

GOLF CANADA TO INSTITUTE CHANGES TO EQUITABLE STROKE CONTROL BEGINNING IN 2012

The Royal Canadian Golf Association (operating as Golf Canada) is the authority for golf in Canada. The Association administers the Rules of Golf, amateur status and handicapping and course rating under the respected RCGA brand.

The RCGA Handicap & Course Rating Committee recently approved a change to the long-standing Equitable Stroke Control (ESC) method, bringing it into equivalency with current ESC calculations employed by the United States Golf Association (USGA). The new ESC method will go into effect March 1, 2012 to coincide with the release of the 2012-2015 version of the Handicap Manual.

WHAT IS EQUITABLE STROKE CONTROL (ESC)?

Equitable Stroke Control (ESC) is the downward adjustment of individual hole scores for handicap purposes in order to make Handicap Factors more representative of a player's potential scoring ability. It sets a maximum number that a player can post on any hole depending on the player's Course Handicap.

HOW IT WORKS:

The modification to the current ESC calculation is illustrated below:

CURRENT ESC		NEW ESC	
0 or Plus Course Handicap	Maximum of 1 over par	9 or Less Course Handicap	Maximum of 2 over par
1-18 Course Handicap	Maximum of 2 over par	10-19 Course Handicap	Maximum score of 7
19-32 Course Handicap	Maximum of 3 over par	20-29 Course Handicap	Maximum score of 8
33 and over Course Handicap	Maximum of 4 over par	30-39 Course Handicap	Maximum score of 9
		40 and Over Course Handicap	Maximum score of 10

WHY THE CHANGE TO ESC METHODOLOGY?

The RCGA Handicap & Course Rating Committee approved the change after commissioning statistical research that revealed that the current Equitable Stroke Control (ESC) method causes differences in Handicap Factors that are not necessarily commensurate with a difference in ability, particularly for golfers in the higher half of each range of handicaps within the ESC table.

A golfer with a 1 handicap, for example, should not be subject to the same ESC score adjustments as a player with an 18 handicap when their abilities are so different. By reducing the

size of the handicap ranges within the ESC table, those issues are mitigated. The new ESC method provides a more even distribution across a wide range of handicaps.

IMPACT OF THE NEW ESC METHODOLOGY:

Using maximum numbers (rather than adjustments being based on hole-par) facilitates simpler application and comprehension of the ESC procedure. It also mitigates the affect of courses not allocating the proper par to holes as per RCGA guidelines.

Currently, in a head-to-head match, the lower handicap player has a better than 50% chance of winning. The new ESC will bring the odds closer to 50%.

The new ESC brings an RCGA Handicap Factor and USGA Handicap Index into virtual equivalency – an important consideration with the number of ‘snowbirds’ playing golf in certain parts of the United States during the winter months.

Canada will continue to use ‘Handicap Factor’ as the proper terminology related to handicapping.

All certified handicap calculation software will be programmed to accommodate this change as of March 1.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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