

## USGA ADOPTS CHANGES IN HANDICAP SYSTEM PROCEDURES FOR 2008

**FAR HILLS, N.J. (December 20, 2007)** - The United States Golf Association has announced three major modifications to the USGA Handicap System™, effective January 1, 2008. The most significant revision clarifies the definition of “peer review” to specify the information that must be provided in connection with a scoring record. As a result of these changes, peer review will become more sensitive to privacy-related concerns.

The new definition of “peer review” mandates two types of scoring records – a general scoring record that provides basic information to those involved in peer review; and a complete scoring record that provides more detailed information to a club’s handicap committee, fellow club members and officials in charge of any outside competition where a golfer plans to compete.

General scoring records will not show the date (day) and course on which a round of golf was played. The name of the course where a round was played is only recommended as part of the complete scoring record. For both types of records, however, the six most recent revisions to a player’s Handicap Index® are required.

“Certain portions of the scoring record are essential for peer review to flourish, and we have painstakingly worked to determine what is necessary in various situations,” said USGA President-elect Jim Vernon, who brought this topic to the attention of the Handicap Committee for review in 2005 in his role as committee chair.

The second significant change to the Handicap System allows authorized golf associations to set handicap revision periods during an inactive “winter” season. The change addresses golfers who live most of the year in a northern state but travel to a warmer climate during the winter months where they play numerous rounds of golf. Previously, the Handicap Index for such players was not updated during the winter months. This modification was adopted following two years of successful testing of the concept with several northern golf associations.

Finally, the USGA will simplify the procedure for combining nine-hole scores. To attain an 18-hole score, nine-hole scores should now be combined in the order that they are played, regardless of the score type. Previous language that made it difficult to combine and post nine-hole scores has been eliminated.

The USGA Handicap System is revised on a schedule that coincides with revisions to the Rules of Golf, meaning that the next round of policy changes would be approved and become effective January 1, 2012.

## **Peer Review**

*"Peer review"* is the ability of golfers to gain an understanding of a player's potential ability and to form a reasonable basis for supporting or disputing a score that has been posted.

There are two essential elements of peer review:

- 1 1) Members of a golf club must have a reasonable and regular opportunity to play together (see Decision 2/8).
- 2 2) Access must be provided to scoring records, as well as to a Handicap Index list, for inspection by others, including, but not limited to, fellow club members. There are two forms of scoring record display:

General – A General scoring record must provide the six most recent revisions of the player's Handicap Index, along with scores, score types, ratings, differentials and dates (month and year only) relating to the most recent handicap revision. This must be made available to those involved in peer review.

Complete – A Complete scoring record must provide the six most recent revisions of the player's Handicap Index, along with scores\*, score types, ratings, differentials and dates (month, day and year) relating to the most recent handicap revision. This must be made available to fellow club members, the club handicap committee and competition officials of any competition in which the player is going to participate.

\* The course name for each score should appear in any "Complete" scoring record display, and must be included for a Type 3 club.