

USGA Handicap System (pre-2020): When a player submits two or more Tournament Scores (T-scores) within a 12-month period that are at least 3.0 strokes better than their Handicap Index, they are eligible for an automatic Handicap Index reduction.

- The amount of the reduction is determined by the number of T-scores submitted by a player within the last 12-months, as well as the difference between the Handicap Index and the average of the two best T-score Handicap Differentials.

Rule Change for 2020: When a player submits a score that produces a Score Differential of 7.0 strokes or more below their Handicap Index, they will be subject to an Exceptional Score Reduction.

- When the Score Differential is between 7.0 and 9.9 strokes below their current Handicap Index, a -1.0 reduction is applied to the most recent 20 Score Differentials. When the Score Differential is 10.0 strokes or more below their Handicap Index, a -2.0 reduction is applied to the most recent 20 Score Differentials.
- Scores submitted after the Exceptional Score will not contain the -1.0 or -2.0 adjustment (unless they are also exceptional), which will allow the reduction to gradually work itself out of a Scoring Record.

Reasons for Change:

- Score types can still be used for further distinction for how someone plays in competitive rounds versus general play, but by considering all scores in the Exceptional Score Reduction procedure, a player's Handicap Index will be more responsive to exceptional performances in competitive and recreational play.
- The new calculation allows for normal standard deviations. 7.0 strokes below a Handicap Index is beyond a normal standard deviation.
- Handicap research shows that players who have shot 7.0 strokes below their Handicap Index are more likely to do so again in the future.
- Since T-scores under the USGA Handicap System are retained for 12-months and compared to the Handicap Index at each revision, it is possible for T-scores that were not exceptional at the time they were made to become exceptional at a later date. This will no longer take place in 2020.