Course Rating Review Committee may increase or decrease the USGA Course Rating recommended by a rating team by 0.4 strokes (0.6 strokes for Bogey Ratings) for 18 holes and 0.2 strokes (0.3 strokes for Bogey Ratings) for nine holes if such action is considered to be warranted. The Course Rating Review Committee should be aware that changing a USGA Course Rating may change the Slope Rating.

Alternatively, the Committee may reject the rating of a rating team, in which case another team should rate the course. The Committee should also review requests for new ratings from clubs and review existing ratings periodically.

### 2. AUTHORIZED GOLF ASSOCIATION RECORDS

A complete file of each rating must be kept by the authorized golf association for future reference. The file should include a scorecard, the names of the persons rating the course, copies of the rating forms, information regarding the weather and other conditions on the day of rating, the fairway watering system, types of grasses, height of rough, official measurements of the holes, names of persons who measured the golf course, and whether permanent yardage markers have been installed.

When all courses in an area have been rated, the Course Rating Review Committee must compile a list of the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating for each course. The list should include total yardage, Scratch and Bogey Yardage Ratings, Scratch Obstacle Stroke Value, and Bogey Obstacle Stroke Value for each course in its jurisdiction that has been rated. The Committee should review these lists, particularly the differences between the Yardage Rating and USGA Course Rating, to make sure that all courses are rated at their proper levels.

An alphabetical listing of the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating of all courses in an area should be sent to each club for posting to facilitate returning of scores made away from home. Ratings must be submitted to the USGA Handicap Department as soon as they have been issued to each course to ensure that the USGA Course Rating and Slope Database is current.

## SECTION 15 — THE EFFECT OF COURSE MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE ON COURSE RATING

A golf course is rated on its effective playing length and its playing difficulty under normal conditions. If the length or playing difficulty changes materially, handicaps will be distorted. Placement of tees and holes must be balanced each day and maintenance practices (watering, cutting, etc.) must be consistent from day-to-day and month-to-month so that the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating will remain accurate. Minor construction may have an effect on the ratings of the course. Following are some examples of the impact that improper course management, changes in course maintenance, and minor construction can have on the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating. Please see Section 15 of “The USGA Handicap System” for more information.

### 1. CHANGE IN EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH

Increasing the effective playing length of the course by 22 yards [18 yards] adds one-tenth (0.1) of a stroke to the USGA Course Rating; reducing the length lowers the rating by the same amount. Increasing effective playing length also raises the Slope Rating: adding 93 yards [85 yards] increases the Slope Rating by 1. Shortening the course reduces the Slope Rating similarly.

#### a. Tee placement

The most obvious way to increase or decrease effective playing length is to move all the tee markers behind or ahead of the permanent yardage markers. Placing tee markers 10 yards per hole behind the permanent markers adds 180 yards to effective playing length which in turn increases the USGA Course Rating by 0.8 [1.0] of a stroke, and increases the Slope Rating by 2.

#### b. Dogleg or forced lay up

Adding obstacles that force a scratch player to lay up short of the normal 250 [210] yard tee shot increases the USGA Course Rating. Removing them so the scratch player can hit a full tee shot lowers the ratings. Building deep bunkers across the fairway 220 [180] yards from the tee forces a 40-yard lay up and adds 0.2 of a stroke to the USGA Course Rating. Since the bogey golfer would not lay up, Slope Rating decreases by 1.

Building bunkers in, or transplanting large trees at, the corner of a dogleg that previously was routinely “cut” by the scratch player adds effective playing length to the course equal to the added yardage of the approach shot.

#### c. Roll

Softening fairways increases effective playing length; hardening fairways decreases effective playing length. If overnight watering is increased so that fairway condition changes from firm to average, or from average to soft, the USGA Course Rating goes up almost 0.5 [0.6] of a stroke, and the Slope Rating increases by 1.

### 2. CHANGES IN OBSTACLES

Generally speaking, changing obstacles has less effect on the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating than changing effective playing length. Increasing an obstacle rating value by 1 (e.g., from a “4” to a “5”) has negligible effect because the rating points are first weighted (0.03 to 0.15, depending on the obstacle) then multiplied by 0.11 in conversion to scratch obstacle strokes (or by 0.26 in conversion to bogey obstacle strokes). Assuming a weighting of 10 percent (0.10), a “4” to “5” change in obstacle difficulty results in a USGA Course Rating increase of only 11 one-thousandths (0.011) of a stroke (or a Bogey Rating increase of 0.026 of a stroke). To achieve an increase of 0.1 of a stroke in USGA Course Rating, obstacles must be rated a total of 9 points higher. Adding 22 yards [18 yards] to the effective playing length achieves the same result.



Some examples of changes in obstacles that produce an increase in USGA Course Rating of 0.1 of a stroke are listed below.

**a. Fairway**

Change mowing pattern to decrease fairway width by 10 yards on 4 holes. Decreasing fairway width from 30 yards to 20 yards on all par-4 and par-5 holes adds over 0.3 of a stroke to the USGA Course Rating and increases the Slope Rating by approximately 1 ½ points.

**b. Recoverability and Rough**

Raise mower blades to increase rough height by 1 inch on 3 holes. Increasing the rough height from 2 ½" to 3 ½" {1 ½" to 2 ½"} on all 18 holes adds nearly 0.7 of a stroke to the USGA Course Rating and increases Slope Rating by approximately 5.

**c. Out of Bounds**

Move the white stakes 10 yards closer to five fairway landing zones or greens.

**d. Bunkers**

Add 13 average bunkers, each in a strategic place such as near the scratch player’s tee shot landing zone (where none existed before) or closely bordering a green (adding ¼ to “the fraction of the green closely bordered by bunkers”). These bunkers will add just over 1 to the Slope Rating. A smaller number of bunkers will produce the same result if they are deeper than 3 [2] feet or must be carried to reach the target.

**e. Green Target**

Decrease watering the greens on 10 holes to change them from “unusually soft” to “average firmness” or from “average” to “unusually firm.” Changing the holding properties of the greens on all 18 holes adds about 0.2 of a stroke to the USGA Course Rating, and increases the Slope Rating by 1.

**f. Green Surface**

Lower greens mower cutting height to increase Stimpmeter measurement by 12 to 18 inches on 8 greens. Speeding up all 18 greens by 1 to 1 ½ feet adds just over 0.2 of a stroke to the USGA Course Rating and almost 1 to the Slope Rating.

In summary, moving tee markers, changing mowing patterns, cutting heights, and watering practices on all 18 holes can increase or decrease the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating as follows:

COURSE MAINTENANCE AND SETUP – POTENTIAL IMPACT		
Obstacle/Effective Length Factor Changed	Change in USGA Course Rating	Change in Slope Rating
Tee Placement	+ or - 0.8 [1.0]	+ or - 2
Roll	+ or - 0.5 [0.6]	+ or - 1
Fairway	+ or - 0.3	+ or - 1
Recoverability and Rough	+ or - 0.7	+ or - 5
Green Target	+ or - 0.2	+ or - 1
Green Surface	+ or - 0.2	+ or - 1
<b>Total Change</b>	<b>+ or - 2.7 [3.0]</b>	<b>+ or - 11</b>

As can be seen, it is imperative that the course setup and maintenance remain consistent with the difficulty when rated. Otherwise, inaccuracies up to 5 or 6 strokes in USGA Course Rating and 20 or more points in Slope Rating can result.

## SECTION 16 — NINE-HOLE USGA COURSE RATING AND SLOPE RATING

“The USGA Course Rating System” can be used to determine ratings for nine-hole courses. The procedure when using the USGA Course Rating Forms is as follows:

- To obtain the Yardage Rating, double the length of the 9 holes and enter this value on Form 3 [3W];
- Evaluate the effective playing length correction factors for the 9 holes using Form 1, double these totals and enter them in the “18-hole totals” column on the Form 1;
- Evaluate the obstacles for the 9 holes using Form 1, add the obstacle rating values for each obstacle factor, double these totals, and enter them in the “18-hole totals” column on Form 1;
- Complete Forms 2 and 3 [3W] using the doubled values described above. Combine the Obstacle Stroke Values and the Yardage Ratings as is done in an 18-hole rating;
- Divide the USGA Course Rating by 2. The result is the nine-hole USGA Course Rating; however,
- The Slope Rating is **not** divided by 2. The result of the calculations is the nine-hole Slope Rating.

Two nine-hole ratings can be combined to form an 18-hole USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating by combining the USGA Course Rating from each nine and averaging the Slope Rating from each nine.

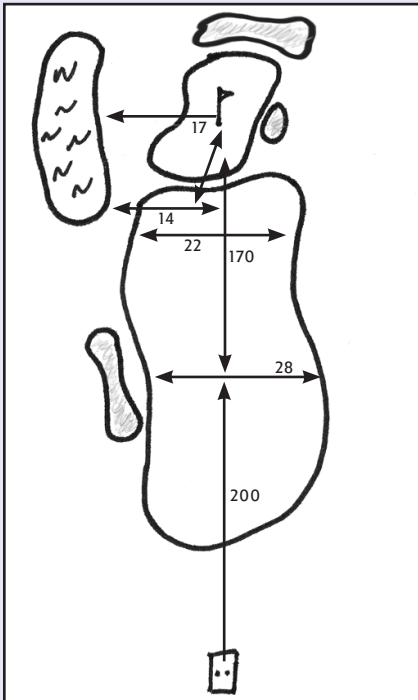
## SECTION 17 — DECISIONS

### SECTION 4

#### THE SCRATCH & BOGEY GOLFER

##### 4-3/1 Transition Zone

- Q.** When raters apply the Transition Zone concept are they just averaging the obstacle values of a long approach shot and a very short shot just in front of the green?
- A.** No. To understand how to rate a hole when the Transition Zone concept is applied, imagine that the golfer plays the hole twice. First, the golfer is able to reach the center of the green successfully with a long approach shot. Second, the golfer is not able to reach the center of the green successfully with a long approach shot and must play an extra shot from a landing zone short of the green surface to the center of the green and use the top row of the Green Target rating table for the approach shot. Average the Green Target rating of the first way the golfer plays the hole with the Green Target rating of the second way. The bottom row of the Green Target table lists the average Green Target rating using the Transition Zone concept. Apply the result to the Recoverability and Rough (R&R) and Bunker tables to determine the R&R and Bunkers Ratings. Average the Topography, Fairway, OB/Extreme Rough, Water Hazards, and Trees ratings of the two times the golfer plays the hole. The Psychological rating is based on the nine “averaged” obstacle ratings. Note that any shot-specific adjustments are applied independently to each shot and prior to averaging.



For the hole pictured, assume there are no punitive obstacles in front of the green. The dimensions of the green target are 22 yards wide by 28 yards deep. Bunkers closely border  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the green. Rough height is  $2\frac{1}{4}$ " cool season. The hole is 380 [290] yards in length.

##### Rated as a two-shot hole for the bogey golfer (men)

- Fairway = 4.
- Green Target = 7 (Approach shot of 180 yards to a green with an effective diameter of 25).
- Water = 5 (Second shot of 180 yards with lateral water hazard at 17 yards).

##### Rated as a three-shot hole for the bogey golfer (men)

- Fairway = 6 (First landing zone yields a rating of 4. Second landing zone (22 yards wide) yields a 6 rating. Choose the higher of the two ratings).
- Green Target = 2 (Approach shot of 10 yards to the center of the green with effective diameter of 25).
- Water = 6 (second landing zone is < 20 yards short of the center of green with lateral water hazard at 14 yards). This yields a rating of 6. The short approach shot of < 20 yards with lateral water at 17 yards yields a rating of 2. Choose the higher of the two ratings).

##### Average the results for bogey golfer (men)

- Fairway = 5 (4 (two-shot hole) + 6 (three-shot hole) = 10;  $10 / 2 = 5$ ).

- Green Target = 5 (7 (two-shot hole) + 2 (three-shot hole) = 9;  $9/2 = 4.5$ ; round up to 5).
- R&R = 5 (Averaged green target of 5 with rough height of  $2\frac{1}{4}$ " cool season).
- Bunkers = 4 (Averaged green target of 5 with bunkers closely bordering  $> \frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of green).
- Water = 6 (5 (two-shot) + 6 (three-shot) = 11;  $11 / 2 = 5.5$ ; round up to 6).

Rated as a two-shot hole for the bogey golfer (women)

- Fairway = 3.
- Green Target = 7 (Approach shot of 140 yards to a green with an effective diameter of 25).
- Water = 5 (Second shot of 140 yards with lateral water hazard at 17 yards).

Rated as a three-shot hole for the bogey golfer (women)

- Fairway = 5 (First landing zone yields a rating of 3. Second landing zone (22 yards wide) yields a 5 rating. Use the higher of the two ratings).
- Green Target = 2 (Approach shot of 10 yards to the center of the green with effective diameter of 25).
- Water = 6 (second landing zone is  $< 20$  yards short of the center of green with lateral water hazard at 14 yards). This yields a rating of 6. The short approach shot of  $< 20$  yards with lateral water at 17 yards yields a rating of 2. Use the higher of the two ratings).

Average the results for bogey golfer (women)

- Fairway = 4 (3 (two-shot hole) + 5 (three-shot hole) = 8;  $8 / 2 = 4$ ).
- Green Target = 5 (7 (two-shot hole) + 2 (three-shot hole) = 9;  $9/2 = 4.5$ ; round up to 5).
- R&R = 5 (Averaged green target of 5 with rough height of  $2\frac{1}{4}$ " cool season).
- Bunkers = 4 (Averaged green target of 5 with bunkers closely bordering  $> \frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of green).
- Water = 6 (5 (two-shot) + 6 (three-shot) = 11;  $11 / 2 = 5.5$ ; round up to 6).

#### 4-3/2 Effect of Transition Zone on Course Rating

**Q:** What effect does the Transition Zone concept have on course rating?

**A:** The Transition Zone (TZ) concept is needed to generate ratings that make sense when rating holes that can barely be reached in regulation by scratch and bogey golfers, or are just out of range of being reached in regulation. Without the TZ concept, raters would be forced to decide whether or not the player can reach the center of the green. If the player can, the Green Target, Recoverability and Rough (R&R), and Bunker ratings are high; if the player cannot, these ratings are relatively low.

For example, consider a hole where the middle tees are five yards closer to the green than the back tees and the center of the green can be reached from the middle tees but not from the back tees. Without the TZ concept, the obstacle rating from the middle tees may well be higher than the obstacle rating from the back tees. Using the TZ concept, the two obstacle ratings will be very similar.

Following is an example that illustrates this situation when rating for bogey men on a hole that measures from 350 to 400 yards from various tees. An analysis for women bogey golfers, or for men or women scratch golfers could have been performed just as easily with similar results.

Consider a par-4 hole with 11 teeing grounds, each five yards apart, so that the hole measures from 350 to 400 yards in length. Rate the hole for a male bogey golfer, with and without using the TZ concept.

Assume the following:

- Topography – minor problem, level hole.
- Fairway – 35 yards wide tee to green.
- Green Target – 24-yard diameter (column (4)) without any special features.
- Recoverability and Rough – 2" to 3" cool season grass (third column).
- Bunkers – closely bordering  $> \frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the green circumference; also some along the fairway.
- Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough – 30-39 yards from the center of the fairway landing zone; 20-29 yards from the center of the green (on the left).
- Water Hazards – a pond at the green; 20-29 yards from the center of the green (on the right).
- Trees – 20-29 yards from the center of the fairway landing zone, moderate recovery (table recovery reduction of minus 3).
- Green Surface – relatively flat, 9' on the Stimpmeter.
- Psychological – from the table.

Obstacle ratings using the TZ concept would be as follows:

(Note: Green Target (GT) ratings from 375 yards through 390 yards were based on rounding the average GT rating and adjusting it up or down one. With the long GT rating of 7 and the short GT rating of 2, the various ratings are determined as follows: 375 yards – round 4.5 up and add 1 to get 6; 380 yards – round 4.5 up to get 5; 385 yards – round 4.5 down to get 4; 390 yards – round 4.5 down and subtract one to get 3.)

<b>WITH TRANSITION ZONE</b>											
<b>(BOGEY GOLFER REACHES THE GREEN A PERCENTAGE OF THE TIME WHEN 370 YARDS &lt; L &lt; 390 YARDS)</b>											
OBSTACLE	HOLE LENGTHS										
	350	355	360	365	370	375	380	385	390	395	400
TOPOGRAPHY	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
FAIRWAY	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
GREEN TARGET	6	6	6	7	7	6	5	4	3	2	3
RECOVERABILITY & ROUGH	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	4	3	4
BUNKERS	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	2	3
OB/EXTREME ROUGH	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4
WATER HAZARDS	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2
TREES	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
GREEN SURFACE	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
PSYCHOLOGICAL	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0

BOGEY YARDAGE RATING	5.00	5.04	5.07	5.10	5.13	5.16	5.19	5.22	5.25	5.29	5.32
BOGEY OBSTACLE STROKES	0.40	0.40	0.42	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.32	0.30	0.18	0.10	0.15
HOLE BOGEY COURSE RATING	5.40	5.43	5.49	5.53	5.56	5.58	5.51	5.52	5.44	5.39	5.46

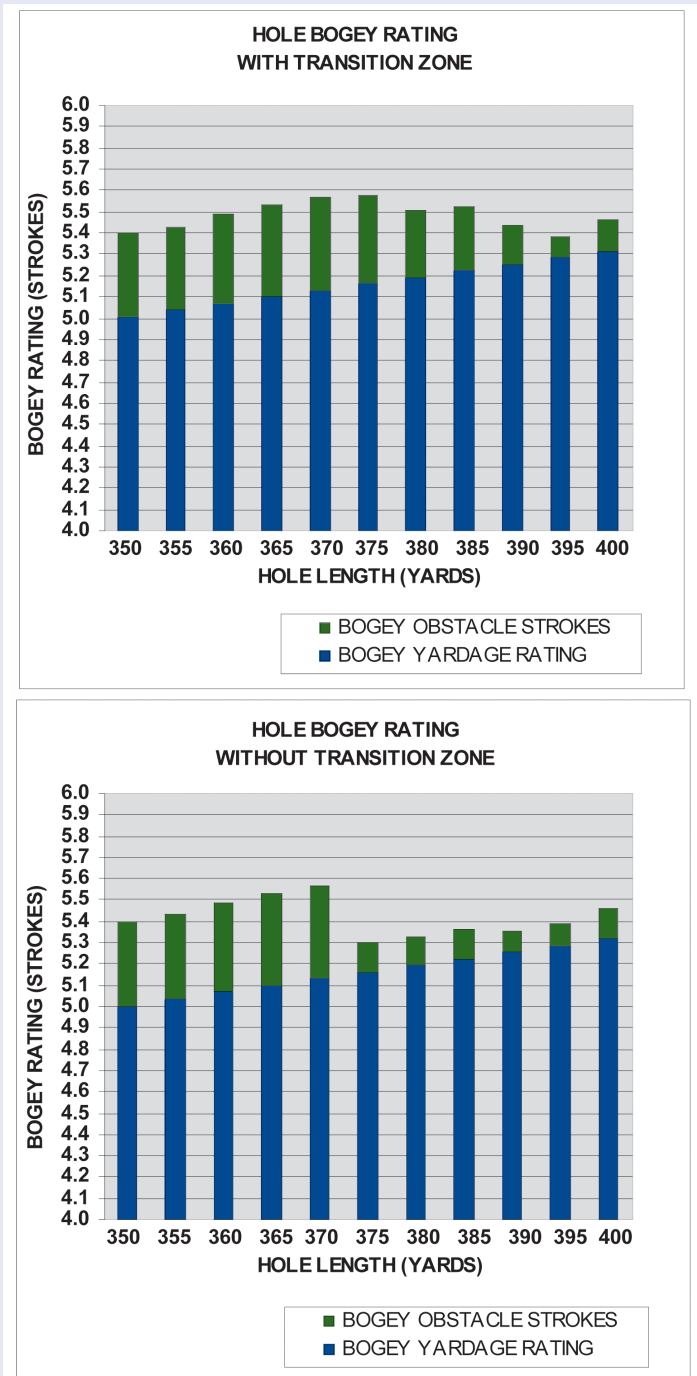
Obstacle ratings without the TZ concept would be as follows:

(Note: Green Target ratings for all holes longer than 370 yards are now 2 (or 3), because of the assumed short approach.)

<b>WITHOUT TRANSITION ZONE</b>											
<b>(BOGEY GOLFER CANNOT REACH THE GREEN IN TWO WHEN L &gt; 370 YARDS)</b>											
OBSTACLE	HOLE LENGTHS										
	350	355	360	365	370	375	380	385	390	395	400
TOPOGRAPHY	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
FAIRWAY	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
GREEN TARGET	6	6	6	7	7	2	2	2	2	2	3
RECOVERABILITY & ROUGH	6	6	6	6	6	3	3	3	3	3	4
BUNKERS	5	5	5	5	5	2	2	2	2	2	3
OB/EXTREME ROUGH	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4
WATER HAZARDS	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2
TREES	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
GREEN SURFACE	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
PSYCHOLOGICAL	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0

BOGEY YARDAGE RATING	5.00	5.04	5.07	5.10	5.13	5.16	5.19	5.22	5.25	5.29	5.32
BOGEY OBSTACLE STROKES	0.40	0.40	0.42	0.43	0.43	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.10	0.10	0.15
HOLE BOGEY COURSE RATING	5.40	5.43	5.49	5.53	5.56	5.30	5.33	5.36	5.35	5.39	5.46

Graphs of the tee-by-tee bogey hole ratings (below) show a relatively smooth transition when the TZ concept is used for holes over 370 yards in length. When the TZ concept is not used, there is a large dip in the Bogey Obstacle Strokes between 370 and 375 yards. Note that the vertical scale shown only runs from 4.0 to 6.0, rather than from 0.0 to 6.0 in order to show the changes in overall hole ratings better as the length of the hole is increased.



Although the hole ratings dip when the bogey golfer no longer has a chance to reach the green in regulation, the dip is nowhere near as pronounced when the TZ concept is employed.

4-5/1 Line of Play

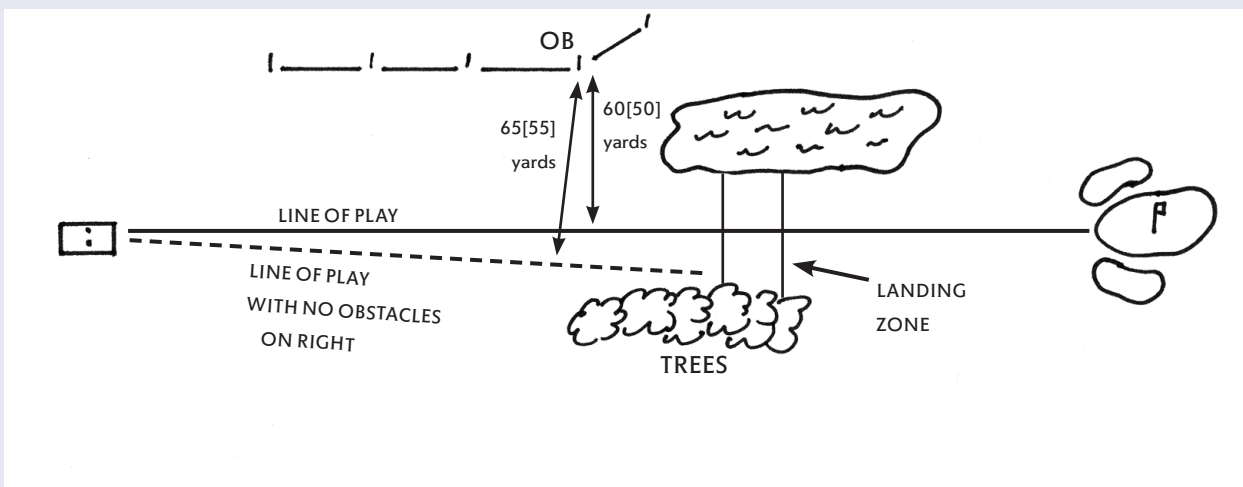
- Q. Please clarify the phrase “line of play” in the “Obstacles Do Not Exist” section on page 13 (page 4 of the Guide).
- A. First, it is important to understand that even though a rater may physically see an obstacle on a hole, that obstacle (for course rating purposes) “may not exist.” In the above-mentioned section it clearly states: “If an obstacle is more than 60 [50] yards to the left and right of the line of play, and more than 60 [50] yards to the left, right, and beyond the center of the green, generally it should not be considered a factor for either the scratch or bogey golfer (i.e., it “does not exist” on the hole and **should be rated zero**). It is important to note the word “generally” in the above sentence. There may be a circumstance where obstacles are outside of this yardage requirement and still may “exist.”

Line of Play, as defined in “The Rules of Golf,” “is the direction which the player wishes his ball to take after a stroke, plus a reasonable distance on either side of the intended direction. The line of play extends vertically upwards from the ground, but does not extend beyond the hole.”

The line of play is normally down the center of the fairway. When there is a severe obstacle on one side of a hole (e.g., a lake along the left edge of the fairway), the line of play may be located off center, farther from the severe obstacle (unless there are severe obstacles on both sides).

The “reasonable distance on either side” is related to the scratch and bogey golfer’s accuracy patterns (see pages 12-13). The distance on either side is negligible just in front of where a stroke is made; it increases to a few yards at the target or landing zone. The reasonable distance is greater for a tee shot than it is for a second shot to a par-4 green. The reasonable distance is greater for men than it is for women.

In the illustration below, to determine if the OB “exists” on the hole, measure from the line of play (i.e., from the center of the fairway). If the OB is within 60 [50] yards, then assign a rating of 1 or more. If the trees on the right side at the landing zone are removed and only light rough exists in that area, the line of play will shift somewhat to the right of center and the OB would be farther away. In that case, the OB might “not exist” on this hole.





## SECTION 5

### RATING GOLF COURSES

#### 5/2 Slope Ratings Equal at Two or More Sets of Tees

- Q.** At a golf course, the men's USGA Course Rating for the forward tees is 69.4 and the men's USGA Course Rating for the back tees is 71.1. The Slope Rating for both tees is 113. Is this possible?
- A.** Yes. The difference in the USGA Course Rating from the forward tees to the back tees indicates that the scratch golfer will score 1.7 shots higher on average from the back tees. The Slope Rating of 113 for each set of tees indicates that bogey golfers will score the same relative to the scoring ability of the scratch golfer for both sets of tees. In other words, the difference between the USGA Course Rating and the Bogey Rating from both sets of tees is the same (in this case 21 strokes for men). Thus the bogey golfer will also score 1.7 strokes higher on average from the back tees than he will from the forward tees.

Normally, the higher the USGA Course Rating, the higher the Slope Rating (longer yardage results in a higher Yardage Rating and higher Obstacle Stroke Values). When Slope Rating remains constant from the middle to the back tees, it is usually the result of the location of the obstacles relative to the bogey golfer's shot patterns from the back tees. This is most evident on courses with many long par-4 holes. The bogey golfer's tee shots land well short of the trouble when playing from the back tees. Bogey then hits over the trouble to generous landing areas short of the greens and is left with easy approach shots to the greens. The result is that the increase in Bogey Yardage Rating is offset by a decrease in Bogey Obstacle Stroke Value, and the Slope Rating remains the same.

When such a situation occurs, or especially when an "inversion" occurs (i.e., when a Slope Rating for a longer set of tees is lower than it is for a shorter set), the Course Rating Review Committee should consider adjusting either the USGA Course Rating or the Bogey Rating within permitted limits to eliminate the problem. Changing one or the other rating by a few tenths will change the Slope Rating by one or more units.

#### 5/3 Minimum Yardage

- Q.** What is the minimum yardage of a course for a USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating?
- A.** In order to qualify for a USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating, courses 3,000 yards or longer for 18 holes (1,500 yards for nine holes) must have one or more "long" holes as follows:
- For any combination up to nine holes, there must be a least one hole that would require a scratch player to hit a full shot (i.e., a hole that would require a scratch player to hit a shot greater than or equal to 250 [210] yards).
  - For any combination greater than nine holes, there must be at least two holes that would require a scratch player to hit a full shot (i.e., two holes that would require a scratch player to hit a shot greater than or equal to 250 [210] yards).

The authorized golf association is responsible for implementing this procedure in a specific area and must be responsible for determining if, in fact, the golf course meets the requirements set forth within

Section 5-1e of “The USGA Handicap System.” When courses are shorter than this length, the basic assumptions in the USGA Course Rating System no longer hold true. The formula for converting effective playing length into strokes fails — players are not required to hit enough full tee shots (if any) on such a short course. Scoring ability on a short course depends much more on pitching, chipping, and putting, and not on overcoming distance, as it does on a “regulation” course. (See *Decision 5-1e/1* and *Appendix A* of “The USGA Handicap System.”)

## SECTION 8

EVALUATION OF OBSTACLES AND CORRECTIONS  
TO EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH

## 8-3/1 Courses Rated Under Assumption Play is Conducted Under Rules of Golf

**Q.** What does it mean to rate a golf course in accordance with the Rules of Golf?

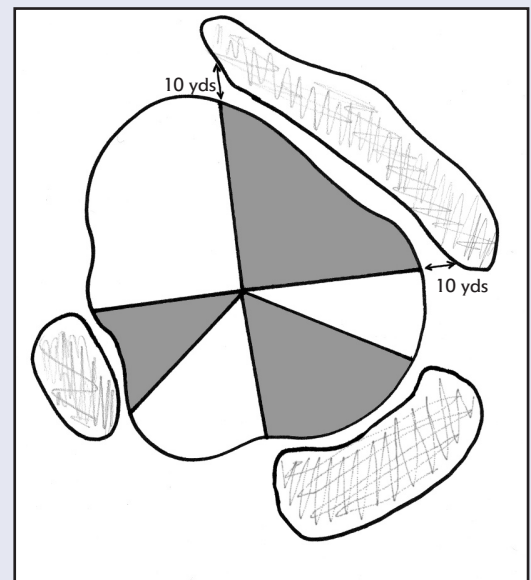
**A.** A golf course is to be rated as if it were marked properly under the Rules of Golf. Hazards are either bunkers, water hazards, or lateral water hazards. Lateral water hazards should be defined by red stakes or lines. Water hazards should be defined by yellow stakes or lines. A water hazard is any sea, lake, pond, river, ditch, surface drainage ditch, or other open water course (whether or not containing water) and anything of a similar nature. Dry but severe obstacle areas off the fairway marked with red stakes or lines (i.e., “lateral trees”) are not lateral water hazards and should not be rated as lateral water hazards. Such red markings should be ignored.

Environmentally sensitive areas marked as water hazards or lateral water hazards should be rated according to Section 8-3. If there is a one-stroke penalty for shots landing in such an area, then rate the area as if it were a water hazard or, if appropriate, as if it were a lateral water hazard. If the penalty for a ball landing in such an area is stroke and distance, then rate the area as Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough. If free relief is given, rate shot(s) hit from the drop area(s).

## 8-8h/1 Measuring Fraction of Green Closely Bordered by Bunkers

**Q.** When measuring the fraction of the green closely bordered by bunkers, where should measuring begin and end?

**A.** In the example, step off the circumference of the green along the shaded areas. Notice that the shaded areas incorporate lines drawn from the center of the green to the edges of the bunkers. It might be helpful to imagine such a line when stepping off the portion of the green closely bordered by bunkers. In determining the edges of the bunkers, include any sloping ground where, if a ball were to land, it would bounce into the sand. The total shaded portion of the green’s circumference divided by the whole circumference gives the percentage of the green closely bordered by bunkers. The circumference can be paced in its entirety or approximated by multiplying the effective diameter by 3 (or more accurately, by 3.14).



## SECTION 10 RATING PROCEDURE

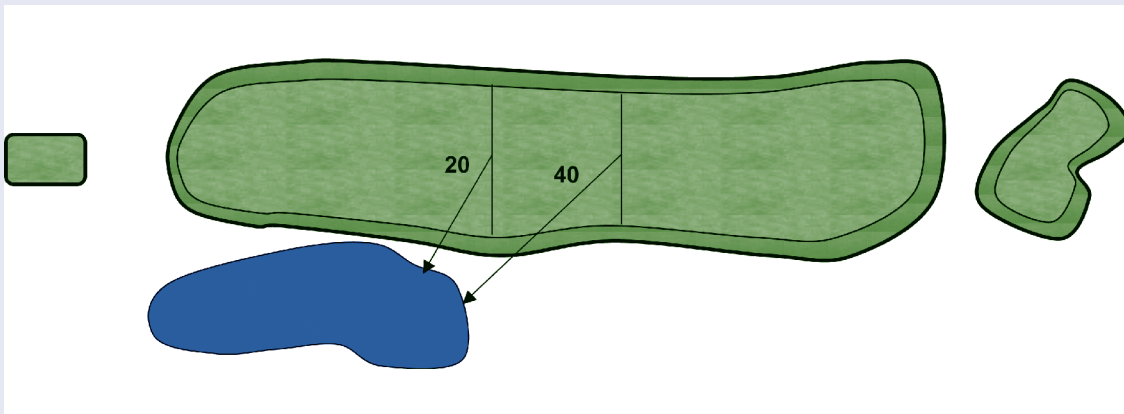
### 10-2/1 Calculating a USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating for tees 7,000 [6,000] yards and longer or 4,800 [4,000] yards and shorter

- Q.** The option exists for an association to calculate a rating for extremely long or extremely short tees for both men and women by using the obstacle ratings and effective playing length factors from a shorter (or longer) set of tees and adjusting for the difference in yardage. How and why is this done?
- A.** For tees 7,000 yards or longer for men or 6,000 yards or longer for women, ratings can be calculated by applying the same obstacle ratings and effective playing length factors from the nearest set of tees under 7,000 [6,000] yards that has been evaluated by the rating team. The Yardage Rating will be calculated based on the actual length of each hole. The same procedure can be used to calculate ratings for tees 4,800 yards or shorter for men and 4,000 yards or shorter for women, assuming there is at least one set of rated tees over 4,800 [4,000] yards.

This procedure will result in a USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating that is consistent with a linear based expected score model. With extremely long tees it is difficult to rate many of the holes for a bogey golfer as very few, if any, bogey golfers will play from such a length. The same holds true for the scratch golfer from extremely short tees.

### 10-5/1 Measuring to Obstacles From the Center of the Fairway

- Q.** If the border or edge of an obstacle factor is not adjacent to the edge of a fairway landing zone, what should be recorded as the distance to the obstacle from the center of the landing zone?
- A.** Sometimes an obstacle might be near a landing zone but the distance from the start of the landing zone to the obstacle might be significantly different than the distance from the end of the landing zone to the obstacle. In this case, the two distances should be averaged. In the example (with the assumed 20 yards of roll), the distance to the water hazard would be the average of the distance from the start of the landing zone to the hazard and the distance from the end of the landing zone to the hazard. In this example, the average would be  $(20+40)/2$  or 30 yards. Thus, the distance from the center of the landing zone to the hazard would be recorded as 30 yards. Alternatively, the rater could just measure lateral distances from the center of the landing zone.



## SECTION 11

### EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH FACTORS

#### 11-3/1 Lay Up for Scratch and Bogey Golfer

**Q.** Is it true that only the scratch golfer lays up?

**A.** No. Conditions for a forced lay up apply to both a scratch and bogey golfer. It is true that on most golf courses, the number of forced lay ups for scratch golfers will usually outnumber those for bogey golfers. Lay up by choice is employed primarily by scratch golfers in course management decisions; however, that does not exclude a bogey golfer from laying up by choice.

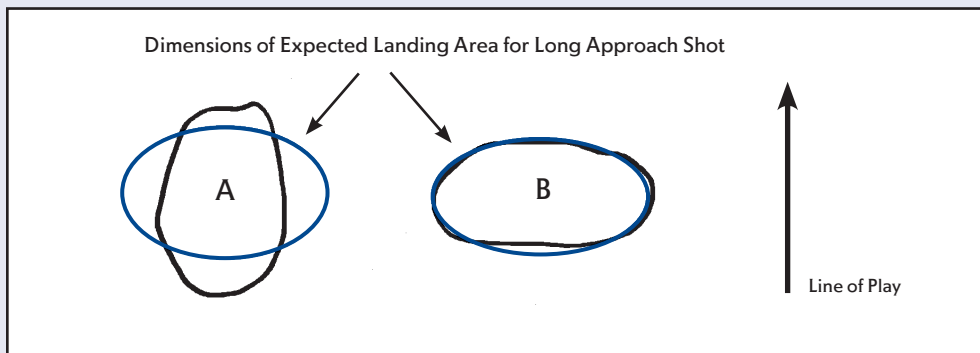
**SECTION 12**  
**OBSTACLE FACTORS**

**12-2/1 Split Fairways**

- Q.** How is a hole evaluated when it has two fairways?
- A.** The first step is to find out how frequently each side of the fairway is played. This information can be ascertained from the course superintendent, the club’s golf professional, or a narrator. Rate the hole as if only one side of the fairway is played. Then rate the hole as if only the other side of the fairway is played. Calculate a weighted average of the two ratings based on how often each side of the fairway is played. For example, suppose that on a hole with a split fairway, one side of the hole is played 25% of the time. When the hole is rated, the side played 25% of the time yields a Fairway rating of 2. The other side of the hole yields a Fairway rating of 6. The rating recorded on a Form 1 for Fairway would be 5 ( $2+6+6+6=20$ ;  $20/4=5$ ). If the percentages were reversed (i.e., the easy side was played 75% of the time), the Fairway rating would be 3 ( $2+2+2+6=12$ ;  $12/4=3$ ).

**12-3/1 Measuring Greens**

- Q.** Explain the proper procedure for measuring the size of a green.
- A.** Essentially, when measuring the size of the green, course raters are trying to determine how difficult it is to hit the green, which generally depends on the surface area of the green. For purposes of rating the Green Target, raters must know the effective diameter of the green. The effective diameter is the width of the green plus the depth of the green divided by two. Width and depth are determined regardless of the line of play. In other words, the direction of approach shots to the center of the green has no bearing on either the actual width or depth of the green (see sketch below). Usually, this is a straightforward procedure, however, some green shapes make determining the green depth or width difficult. Using good judgment, course raters should determine what is the best representation of the green width and depth. Sometimes it is necessary to average the measurements of the green width or depth at more than one location on the green (see “Oddly Shaped Greens,” pages 49-50). The team leader should make the final decision as to which measurements best represent the width and depth of the green. The team must be consistent in its procedure for measuring greens.



In the sketch above, examples A and B represent two greens of identical size and shape but placed at different angles to the line of play. The effective diameters of both greens are the same, however,

as the blue line marking the dimension of the expected landing areas reveals, a long approach shot will hit green A less often than green B. When the position of the green in relation to the line of play is such that the dimensions of the expected landing area significantly exceed the shape of the green, consider decreasing the effective diameter (moving one column to the right in the Green Target Table) or increasing the Green Target value by one. This procedure should not apply on 2:1 or 3:1 greens because the effective green diameter has already been reduced (see “Oddly Shaped Greens,” pages 49-50).

### 12-3/2 Measuring Approach Shot Lengths

- Q.** Explain the proper procedure for measuring approach shot lengths.
- A.** Before going on the golf course, raters should calculate the mathematical approach shot lengths for all par-4 and par-5 holes. This is done by subtracting from the length of the hole the distance the golfer covers to reach the approach shot landing zone. Once on the golf course, raters might adjust a landing zone closer to or farther from the center of the green. This would depend on such factors as roll, elevation, prevailing wind, dogleg, forced lay up, and lay up by choice. If any of these factors affect the distance the golfer can advance the ball from the tee to a distance where the golfer is able to reach the green (transition zone included), then such an effect should be recorded under “adjusted approach shot” and used as the approach shot distance.

### 12-4 Prepared Waste Areas

- Q.** How should prepared “waste areas” be rated?
- A.** Golf courses should be rated in accordance with the Rules of Golf. However, for rating purposes, areas commonly referred to as “waste areas” are rated under Recoverability & Rough (R&R) as well as Bunkers. When rating the area under R&R, consider the condition of rough or extreme rough throughout the portion of the waste area(s) near the landing zone(s) and/or at the green and determine the “rough height equivalent” of the waste area(s), and then apply it to the R&R table and adjustments. When rating the area under Bunkers, consider any adjustments that might exist in the portion of the waste area(s) that is considered near the fairway and/or the green. Waste areas that are not prepared are rated under R&R and/or OB/ER. (*Revised*)

### 12-4c/1 Mounds Adjustment

- Q.** Explain the **Mounds (M)** adjustment under the Recoverability & Rough obstacle category.
- A.** Mounds should be considered in the rough near the fairway landing zone(s) and/or around the green. Mounds in the fairway landing zone are rated under Topography (they affect stance and/or lie). Mounds around the green are distinctly different from the **Rise/DRop (R)** adjustment. However, a combination of mounds and rise and drop may warrant an adjustment when independently they may not. Consider the impact the mounds have on scoring. If the mounded areas were flat, could the scratch player hit the green (mounds near the fairway) or get up and down (greenside mounds)? With the mounds present, how much more difficult is it to hit the green or get up and down? If it is not more difficult, there is no adjustment. Consider the downhill, sidehill, and uphill lies on the various sides of the mounds in this evaluation.

### 12-4c/2 Rough on Hillside Between Terraced Holes

- Q.** A golf course built on a hillside features adjoining parallel holes. The holes are terraced such that one hole is fifteen feet above the other, separated by a slope of rough extending the length of the holes. Recovery from the sloping area of rough seems more difficult than if the rough was level yet no adjustment under Recoverability and Rough specifically covers this condition. How should raters account for such a situation?
- A.** The increased difficulty in a player’s ability to recover from the condition described relates primarily to stance and ball position. While no adjustment under Recoverability and Rough specifically handles this situation, this is similar to the problems faced by a player who encounters mounds in the rough. Utilizing the same philosophy found in the discussion of the **Mounds** adjustment (Decision 12-4c/1), an appropriate use of the **Mounds (M)** adjustment is warranted in this circumstance.

### 12-4c/3 Rise and Drop Adjustment

- Q.** What does the statement “excluding bunkers” mean when determining a **Rise/Drop (R)** adjustment?
- A.** When determining the fraction of the green bordered by a rise and/or drop, any area of the green that is closely bordered by bunkers is excluded from being used to determine the fraction. This area is already being given a value under Bunkers, including a probable depth adjustment if the bunker is at least 5' below the green. So if the column for  $>1/2$  to  $3/4$  bunkers closely bordering the green is used, it would be impossible to have a **Rise/Drop (R)** adjustment as less than  $1/2$  the green is left to qualify for the adjustment.

### 12-4d/1 Par-3 Landing Zone

- Q.** How is a par-3 landing zone rated under Recoverability and Rough (R&R), as noted on page 53 (page 22 of the Guide)?
- A.** When rating a landing zone on a par-3 hole where the bogey golfer cannot reach the green, a close review of where bogey golfers would likely hit their tee shot is warranted. Use the accuracy table to determine the size of the area where the golfer is likely to land. Even though there may not be a fairway cut at this landing area (remember Fairway does not get a value on a par 3), the rating team should apply the **Par-3 (3)** adjustment and look at other factors that may contribute to an adjustment. Also, if the bogey golfer hits less than a full tee shot to avoid trouble near the edge of the green, a **Lay-up (L)** adjustment may apply.

In addition the rating team should make some corrections for the bogey golfer because bogey is essentially playing a two-shot hole. In this case, the rating team may disregard the **None (N)** adjustment for Bunkers on a par-3 hole. In other words, rate the hole as a two-shot hole as you would a par-4 two-shot hole, except that Fairway still gets no value. Rate other bogey obstacle values as you would for any other two-shot hole.

### 12-5a Closely Bordering Bunkers

- Q.** The Guide and manual state that normally bunkers within 10 yards of the edge of the green qualify as “closely bordering.” There are some bunkers that, although not within 10 yards of the edge of the green will collect a shot that just misses a green. Do these bunkers also qualify as “closely bordering?”



- A.** If the bunker is not within 10 yards of the edge of the green and conditions exist which indicate that a shot missing the green by just under 10 yards will obviously be collected by the bunker, consider such areas of the green as closely bordered by bunkers. Such conditions would include but are not limited to sloping ground, very closely mown grass, and hard pan.

### 12-7/2 Water Hazard Carry Different Depending on Line of Play

- Q.** What is the carry distance when a water hazard runs at an angle to the line of play so that the carry on one side is greater than the other?
- A.** If the water hazard cuts through the fairway, average the carry distance on both sides of the fairway with the carry at the center of the fairway. If the water hazard does not cut through the fairway, measure the carry along the line of play and consider using the **Percentage (P)** adjustment based on the average carry distance. Be sure that the carry distance includes the distance to carry the water hazard safely (usually by 10 yards).

### 12-7/3 Different Conditions Short of the Far Edge of a Water Hazard

- Q.** A tee shot must be hit 170 [120] yards to carry a water hazard safely. Consider three scenarios. In the first scenario, the player must hit over a lake that begins in front of the teeing ground and extends to 160 [110] yards from the tee. In the second situation, the player must hit over a small creek that crosses the fairway 160 [110] yards from the tee. Between the teeing ground and the creek is extreme rough. In the third scenario, the same creek exists as described in the second scenario except in this case the area between the teeing ground and the creek consists of both minor rough and fairway. Should the water hazard obstacle value be identical for all of these situations? Would an obstacle value for Extreme Rough be included in the second example?
- A.** In all three situations analyze the effect the presence of obstacles has on a player's scoring ability. The first and second situations are practically identical in that a poorly struck ball will, in the first case, end up in a water hazard or, in the second case, be lost in either extreme rough or the water hazard. In either case the likely remedy would be to invoke the stroke and distance option under Rule 27-1 and play a third shot from the teeing ground. As there is no difference in the effect on scoring, the obstacle value associated with a 160 [110] carry over water should be applied in both scenarios. A value for extreme rough should not be included in the analysis of the second example because this would in essence be "double-dipping" (i.e., ultimately the players must negotiate the water hazard for their ball to be in play).

In the situation where minor rough and fairway lead up to the water hazard, the combination of the missed shot and a small creek will likely not be as punitive to the player as a poorly played ball in the aforementioned instances. The obstacle value in this case is derived by reducing the crossing water hazard table value with a **Percentage (P)** adjustment. The nature of the hazard will determine the applicability and/or extent of the adjustment.

### 12-8a/1 Impact of Underbrush on Recovery From Trees

- Q.** Thick underbrush is rated as Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough when the underbrush makes it likely the ball will be lost, unplayable, or advanced with great difficulty. How is the recovery from trees affected by underbrush?
- A.** Underbrush forces the scratch player to hit a different recovery shot from the trees (e.g., to use

a highly lofted club rather than a long iron to hit a low, rolling punch shot). Thus the underbrush must be considered when evaluating the probability of recovery from trees. For example, consider trees with no underbrush located 25 yards from the center of the tee shot landing zone. Assume recovery is a moderate (60%) problem, based on the scratch golfer's opportunity to hit a low fade or hook, or a rolling shot to recover. The rating for this example would normally be 3 (table value 6, recovery reduction -3). By adding underbrush to this example, the golfer's recovery problems will most likely increase. If the tree limbs are high and the shot necessary to get out of the underbrush also gets out of the trees, the recovery problems might increase only slightly, say to moderate (40%) problem, which would make the recovery reduction -2. If the tree limbs are low and thick with foliage, the recovery problems might increase to a significant (20%) problem, which would make the recovery reduction -1. It would not be an accurate evaluation of the impact on the golfer's scoring ability to evaluate the trees without considering the underbrush.

If the underbrush likely leads to a lost ball (i.e., meets the definition of OB/Extreme Rough), this area has to be rated under OB/Extreme Rough, and Trees should be disregarded or severely downgraded. High ratings in both categories would overstate the impact on scoring for both the scratch and bogey golfers.

### 12-8b/1 Explanation of Probability of Recovery From Trees

- Q.** A tee shot landing area is bordered by trees that are 25 yards from the center of the fairway. On a two-shot hole, it is judged that the scratch golfer could rarely get on or near the green from the trees and the rater determines the trees to be a significant problem. Based on the tee shot, the rater assigns a rating value of 5 for trees on the hole (6 from the top of the Trees table, reduced by 1 for recovery). Consider a second scenario where the same trees border a short, three-shot hole. The scratch golfer can advance the ball less than half the distance to his normal second landing zone but is still able to reach the green with his third shot by hitting a longer club. Should the rating value for trees on this hole be 5 as well?
- A.** In determining recovery from the trees the rater should consider their impact on the golfer's play of the hole. In the first situation, an extra shot was required for the golfer to reach the green. In the second scenario, however, the golfer was still able to reach the green with the third shot even though it was a substantially longer shot. Because the golfer did not necessarily lose a shot in recovering from the trees, the rater would be justified in this case in determining the trees to be a moderate rather than significant problem, resulting in a rating value of 4 (6 from the top of the Trees table reduced by 2 for recovery), or even 3 (reduced by 3 for recovery).

### 12-10/1 Women's Bogey OB/ER or Water Hazard Psychological Adjustment

- Q.** When rating for women, there is a "Bogey OB/ER and/or Water Hazard Extraordinary Psychological Adjustment Table." Does the table imply that the "minimum bogey Psychological rating" is added to Psychological value determined from the sum of the other nine obstacle ratings?
- A.** No. The purpose of this table is to ensure that the Psychological rating is at least 3, 6, or 10 for holes with bogey OB/ER or Water Hazard values of 5, 6, or 7 (or more), respectively, when the sum of the other nine obstacle values would not yield a Psychological value this high for the bogey woman golfer. Additional Psychological ratings for the first and last hole are added to these minimums. The maximum possible Psychological rating recorded on Form 1 is 10. (*Revised*)

## SECTION 15

### THE EFFECT OF COURSE MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE ON COURSE RATING

#### 15-1/1 Effect of a Long Par-4 Hole on the Bogey Golfer's Rating

- Q.** To what extent does a long par-4 hole affect the bogey golfer's rating? Doesn't the shorter approach shot reduce the bogey golfer's rating too much on a hole where they are going to need at least one more stroke to reach the green?
- A.** No. When a par-4 hole is unreachable by a bogey golfer in two shots and the transition zone concept cannot be applied, the bogey golfer will, in most cases, have a relatively short approach shot. In this case, the bogey golfer's Green Target value will be based on a relatively short approach shot. This will also be reflected in the bogey golfer's Bunker and Recoverability & Rough ratings. Indeed, these ratings will most often be lower than if the bogey golfer were hitting a full-length second shot into the green. However, the effect of these lower obstacle ratings is more than offset by the higher Yardage Rating that results from the hole being longer.

## APPENDIX A FORMS

### Appendix A/1 Determination of 3.5 as a Multiplier to Calculate Effective Playing Length for Roll

- Q.** When a landing zone is soft and level, the roll value increases the effective playing length by only 7 yards (2 x 3.5). The opposite is true when a landing zone is firm and level; effective playing length decreases by only 7 yards. Players get much more than 7 extra yards of roll at some of these firm, flat landing zones. Should the multiplier be higher than 3.5?
- A.** No. One of the purposes of the USGA Course Rating System is to determine the effect of obstacles and course conditions on golfers' overall scoring ability. To accomplish this, raters are asked to assign numerical values to various factors they observe on the course in accordance with specific, objective guidelines. These numerical ratings are then, through a series of formulas, converted to strokes.

The greatest impact on scoring can be attributed to yardage. Adding 22 [18] yards to the length of a hole increases the scratch scoring difficulty by 0.1 strokes. There are other factors that may influence scoring as well. Uphill holes are more difficult to score on than downhill holes of the same measured length. The same is true for soft ground conditions in relation to firm ground conditions, holes into the wind versus downwind holes, etc. But these effective length corrections do not have the same conversion ratio to strokes as "straight yardage." If firm fairway conditions allow tee shots to roll 22 [18] yards farther than normal, it does not mean the hole plays 0.1 strokes easier.

Regression analysis shows that this extra 22- [18-] yard gain does not lower scores as much as shortening the hole by that length would. In fact, for roll, the analysis determined that 3.5 yards for each rating point assigned by the raters gives the best prediction of score. Thus, in the example above, if -2 points are assigned for a change in roll on a flat fairway from average to firm, effective playing length is reduced by 7 yards, while the extra roll might be for example, 15 yards. The 7-yard change in effective playing length converts to 0.032 [0.039] strokes, while shortening the hole by 15 yards would have changed scoring by 0.068 [0.083] strokes. The difference is explained, in part, by the fact that firm fairways mean a ball can bounce more easily into trouble and firm fairways often produce more difficult lies.

## SECTION 18 — SHORT COURSE RATING PROCEDURE

### 1. GENERAL

The USGA has established the following guidelines in an effort to provide golf courses that are shorter than 3,000 yards with a USGA Short Course Rating. This rating is very similar in nature to a regular course rating procedure and guidelines listed in Section 5, with the exceptions as outlined in this section. Only golf courses that meet the definition below are eligible for this type of rating and the USGA Short Course Handicap Procedure for this section is outlined within “The USGA Handicap System,” Appendix A. Please note that a Short Course Handicap must be designated with an “SL” and is not transferable to ANY other rated golf course.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

#### a. Short Course

A Short Course is defined as any set or pre-determined number of holes meeting the following criteria:

- 18 holes totaling less than 3,000 yards;
- Nine holes totaling less than 1,500 yards; or
- Fewer than nine holes that total, when scaled up to an 18-hole layout, less than 3,000 yards (for example, a six-hole course less than 1,000 yards would scale up to an 18-hole course less than 3,000 yards).

It should be noted that, in order to qualify for a USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating, courses 3,000 yards or longer for 18 holes (1,500 yards for nine holes) must have one or more “long” holes as follows:

- For any combination up to nine holes, there must be at least one hole that would require a scratch player to hit a full shot (i.e., a hole that would require a scratch player to hit a shot greater than or equal to 250 [210] yards).
- For any combination greater than nine holes, there must be at least two holes that would require a scratch player to hit a full shot (i.e., two holes that would require a scratch player to hit a shot greater than or equal to 250 [210] yards).

The authorized golf association is responsible for implementing this procedure in a specific area and must be responsible for determining if, in fact, the golf course meets the requirements set forth within this section. (See *Decision 5/3*.)

#### b. Short Course Rating

A USGA Short Course Rating is the USGA’s mark that indicates the evaluation of the playing difficulty of a short course for scratch golfers under normal course and weather conditions. It is expressed as strokes taken to one decimal place and is based on yardage and other obstacles to the extent that they affect the scoring ability of a scratch golfer.

### 3. FORMS TO USE AND THE RATING PROCESS

The USGA Handicap Department has supplied authorized golf associations with USGA Short Course Rating Forms SCR1 (Short Course Form 1), SCR2 (Short Course Form 2), and SCR3 (Short Course Form 3) to use for rating courses under the USGA Short Course Rating Procedure. Associations will note that the Form SCR1 is similar in nature to the standard Form 1 with the inclusion of Effective Playing Length corrections and the ten Obstacle Factors. However, there is no rating necessary for the bogey golfer because this rating system is not portable, so the review of obstacles is limited to the scratch golfer only. Similarly, Form SCR3 has no references to a Bogey Rating or to a Slope Rating, since these do not exist in the Short Course Rating System and Short Course Handicap System.

Raters should use “The USGA Course Rating System Guide” (men and women) while rating short courses, but ignore any references to the bogey golfer. Since all short courses have mostly par-3 holes, raters should be very aware of the adjustments that are applicable for par-3 holes only.

#### 4. FORMULAS TO USE IN SHORT COURSE RATING CALCULATION

The procedure for calculating Obstacle Strokes and Effective Playing Length corrections for short courses is similar to the standard USGA Course Rating calculation as outlined in Section 13 of this manual. Transfer the Effective Playing Length correction totals from Form SCR1 and the Scratch Obstacle Stroke Value from Form SCR2 to Form SCR3.

The Short Course Yardage Rating (SCYR) is determined by dividing the scratch effective playing length of the short course by 330 [270] and adding 2.6 strokes per hole to the resulting figure.

##### USGA SHORT COURSE YARDAGE RATING FORMULAS

$$SCYR_{(men)} = ((scratch)EPL_{(men)} \div 330) + 2.6 \times N_{(number\ of\ holes)}$$

$$SCYR_{(women)} = ((scratch)EPL_{(women)} \div 270) + 2.6 \times N_{(number\ of\ holes)}$$

USGA Short Course Rating (SCR) is obtained by adding the Scratch Obstacle Stroke Value to the Short Course Yardage Rating:

##### USGA SHORT COURSE RATING (SCR) FORMULAS

$$SCR_{(men)} = SOSV_{(men)} + ((scratch)EPL_{(men)} \div 330) + 2.6 \times N_{(number\ of\ holes)}$$

$$SCR_{(women)} = SOSV_{(women)} + ((scratch)EPL_{(women)} \div 270) + 2.6 \times N_{(number\ of\ holes)}$$

Using the formula above, if the Scratch Obstacle Value is 1.1 and the scratch Effective Playing Length is 2,750 yards for an 18-hole short course, the USGA Short Course Rating for men is:

$$1.1 + (2750 \div 330) + (18 \times 2.6) = 56.2.$$

For further explanation on Short Course Handicap Computation, please see Appendix A in “The USGA Handicap System.”

## SECTION 19 — USGA PACE RATING

### 1. GENERAL

The USGA Pace Rating System uses a formula for establishing a target completion time (“Time Par”) for each hole on a golf course. This computation takes into account the length and difficulty of the hole and other conditions of play, such as whether players normally walk or ride and whether carts are required to stay on the cart paths. The sum of the Time Pars for 18 holes is the “USGA Pace Rating” for the course.

The USGA Pace Rating is determined from the most often played set of tees. These are generally the middle tees for men. However, a course may request a separate USGA Pace Rating for each set of tees on the course. In that case, when a tournament or play-day is taking place on the back tees or on the front tees, the USGA Pace Rating of the tees being played will apply. When members of a group play from more than one set of tees, the higher USGA Pace Rating will apply to all players in the group.

A USGA Pace Rating calculated according to the formulas and assumptions outlined below, answers the question, “How fast should a group of four average golfers play on a busy day?” Because the data entered in the USGA Pace Rating procedure are completely specific to the course, the resulting USGA Pace Rating is unique to that course.

Generally, the USGA Pace Ratings for courses turn out to be between 3:40 and 4:00 hours, although long, difficult courses come up with USGA Pace Ratings of more than four hours.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

#### a. Length Time

The time needed to play a hole based on the measured length of the hole. This calculation converts the length of the hole to minutes, then adds a standard four minutes for chipping and putting around the green. Length time includes all the time for a group of four players to play the hole, whether walking or riding. Additional time is factored in if carts must be kept on the cart paths

#### b. Obstacle Time

The additional time needed to play a hole where there are difficulties to overcome, such as extreme rough, water hazards, trees, bunkers, etc. Water hazards automatically add minutes to the obstacle time. Other obstacles add to the time if they present a higher-than-average difficulty for an average golfer. A calculation converts the obstacle ratings into minutes.

#### c. Green-to-tee Time

The additional time needed to get from the green to the next teeing ground. On a course played by a significant number of walkers, the distance from green to tee may add to the Time Par of the previous hole. A calculation converts the measured green-to-tee distance into minutes. Generally, on a course played mostly by riders, no green-to-tee time is added. However, on courses where carts are required and there are long distances between holes, additional time may be added. An additional four minutes is added to any hole where a stop may be made at a “halfway house” after completing the hole, before teeing off on the next hole.

#### d. Total Time

The Total Time for a hole is the sum of Length Time plus Obstacle Time plus Green-To-Tee Time.

#### e. Time Par

Time Par equals the Total Time for a hole rounded to the nearest minute.

#### f. USGA Pace Rating

A USGA Pace Rating is the sum of the Time Pars on the course.

### 3. ASSUMPTIONS

#### a. Player Skill

The USGA Pace Rating System assumes that play is by golfers who are average or higher-handicapped. The skill of the bogey golfer is considered in the Length Time and the Obstacle Time of a hole. To assure objectivity in judging the difficulty of an obstacle and the effect of hole length on the bogey golfer, the USGA Pace Rating formula uses the obstacle ratings assigned to the course under the USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating procedure.

#### b. Playing Conditions

The USGA Pace Rating System assumes that play is under “impeded” conditions. This means that groups of four are filling all or most of the playing slots on the course, so that smaller or faster groups are not able to play through. In other words, the course is at capacity. A playing slot is the space occupied by a group of four. The number of playing slots usually depends on the par of the hole: on a par-5 hole there are 2 playing slots (e.g., a group on the tee and a group approaching the green); on a par-4 hole there are 1½ (half of the time one, the other half of the time two) playing slots; on a par-3 hole there is 1 playing slot. Playing slots become overloaded if players play too slowly or if groups are added to the course too rapidly.

#### c. Walking vs. Riding

The USGA Pace Rating of a course is the same for walkers and riders when carts are allowed full access to the fairways, even at 90 degrees. The USGA Pace Rating of a course is higher when carts are restricted to the cart paths. When walkers and riders restricted to paths are mixed, the higher Pace Rating prevails.

#### d. Group Size

The Pace Rating of a course is based on groups of four. If play is impeded, then the smaller groups will play at the same pace as the groups of four. On other days, if open holes are available and groups of two or three predominate, a group of two should finish in a time that is approximately two minutes per hole faster, and a group of three should finish approximately one minute per hole faster.

### 4. PACE RATING

#### a. Club Policy

The club must provide the following information:

- Carts: Are carts required or optional? Are carts required to remain on cart paths (if so, which holes)? (Note: If the “90 degree rule” is in effect, this has no impact on the USGA Pace Rating.)
- Walkers: Is the course walked by a significant number of players?

#### b. Form 1 Information

The following information should be available from the most recent USGA Course Rating Form 1:

- The distance from the green of each hole to the tee of the next. For holes 1-17, the rating team should have measured the yardage by walking or lasering the most frequently-traveled route from the edge of each green to the permanent marker on the middle tees on the next hole.
- The number(s) of the hole(s) that precede(s) the halfway house.
- The rating values on each hole for any obstacle (except Water Hazards) that is rated 5 or higher for either the scratch or bogey golfer.



- The Water Hazard ratings for each hole (the obstacle rating for Water Hazards does not have to be 5 or higher to be considered).

## 5. COMPLETING USGA PACE RATING FORM PRI

At the top of the form, record the name of the course, the name of the official conducting the rating, and the date. Indicate which tees are being rated.

### a. Line 1 – Length (In Yards)

Enter the length of each hole from the USGA Course Rating Form 1 for the tees being rated.

### b. Line 2 – Length Time OR Cart Path Time

Compute Length Time if the hole is played by a significant number of walkers or if carts are used and are allowed on the fairway (allowed on the fairway can mean the 90-degree rule).

$$\text{Length Time} = \text{Length of the hole (Line 1) divided by 48, plus 4}$$

OR

Compute Cart Path Time instead of Length Time if carts are used but are restricted to cart paths only. Complete this calculation instead of Length Time even if the hole is played by a significant number of walkers.

$$\text{Cart Path Time} = \text{Length of the hole (Line 1) divided by 42, plus 4}$$

Round to the nearest tenth and enter Cart Path Time or Length Time, as appropriate, on Line 2. Note: Carts may be allowed on the fairways of some holes, but restricted to the cart paths on others (especially par-3 holes). Therefore, on such a course, both Length Time and Cart Path Time will apply.

### c. Line 3 – Non-Water Obstacle Total

Enter the total of all obstacle ratings (excluding Water Hazards) that are 5 or higher. For each obstacle, the larger of the scratch or bogey rating is included in this total, so long as it is at least 5.

### d. Line 4 – Non-Water Obstacle Time

Compute the Non-Water Obstacle Time.

$$\text{Non-Water Obstacle Time} = \text{Non-Water Obstacle Total (Line 3) divided by 30}$$

Round to the nearest tenth and enter on Line 4.

### e. Line 5 – Water Value

Enter the obstacle rating value for Water Hazards (include any value, scratch or bogey, whichever is higher).

### f. Line 6 – Water Time

Compute the Water Time.

$$\text{Water Time} = \text{Water Value (line 5) divided by 6}$$

Round to the nearest tenth and enter on Line 6.

**g. Line 7 – Total Obstacle Time**

Add the Non-Water Obstacle Time (Line 4) to the Water Time (Line 6). Round to the nearest tenth and enter on Line 7.

**h. Line 8 – Green-To-Tee Distance**

Complete this entry only if (1) a significant number of players walk the course, or if (2) carts are required and the green-to-tee distance on the hole is greater than 80 yards. No entries are needed if most people ride in carts and there are no extreme distances between greens and tees (longer than 80 yards).

**i. Line 9 – Green-To-Tee Distance Time**

If a significant number of players walk, compute the Green-To-Tee Distance Time as follows.

$$\text{Green-To-Tee Distance Time} = \text{Green-To-Tee Distance (Line 8) minus 20, divided by 48}$$

(If the Green To Tee Distance is 20 yards or less, enter 0 as The Green-To-Tee Distance Time.) If carts are required and the Green-To-Tee Distance is greater than 80 yards, compute the Green-To-Tee Distance Time as follows:

$$\text{Green-To-Tee Distance Time} = 1 \text{ minute} + \text{Green-To-Tee Distance (Line 8) minus 80 divided by 260}$$

Round to the nearest tenth and enter on Line 9. Note: Green-To-Tee Distance Time is added to the previous hole (the hole with the green). There is no entry for hole 18.

**j. Line 10 – Halfway House Time**

Allow four minutes for a stop at the halfway house on the course or the clubhouse snack bar at the turn. Assign the four minutes to the hole that precedes the stop

**k. Line 11 – Total Time**

Calculate the Total Time for a hole by adding together the following:

$$\text{Total Time} = \text{Length Time OR Cart Path Time (Line 2)} + \text{Total Obstacle Time (Line 7)} + \text{Green-To-Tee Distance Time (Line 9)} + \text{Halfway House Time (Line 10)}$$

Round to the nearest tenth of a minute and enter on Line 11.

**l. Line 12 – Time Par**

Round the Total Time (Line 11) to the nearest minute and enter on Line 12.

**m. Line 13 – Front 9/Back 9 Total Time**

Add together the Time Pars for holes 1 through 9 and convert the result to hours and minutes. This is the front 9 Total Time. Add together the Time Pars for holes 10 through 18 and convert the result to hours and minutes. This is the back 9 Total Time.

**n. Bottom Line – USGA Pace Rating**

The sum of the 18 Time Pars is the course USGA Pace Rating. While the front 9 and back 9 Total Times may add to a slightly different result, it is better to publish a Pace Rating that matches the sum of the 18 Time Pars, even though it includes some minor rounding errors.

For more information on the USGA Pace Rating System, call the USGA at 908-234-2300.

**USGA COURSE RATING FORM 1**


EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH AND OBSTACLE EVALUATION

COURSE:



Front Nine Totals  
Par 4s/5s | Par 3s

TEES	DATE	REASON	TEAM LEADER	MEMBERS	NARRATOR	RATER'S NOTES	COURSE:									Totals				
							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Par 4s/5s	Par 3s			
							<b>HOLE</b>													
							PAR													
							LENGTH													
							GREEN WIDTH X DEPTH	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
							EFFECTIVE GREEN DIAMETER													
							<b>ROLL</b>													
							<b>ELEVATION</b> (Fee to Green)													
							<b>DOGLEG/LAY-UP</b>													
							<b>PREVAILING WIND</b>													
							<b>TOPOGRAPHY</b>													
							Approach Elevation Change													
							Stance/Lie Problems													
							<b>FAIRWAY</b>													
							1st Landing Zone Width													
							2nd Landing Zone Width													
							3rd Landing Zone Width													
							<b>GREEN TARGET</b>													
							Approach Shot Length													
							Adjusted Approach													
							<b>RECOVER &amp; ROUGH</b>													
							<b>BUNKERS</b>													
							Fairway													
							Bunker Fraction													
							<b>OB/EXTREME ROUGH</b>													
							Landing Zone													
							Green													
							<b>WATER HAZARDS</b>													
							Crossing													
							Lateral													
							At Green													
							<b>TREES</b>													
							Distance													
							Recovery													
							<b>GREEN SURFACE</b>													
							<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL</b>													
							ft.													
							Pace													
							GTT/Carts/HH													

USGA COURSE RATING FORM 1																		Back Nine Totals		18 hole Totals	
EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH AND OBSTACLE EVALUATION																		Par 4s/5s	Par 3s	Par 4s/5s	Par 3s
COURSE:																		USGA 			
HOLE	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Totals		Totals									
PAR																					
LENGTH																					
GREEN WIDTH X DEPTH																					
EFFECTIVE GREEN DIAMETER																					
ROLL																					
ELEVATION (Tee to Green)																					
DOGLEG/LAY-UP																					
PREVAILING WIND																					
TOPOGRAPHY																					
Approach Elevation Change																					
Stance/Lie Problem																					
FAIRWAY																					
1st Landing Zone Width																					
2nd Landing Zone Width																					
3rd Landing Zone Width																					
GREEN TARGET																					
Approach Shot Length																					
Adjusted Approach																					
RECOVER. & ROUGH																					
BUNKERS																					
Fairway																					
Bunker Fraction																					
OB/EXTREME ROUGH																					
Landing Zone																					
Green																					
WATER HAZARDS																					
Crossing																					
Lateral																					
At Green																					
TREES																					
Distance																					
Recovery																					
GREEN SURFACE																					
PSYCHOLOGICAL																					
Pace																					
GTT/Carts/HH																					

**USGA COURSE RATING FORM 2  
OBSTACLE STROKE VALUE CALCULATIONS**

PAR 4/5 OBSTACLES	FORM 1 SCRATCH TOTAL	X WEIGHTING	SCRATCH WEIGHTED DIFFICULTY	FORM 1 BOGEY TOTAL	X WEIGHTING	BOGEY WEIGHTED DIFFICULTY
TOPOGRAPHY		X.10			X.12	
FAIRWAY		X.11			X.09	
GREEN TARGET		X.09			X.06	
RECOVERABILITY AND ROUGH		X.14			X.15	
BUNKERS		X.07			X.10	
OUT OF BOUNDS/ EXTREME ROUGH		X.10			X.09	
WATER HAZARDS		X.14			X.14	
TREES		X.09			X.14	
GREEN SURFACE		X.11			X.08	
PSYCHOLOGICAL		X.05			X.03	
SCRATCH PLAYER PAR 4/5 DIFFICULTY SUM				<b>A</b>	BOGEY PLAYER PAR 4/5 DIFFICULTY SUM	

**C**

PAR 3 OBSTACLES	FORM 1 SCRATCH TOTAL	X WEIGHTING	SCRATCH WEIGHTED DIFFICULTY	FORM 1 BOGEY TOTAL	X WEIGHTING	BOGEY WEIGHTED DIFFICULTY
TOPOGRAPHY		X.08			X.08	
FAIRWAY						
GREEN TARGET		X.09			X.07	
RECOVERABILITY AND ROUGH		X.13			X.13	
BUNKERS		X.06			X.10	
OUT OF BOUNDS/ EXTREME ROUGH		X.08			X.07	
WATER HAZARDS		X.13			X.11	
TREES		X.07			X.11	
GREEN SURFACE		X.11			X.09	
PSYCHOLOGICAL		X.05			X.04	
SCRATCH PLAYER PAR 3 DIFFICULTY SUM				<b>B</b>	BOGEY PLAYER PAR 3 DIFFICULTY SUM	

**D**

$$\boxed{\text{A}} + \boxed{\text{B}} = \boxed{\text{E}}$$

Scratch Total Weighted Difficulty

$$\boxed{\text{C}} + \boxed{\text{D}} = \boxed{\text{F}}$$

Bogey Total Weighted Difficulty

$$(\boxed{\text{E}} \times 1.1) - 4.9 = \boxed{\text{SOSV}}$$

SCRATCH OBSTACLE STROKE VALUE

$$(\boxed{\text{F}} \times 1.26) - 11.5 = \boxed{\text{BOSV}}$$

BOGEY OBSTACLE STROKE VALUE

### MEN'S USGA COURSE RATING FORM 3

USGA COURSE RATING AND SLOPE RATING CALCULATIONS – WITH ALTITUDE CORRECTION (AT 2,000' AND ABOVE)

#### A. MEN'S EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH

EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION FACTORS	FORM 1 SCRATCH TOTAL	X MULTIPLIER	SCRATCH EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION (YARDS)	FORM 1 BOGEY TOTAL	X MULTIPLIER	BOGEY EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION (YARDS)	
ROLL		X 3.5			X 3.5		
ELEVATION	(feet)	X 0.23		INSERT SCRATCH CORRECTION VALUE →			
DOGLEG/ FORCED LAY UP	(yards)	X 1 (no multiplier)			X 1 (no multiplier)		
PREVAILING WIND		X 6		INSERT SCRATCH CORRECTION VALUE →			
(altitude = feet) A ALTITUDE	(number of par-4/5 holes)	$X(-.07) X A X 250$ 5000		INSERT SCRATCH CORRECTION VALUE →			
SCRATCH EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION				<b>G</b>	BOGEY EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION		<b>H</b>

GOLF COURSE MEASURED LENGTH  **J**

SCRATCH EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH  $G + J =$

**sEPL**

BOGEY EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH  $H + J =$

**bEPL**

#### B. MEN'S YARDAGE RATING

**SCRATCH YARDAGE RATING** (Round off to the Nearest Tenth):

$$= (sEPL/220) + 40.9 = \text{[ ]} \text{ SYR}_{(MEN)}$$

**BOGEY YARDAGE RATING** (Round off to the Nearest Tenth):

$$= (bEPL/160) + 50.7 = \text{[ ]} \text{ BYR}_{(MEN)}$$

#### C. MEN'S USGA COURSE RATING

**USGA COURSE RATING** (Round off to the Nearest Tenth):

$$= \text{SOSV} + \text{SYR}_{(MEN)} = \text{[ ]} + \text{[ ]} = \text{[ ]} \pm 0.4$$

SCRATCH OBSTACLE STROKE VALUE      SCRATCH YARDAGE RATING (MEN)      USGA COURSE RATING

**BOGEY RATING** (Round off to the Nearest Tenth):

$$= \text{BOSV} + \text{BYR}_{(MEN)} = \text{[ ]} + \text{[ ]} = \text{[ ]} \pm 0.6$$

BOGEY OBSTACLE STROKE VALUE      BOGEY YARDAGE RATING (MEN)      BOGEY RATING

#### D. MEN'S SLOPE RATING (ROUND TO THE NEAREST WHOLE NUMBER):

$$= 5.381 X (\text{BOGEY RATING} - \text{USGA COURSE RATING}) = \text{[ ]}$$

**SLOPE RATING**

**WOMEN'S USGA COURSE RATING FORM 3W**

USGA COURSE RATING AND SLOPE RATING CALCULATIONS – WITH ALTITUDE CORRECTION (AT 2,000' AND ABOVE)

**A. WOMEN'S EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH**

EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION FACTORS	FORM 1 SCRATCH TOTAL	X MULTIPLIER	SCRATCH EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION (YARDS)	FORM 1 BOGEY TOTAL	X MULTIPLIER	BOGEY EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION (YARDS)
ROLL		X 3.5			X 3.5	
ELEVATION	(feet)	X 0.23		INSERT SCRATCH CORRECTION VALUE →		
DOGLEG/ FORCED LAY UP	(yards)	X 1 (no multiplier)			X 1 (no multiplier)	
PREVAILING WIND		X 6		INSERT SCRATCH CORRECTION VALUE →		
(altitude = feet) A ALTITUDE	(number of par-4/5 holes)	X (-.07) X A X 210 5000		(THERE IS NO ALTITUDE ADJUSTMENT FOR BOGEY WOMEN)		

SCRATCH EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION  **G** BOGEY EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION  **H**  
 GOLF COURSE MEASURED LENGTH  **J**  
 SCRATCH EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH **G + J =**  BOGEY EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH **H + J =**   
**sEPL** **bEPL**

**B. WOMEN'S YARDAGE RATING**

**SCRATCH YARDAGE RATING** (Round off to the Nearest Tenth):

$= (sEPL / 180) + 40.1 =$   **SYR<sub>(WOMEN)</sub>**

**BOGEY YARDAGE RATING** (Round off to the Nearest Tenth):

$= (bEPL / 120) + 51.3 =$   **BYR<sub>(WOMEN)</sub>**

**C. WOMEN'S USGA COURSE RATING**

**USGA COURSE RATING** (Round off to the Nearest Tenth):

$= SOSV + SYR_{(WOMEN)} =$   +  =  ± 0.4  
SCRATCH OBSTACLE STROKE VALUE      SCRATCH YARDAGE RATING (WOMEN)      USGA COURSE RATING

**BOGEY RATING** (Round off to the Nearest Tenth):

$= BOSV + BYR_{(WOMEN)} =$   +  =  ± 0.6  
BOGEY OBSTACLE STROKE VALUE      BOGEY YARDAGE RATING (WOMEN)      BOGEY RATING

**D. WOMEN'S SLOPE RATING (ROUND TO THE NEAREST WHOLE NUMBER):**

$= 4.24 \times (\text{BOGEY RATING} - \text{USGA COURSE RATING}) =$    
**SLOPE RATING**

**USGA SHORT COURSE RATING FORM 1**  
SHORT COURSE EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH AND OBSTACLE EVALUATION

COURSE: \_\_\_\_\_



TEES	HOLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
DATE	PAR																		
REASON	LENGTH																		
	GREEN WIDTH X DEPTH	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
TEAM LEADER	EFFECTIVE GREEN DIAMETER																		
MEMBERS	<b>ROLL</b> ELEVATION(Tee to Green) DOGLEG/LAY-UP PREVAILING WIND																		
	<b>TOPOGRAPHY</b>																		
NARRATOR	Approach Elevation Change Stance/Lie Problems <b>FAIRWAY</b>																		
RATER'S NOTES	1st Landing Zone Width																		
	2nd Landing Zone Width <b>GREEN TARGET</b>																		
	Approach Shot Length Adjusted Approach <b>RECOVER. &amp; ROUGH</b>																		
	<b>BUNKERS</b>																		
	Fairway Bunker Fraction																		
Grass Type	<b>OB/EXTREME ROUGH</b>																		
	Landing Zone																		
Stimpmeter	<b>WATER HAZARDS</b>																		
	Green																		
Rough Height	<b>WATER HAZARDS</b>																		
	Crossing																		
	Lateral																		
Spot Lengths (Yards):	<b>TREES</b>																		
Scratch1=	Distance																		
Scratch2=	Recovery																		
Altitude	<b>GREEN SURFACE PSYCHOLOGICAL</b>																		
ft.																			





**USGA SHORT COURSE RATING FORM 3**  
**USGA COURSE RATING CALCULATIONS**

**A. MEN'S EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH**

EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION FACTORS	FORM 1 SCRATCH TOTAL	X MULTIPLIER	SCRATCH EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION (YARDS)
ROLL		X 3.5	
ELEVATION		X 0.23	
DOGLEG/ FORCED LAY UP		X 1 (no multiplier)	
PREVAILING WIND		X 6	
SCRATCH EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION			<input type="text"/>
GOLF COURSE MEASURED LENGTH			<input type="text"/>
SCRATCH EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH	D + E =		<input type="text"/>

**sEPL**

**B. MEN'S YARDAGE RATING**

**SCRATCH YARDAGE RATING** (Round off to the Nearest Tenth):

$$= (\text{sEPL} / 330) + (2.6 \times \text{Number of Holes}) = \text{SYR (MEN)}$$

**C. MEN'S USGA SHORT COURSE RATING**

**USGA SHORT COURSE RATING** (Round off to the Nearest Tenth):

$$= \text{SOSV} + \text{SYR (MEN)} = \text{USGA SHORT COURSE RATING}$$

Date Rated:

**USGA SHORT COURSE RATING FORM 3W**  
**USGA SHORT COURSE RATING CALCULATIONS**

**A. WOMEN'S EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH**

EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION FACTORS	FORM 1 SCRATCH TOTAL	X MULTIPLIER	SCRATCH EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION (YARDS)
ROLL		X 3.5	
ELEVATION		X 0.23	
DOGLEG/ FORCED LAY UP		X 1 (no multiplier)	
PREVAILING WIND		X 6	
SCRATCH EFFECTIVE LENGTH CORRECTION			<input type="text"/>
GOLF COURSE MEASURED LENGTH			<input type="text"/>
SCRATCH EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH	D + E =		<input type="text"/>

**D**  
**E**

**sEPL**

**B. WOMEN'S YARDAGE RATING**

**SCRATCH YARDAGE RATING** (Round off to the Nearest Tenth):

$$= (\text{sEPL} / 270) + (2.6 \times \text{Number of Holes}) = \text{SYR (WOMEN)}$$

**C. WOMEN'S USGA SHORT COURSE RATING**

**USGA SHORT COURSE RATING** (Round off to the Nearest Tenth):

$$= \text{SOSV} + \text{SYR (WOMEN)} = \text{USGA SHORT COURSE RATING}$$

+  =   
SCRATCH OBSTACLE STROKE VALUE      SCRATCH YARDAGE RATING (WOMEN)

Date Rated:

**USGA PACE RATING FORM PR1  
DATA FORM FOR USGA PACE RATING PROCEDURE**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Club Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Pace Rater: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**TEES TO BE RATED:** Back \_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_ Forward \_\_\_ Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**ARE CARTS REQUIRED TO STAY ON PATHS?** \_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ MIXED

**FRONT NINE**

HOLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Length (In yards)									
2. Length Time (In minutes to 1 decimal) (L/48 plus 4)									
OR 2. Cart Path Time (In minutes to 1 decimal) (If carts on path only) (L/42 plus 4)	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR
3. Obstacle Total (Sum of individual obstacles rated total of 5 or more— do not include water)									
4. Obstacle Time (Line 3 divided by 30)									
5. Water Value (Actual obstacle rating)									
6. Water Time (Line 5 divided by 6)									
7. Total Obstacle Time (Line 4 + Line 6)									
8. Green-To-Tee Distance (If hole is walked significantly)									
9. Green-To-Tee Distance Time [(Line 8 - 20) divided by 48]									
10. Halfway House Time									
11. Total Time (In minutes to 1 decimal)									
12. Time Par (Line 11 rounded to nearest minute)									
13. Front 9	TOTAL TIME: _____ HOURS: _____ MINUTES: _____								

**USGA PACE RATING FORM PR1  
DATA FORM FOR USGA PACE RATING PROCEDURE**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Club Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Pace Rater: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**TEES TO BE RATED:** Back \_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_ Forward \_\_\_ Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**BACK NINE**

HOLE	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Length (In yards)									
2. Length Time (In minutes to 1 decimal) (L/48 plus 4)									
OR 2. Cart Path Time (In minutes to 1 decimal) (If carts on path only) (L/42 plus 4)	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR
3. Obstacle Total (Sum of individual obstacles rated total of 5 or more— do not include water)									
4. Obstacle Time (Line 3 divided by 30)									
5. Water Value (Actual obstacle rating)									
6. Water Time (Line 5 divided by 6)									
7. Total Obstacle Time (Line 4 + Line 6)									
8. Green-To-Tee Distance (If hole is walked significantly)									0
9. Green-To-Tee Distance Time [(Line 8 – 20) divided by 48]									0.0
10. Halfway House Time									
11. Total Time (In minutes to 1 decimal)									
12. Time Par (Line 11 rounded to nearest minute)									
13. Back 9	TOTAL TIME: _____ HOURS: _____ MINUTES: _____								

**USGA PACE RATING:** \_\_\_\_\_ **HOURS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **MINUTES:** \_\_\_\_\_

### EXAMPLE — MEN

#### Par-3 Hole Over Water

Water Hazard, within 5 to 10 yards, surrounds more than half of the green

#### Description of Hole

Length..... 161 yards  
 Topography..... Level  
 Green Target..... 35 yards wide by 17 yards deep  
 Rough Height..... 1¼" warm season  
 Bunkers..... Less than ¼, 4 feet deep  
 Out of Bounds..... None  
 Water Hazard..... 153-yard safely crossing  
 ..... 19 yards lateral  
 Trees..... 20 yards right, minor recovery problem  
 Green Surface..... Two tiers separated by a 2 feet of elevation change, moderately contoured  
 Stimpmeter at 10'6"

#### Green Target

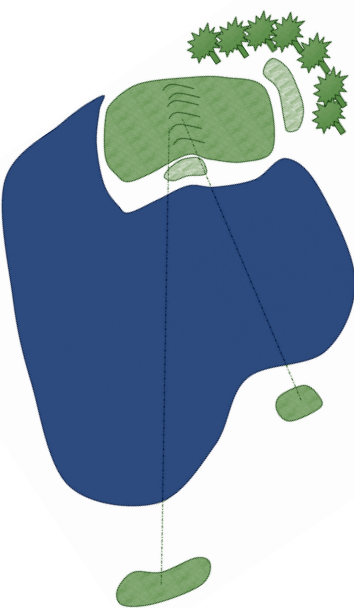
Since the green width is more than two times the depth, see the "oddly shaped" greens examples on pages 49-50 to determine effective green diameter.

#### Recoverability and Rough

The table rating is 5 for the scratch golfer and 6 for the bogey golfer. Since a +2 Surrounded (S) adjustment has been applied to water hazard, a +1 Surrounded (S) adjustment must also be applied to R&R.

#### Water Hazard

To carry the water safely, players must carry the shot 153 yards. At that length, the scratch crossing water rating is 3 and the bogey is 6. The rating for lateral water, 19 yards from the center



of the target, is 4 for the scratch golfer and 5 for the bogey golfer. Since water must be crossed and also closely borders the green, the Two waYs (Y) adjustment of +1 applies to the bogey golfer (both ratings are 5 or higher) but not to the scratch golfer. From the Surrounded (S) adjustment table, there is a +2 adjustment to both ratings because the water hazard surrounds more than half the green and is within 5-10 yards of its edge. The total Water Hazard rating for scratch is 6 and for bogey is 9.

Obstacle	Description of Hole	Ratings	
		Scratch	Bogey
Topography	Par-3 Hole	0	0
		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Green Target	35 yds wide by 17 yds deep, 23 effective diameter		
	Scratch Approach Shot: 161 yards	(5)	
	Bogey Approach Shot: 161 yards		(6)
	Tiered (T) green	+1	+1
	<b>Final Value</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
		<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Recoverability and Rough	1¼" warm season rough		
	Table Value	(5)	(6)
	Surrounded (S)	+1	+1
	<b>Final Value</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
		<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Bunkers	Less than ¼ of green closely bordered		
	Table value	(3)	(4)
	4' deep (D)	+1	+1
	Par-3 Hole (N)	-1	-1
	<b>Final Value</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
		<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough	None	0	0
		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Water Hazard	153 yards crossing, 19 yards left		
	Tee shot: crossing of 153 yards	(3)	(6)
	19 yards lateral	(4)	(5)
	Highest Value	(4)	(6)
	In play Two waYs (Y)	n/a	+1
	Surrounded (S)	+2	+2
	<b>Final Value</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>
		<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>
Trees	20 yards from center of green		
	Tee shot: 20 yards from center of green	(3)	(5)
	Minor recovery problem	-4	-4
	<b>Final Value</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Green Surface	Stimpmeter at 10'6", moderately contoured	(7)	(8)
	Tiered (T) green	n/a	+1
	<b>Final Value</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>
		<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>
Psychological			
	Scratch: 4 @ 25	(4)	
	Bogey: 4 @ 32		(6)
	<b>Final value</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>
		<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>

### EXAMPLE — WOMEN

#### Par-3 Hole Over Water

Water Hazard, within 5 to 10 yards, surrounds more than half of the green

#### Description of Hole

Length..... 120 yards  
 Topography..... Level  
 Green Target.....35 yards wide by 17 yards deep  
 Rough Height.....1¼" warm season  
 Bunkers.....Less than ¼, 4 feet deep  
 Out of Bounds..... None  
 Water Hazard.....112-yard safely crossing  
 ..... 19 yards lateral  
 Trees..... 20 yards right, minor recovery problem  
 Green Surface..... Two tiers separated by a 2 feet of elevation change, moderately contoured  
 Stimpmeter at 10'6"

#### Green Target

Since the green width is more than two times the depth, see the "oddly shaped" greens examples on page 54 to determine effective green diameter.

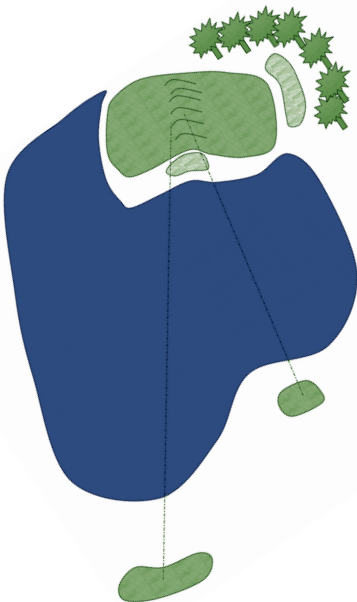
#### Recoverability and Rough

The table rating is 5 for the scratch golfer and 6 for the bogey golfer. Since a +2 Surrounded (S) adjustment has been applied to water hazard, a +1 Surrounded (S) adjustment must also be applied to R&R.

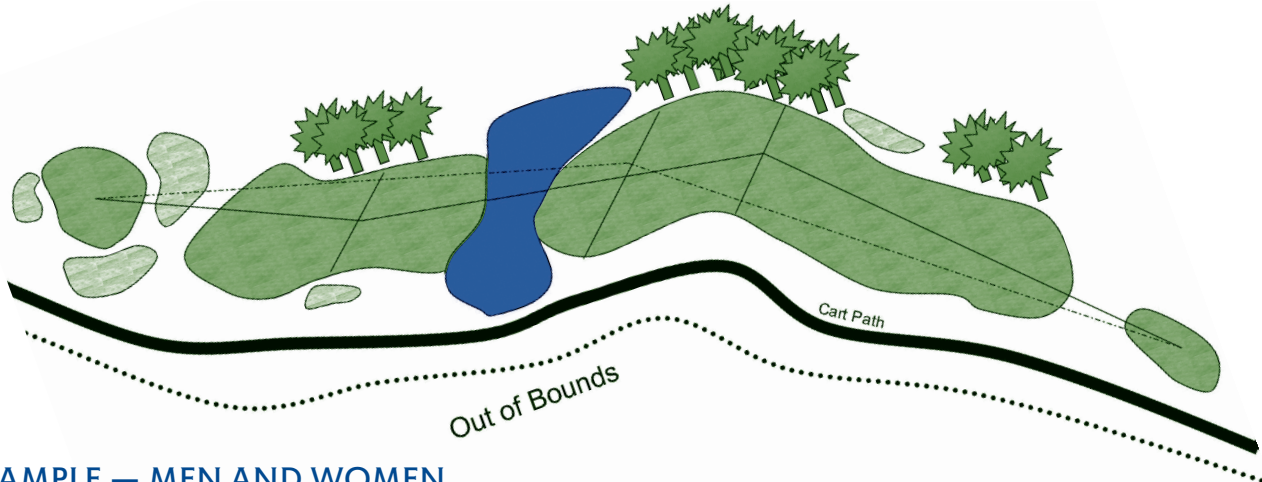
#### Water Hazard

To carry the water safely, players must carry the shot 112 yards. At that length, the scratch crossing water rating is 3 and the bogey is 7. The rating for lateral water, 19 yards from the center

of the target, is 4 for the scratch golfer and 5 for the bogey golfer. Since water must be crossed and also closely borders the green, the Two waYs (Y) adjustment of +1 applies to the bogey golfer (both ratings are 5 or higher) but not to the scratch golfer. From the Surrounded (S) adjustment table, there is a +2 adjustment to both ratings because the water hazard surrounds more than half the green and is within 5-10 yards of its edge. The total Water Hazard rating for scratch is 6 and for bogey is 10.



Obstacle	Description of Hole	Ratings	
		Scratch	Bogey
Topography	Par-3 Hole	0	0
		0	0
Green Target	35 yds wide by 17 yds deep, 23 effective diameter		
	Scratch Approach Shot: 120 yards	(4)	
	Bogey Approach Shot: 120 yards		(6)
	Tiered (T) green	+1	+1
	<b>Final Value</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>
		5	7
Recoverability and Rough	1¼" warm season rough		
	Table Value	(5)	(6)
	Surrounded (S)	+1	+1
	<b>Final Value</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
		6	7
Bunkers	Less than ¼ of green closely bordered		
	Table value	(3)	(4)
	4' deep (D)	+1	+1
	Par-3 Hole (N)	-1	-1
	<b>Final Value</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
		3	4
Out of Bounds/ Extreme Rough	None	0	0
		0	0
Water Hazard	112 yard crossing, 19 yards left		
	Tee shot: crossing of 112 yards	(3)	(7)
	19 yards lateral	(4)	(5)
	Highest Value	(4)	(7)
	In play Two waYs (Y)	n/a	+1
	Surrounded (S)	+2	+2
	<b>Final value</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
		6	10
Trees	20 yards from center of green		
	Tee shot: 20 yards from center of green	(2)	(5)
	Minor recovery problem	-4	-4
	<b>Final Value</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
		1	1
Green Surface	Stimpmeter at 10'6", moderately contoured	(7)	(8)
	Tiered (T) green	n/a	+1
	<b>Final Value</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>
		7	9
Psychological			
	Scratch: 4 @ 24	(3)	
	Bogey: 4 @ 33		(6)
	Extraordinary (X) for bogey due to Water number	n/a	+4
	<b>Final value</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>
		3	10



**EXAMPLE — MEN AND WOMEN**

Difficult 18th hole

Length: 444 yards (Men); 374 yards (Women)

Effective Playing Length Factor

Description of Hole

Ratings

Men

Women

Scratch Bogey Scratch Bogey

Roll .....	Average	0	0	0	0
		0 0		0 0	
Elevation .....	+20' from tee to green	+20		+20	
Dogleg/Forced Lay up .....	None	0	0	0	0
		0 0		0 0	
Prevailing Wind .....	Crosswind at 5 to 9 mph	1	1	1	1
		1		1	
<b>Obstacle Factors</b>					
Topography .....	Minor Problem	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
	Approach shot +10'				
	<b>Final value</b>	2	2	2	2
		2 2		2 2	
Fairway .....					
	1st Shot: Scratch 40 yards wide	(3)		(3)	
	Bogey 28 yards wide		(5)		(5)
	2nd Shot: Bogey 34 yards wide	n/a	(4)	n/a	(4)
	<b>Final value</b>	3	5	3	5
		3 5		3 5	
Green Target .....	24 yards wide by 30 yards deep				
	Scratch Approach Shot: 194 yards [164 yards — women]	(5)		(5)	
	Bogey Approach Shot: 74 yards [94 yards — women]		(3)		(4)
	Visibility (V)	n/a	+1	n/a	+1
	<b>Final Value</b>	5	4	5	5
		5 4		5 5	



<b>Recoverability and Rough</b>	3¼" cool season rough	(6)	(6)	(6)	(6)
		<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">6</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">6</span>		<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">6</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">6</span>	
<b>Bunkers</b> .....	At the green: ½ to ¾	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)
4' deep (D)		+1	+1	+1	+1
Carry (C)		+1	+1	+1	+1
None (N)		-1	n/a	-1	n/a
Near both fairway landing zones (2)		n/a	+1	n/a	+1
	<b>Final Value</b>	6	8	6	8
		<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">6</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">8</span>		<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">6</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">8</span>	
<b>OB/Extreme Rough</b> .....	30-39 yards left, entire hole	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)
Tee shot		+1	+1	+1	+1
Cart path along boundary (+B)		(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)
Scratch second shot		(2)		(2)	
Cart path along boundary (+B)		+1		+1	
Bunker to the left of green (-B)		-1		-1	
		(2)		(2)	
Bogey second shot: 30-39 yards left of the fairway			(3)		(3)
Cart path along boundary (+B)			+1		+1
Bunker to the left of the fairway (-B)			-1		-1
			(3)		(3)
Bogey third shot: 30-39 yards left and long of the green			(2)		(2)
Cart path along boundary (+B)			+1		+1
Bunker to the left of the green (-B)			-1		-1
Final value		5	5	5	5
		<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">5</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">5</span>		<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">5</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">5</span>	
<b>Water Hazard</b> .....		(1)		(1)	
Scratch 2nd shot: crossing of 60 yards [35 yards — women]			(5)		(5)
Bogey 2nd shot: crossing of 110 yards [95 yards — women]		1	5	1	5
	<b>Final value</b>	1	5	1	5
		<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">5</span>		<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">5</span>	
<b>Trees</b> .....		(6)		(6)	
Scratch tee shot: 22 yards from center of the fairway		(-3)		(-3)	
Moderate recovery problem		(3)		(3)	
Bogey tee shot: 18 yards from center of the fairway			(7)		(7)
Moderate recovery problem			(-2)		(-2)
			(5)		(5)
Bogey second shot: 16 yards from center of the fairway			(6)		(6)
Minor recovery problem			(-4)		(-4)
			(2)		(2)
Final value		3	5	3	5
		<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">5</span>		<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">5</span>	
<b>Green Surface</b> .....	Stimpmeter at 11'6", relatively flat	(7)	(7)	(7)	(7)
		<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">7</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">7</span>		<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">7</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">7</span>	
<b>Psychological</b> .....		(4)		(4)	
Scratch: 5 @ 29			(6)		(7)
Bogey: 7 @ 41 [8 @ 46]			(-2)		(-4)
18th hole		+2	+2	+2	+2
	<b>Final value</b>	6	8	6	9
		<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">6</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">8</span>		<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">6</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">8</span>	

## APPENDIX C – SAMPLE RATINGS EXPIRATION LETTER

[Golf Club]

[Address]

Dear,

A key aspect of the USGA Handicap System™, which addresses the portability of a player’s Handicap Index®, is the ability to post scores using ratings that are based on an objective standard. Utilizing the USGA Course Rating System™, ratings are provided by authorized golf associations and need to be renewed periodically due to changes on a golf course (e.g., trees mature, different golf course marking/ set up), as well as changes that need to be accounted for due to periodic modifications to USGA Course Rating System policy. This letter is being sent to [The Club] as you are due for a re-rating of [The Course].

According to “Section 14-2” of “The USGA Handicap System” manual, a golf course must be re-rated at least once every 10 years, even if it is perceived that the course has not changed in any way; a new course must be re-rated once within five years of the initial rating and every 10 years thereafter. [The Course] was last rated on [Effective Rating Date]. The [Authorized Golf Association] needs to schedule a re-rating of [The Course] as soon as possible to ensure it remains in compliance with the USGA Handicap System™ (see “Section 8-2m,” Golf Club Compliance Checklist).

If a rating expires, it is no longer valid, can no longer be used, and the [Authorized Golf Association] will withdraw the rating(s). Scores made in this situation will not be acceptable for handicap posting purposes (see “Section 5-1e(v)”), and the golf club is not in compliance with the System (Handicap Decision 1-2/1). A club also jeopardizes its ability to utilize the USGA Handicap System in the future and the [Authorized Golf Association] must notify the club that its ratings are no longer valid and scores are not acceptable for handicap posting purposes at the club. Some golfers or groups may be less likely to play at a course without valid ratings and this could be detrimental to the total number of rounds played and thus the revenue derived by a golf course.

In order to stay in compliance with the USGA Handicap System, at your earliest convenience please contact (name) at the [Authorized Golf Association] by calling (number) to have the course re-rated. It will be done at a mutually agreeable time at no cost (or a cost of \_\_\_\_\_ ) to the Club.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter and for your support of the USGA Handicap System.

Sincerely,

[Authorized Golf Association]

**APPENDIX D****THERE ARE NO CHANGES IN THIS LISTING THAT SHOULD REQUIRE AN ASSOCIATION TO RE-RATE ANY GOLF COURSE****HISTORY**

- Updated list of international golf associations licensed to use the USGA Course Rating System as of January 1, 2012

**DEFINITIONS**

- Added carry safely, closely bordering, and near definitions for clarity

**RATING GOLF COURSES**

- Change requirement for new courses to be re-rated

**EVALUTATION OF OBSTACLES AND CORRECTIONS TO EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH**

- Eliminated option to enter bogey ratings as variances of scratch
- Changed alpha-numeric table to reflect any new or changed adjustments
- Changed situations rated under two obstacle categories table to reflect updates
- Clarified fairway measurements with obstacles

**EFFECTIVE PLAYING LENGTH FACTORS**

- Changed table values in Roll Rating Table
- Replaced Inconsistent with In play 2x adjustment to Roll
- Changed forced lay up yardage to 10 yards short of the trouble

**OBSTACLE FACTORS****– Topography**

- Removed Visibility adjustment

**– Green Target**

- Changed Green Target Rating table to include row regarding Transition Zone

**– Recoverability and Rough**

- Clarified closely bordering for certain objects
- Changed R&R Table
- Eliminated Extreme adjustment
- Changed Inconsistent adjustment
- Changed Unpleasant adjustment

**– Bunkers**

- Clarified Squeeze adjustment when greenside bunkers also qualify as fairway bunkers
- Clarified Carry adjustment for bunkers protecting more than half of the green
- Changed Extreme adjustment to include depth for fairway bunkers
- Changed Depth adjustment to be for greenside bunkers only
- Clarified Two adjustment for two or more landing zones

**– Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough**

- Changed women's bogey crossing values
- Clarified not to use Bounce adjustment when distance is less than 20 yards

– **Water**

- Clarified conditions when determining distance for surrounded adjustment
- Clarified not to use Bounce adjustment when distance is less than 15 yards

– **Trees**

- Expanded chute table for maximum shot lengths

– **Desert**

- Clarified not to use Bounce adjustment when the distance is less than 10 yards

– **Green Surface**

- Changed Green Surface Table values

– **Psychological**

- Added OB/ER to bogey women's Extraordinary adjustment table

**DECISIONS**

- Revised 12-4
- Revised 12-10/1

**APPENDICES**

- Changed rating examples to reflect new changes
- Added ratings expiration sample letter

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## NOTES

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