HOW DO WE CALCULATE YOUR TOURNAMENT HANDICAP?

You check your handicap index in GAM and it is 12.5. Then you play in an MPSGA tournament and your Tournament Handicap is 10. What is going on? There are four factors that affect your Tournament Handicap.

1. For New members of the MPSGA, we typically use your “12 Month Low” index rather than your current index. This is the recommended practice of GAM and the USGA. While your 6/1 index may be 12.5, often your index was lower over the past 12 months. If your index was 11.1 a year ago on 9/1, we typically use 11.1

2. Once a new member has 5 Tournament scores, we begin to calculate a Tournament Index. This index uses only qualified Tournament scores (designated as “T” in the handicap system). If one has played better in Tournaments than one’s regular play, the Tournament Index will often be lower than the GAM index.

3. A course and its tee each have a “Slope Rating”. In order to convert your Handicap Index, the Slope Rating for the tee one has selected is divided by a constant number (113). For example, if the tee you selected has a 125 Slope Rating, we divide 125 by 113 which results in a factor of 1.1062. The resulting factor is applied to your index (1.1062 x 12.5 = 13.83). The final number is rounded up or down and, in this example, 14 becomes your Course Handicap.

4. Finally, there is an adjustment made based on the course played and the Tee selected. The MPSGA uses three tees in each Tournament: Back, Middle, Forward. Within a Flight, players may be using 2-3 different tees. A player competing from the Forward tee versus another player on the Back tee needs an adjustment to level the playing field. An example might best illustrate how the process occurs.

Tournament Z is played on a course where the following Rating & Slope numbers apply:
Front: 68.0 / 123 5,700 yards
Middle: 69.3 / 128 6,050 yards
Back: 71.0 / 130 6,324 yards

We have three players, each with a Tournament Index of 12.5. They are all assigned to the C flight. Player 1 is playing the Front tees. Player 2 is playing the Middle tees. Player 3 is playing the Back tees.
1. 123/113 x 12.5 = 14 Tournament Handicap
2. 128/113 x 12.5 = 14 Tournament Handicap
3. 132/113 x 12.5 = 14 Tournament Handicap

Allowing Player 1 have his full Tournament Handicap would be unfair to Player 2 and Player 3. We use the USGA developed process for adjusting handicaps for different tees. The USGA process takes the Course Ratings (primarily based on
yardage) and computes the difference.
Front versus Back: 71.0 – 68.0 = 3 (rounded)
Middle versus Back: 71.0 – 69.3 = 2 (rounded)

As the final step, we subtract 3 from Player 1’s Tournament Handicap and subtract 2 from Player 2’s Tournament Handicap. The final Tournament Handicaps look like this:

Player 1 (Front Tee): 11
Player 2 (Middle Tee): 12
Player 3 (Back Tee): 14

Conclusion: In the example all three players have the same Tournament Index yet their final handicaps are all different, primarily because of the tee they selected. In Player 1’s case, **his final Tournament Handicap is less than his index.** The reason for that is he is playing the Front Tees and his handicap needs to be adjusted so players using the Middle or Back tees are not at a disadvantage.

**Note:** We also use the Tournament Point System (aka “Knuth”). Successful players accumulate Points for finishing in the top 3 places of each tournament. For more details on this process, please visit our website (www.mpsga.org) where a description is found under “MPSGA General Information–Policies and Procedures–MPSGA Handicap Policy” – Page 3.

As always, the preceding information serves as a guideline for developing Tournament Handicaps. The Handicap Committee has the responsibility and authority to adjust a handicap index, assign a player a higher or lower Tournament Handicap or assign a player to an alternate tournament flight under any circumstance that it believes necessary to do so.

If you feel your Tournament Handicap is too high or too low, you may request a review by the MPSGA Handicap Committee. This request may be made by sending an e-mail to the chairman of the MPSGA Handicap Committee Brian Kuehn (bkuehn1952@comcast.net) and by providing any information pertinent to the situation for the Committee’s review. The Committee will generally provide a final decision to the player within a few days of receipt of the request for review. If it is determined that inaccuracies are present, tournament indices will be adjusted accordingly.

For more information on the MPSGA’s Handicap Policy, please go to MPSGA.org and click on the “MPSGA General Information” tab.