

Golf Croquet handicap “New System”

The following summarises the system and how to convert players onto it – it is extracted from the full information about the New System which will be available on the CA website by the 10th February.

The New System was approved by CA Council in January for national introduction in time for the 2016 season. It has been developed from an analysis of 8,300 games played in the last few years under both the Effective Handicap trial and earlier system. The New System was successfully trialled during 2015 by the East Anglia Croquet Federation, and 3,000 games played under the New System were collected and analysed to confirm it works as intended.

The good news is the new system works much like the previous ones – only the handicap range and trigger points have altered. It no longer uses “Effective Handicaps”. Further good news is that for the majority of players, the conversion onto the new system is very simple.

The New System

It is a simple and straightforward Automatic Handicap System covering all abilities, and including both handicap and level-play games.

Throughout, games are played off your handicap – it does away with the Effective Handicap/ Actual Handicap split.

It is open-ended at both ends, so players of all abilities can find “their own level”.

The handicaps of the middle ranges (11 through 4) are unchanged and function just as in the previous two systems for the great majority of players.

But both extremes have been extended to give the weakest players more Extra Turns against the majority of opponents, and to make the strongest players give away more ETs to the majority of their opponents. Analysis of the trial results shows the size of these changes brings all handicaps much closer to a 50:50 win/loss ratio – in other words, the New System is fair for all abilities.

Complete beginners might start at 16, 14, 12 or less – we have updated the “Three Times Round” test accordingly. If they have an unsuccessful first season, they might float out as far as 18 or even 20, though most don’t need to.

It is entirely reasonable for Clubs and Federations to set an upper handicap limit for players in their leagues, matches and events, as many have in the past. But a true beginner generally won’t be playing in such matches immediately, and may benefit from a first season playing within their clubs off 14 or 16, for example.

At the other end, top players have minus handicaps extending as far as -4 or -5 (there are just 2 players in the UK who would be -5s at the moment). The handicap index range has been chosen so that at low handicaps, it approximately correlates with CGS Ranking Grade – which makes it easy to give visiting players and strong players (who rarely play handicap games) an accurate handicap.

Table 1 – New System trigger points

Handicap	Trigger Point	Handicap	Trigger Point	Handicap	Trigger Point
-6	2800	2	1800	10	1200
-5	2650	3	1700	11	1150
-4	2500	4	1600	12	1100
-3	2350	5	1500	14	1050
-2	2200	6	1400	16	1000
-1	2100	7	1350	18	950
0	2000	8	1300	20	900
1	1900	9	1250		

The points interchanged by players after a level game are calculated on a sliding scale as shown in Table 2 below. The points the better player can win are significantly reduced; should the weaker player win, they gain significantly more than 10 points.

Table 2 -

		Points Exchanged in Level Play																							
		LOSER's HANDICAP																							
		-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	14	16	18	20	
WINNER's HANDICAP	-6	10	7	4	2																				
	-5	13	10	7	4	2																			
	-4	16	13	10	7	4	3	2																	
	-3	18	16	13	10	7	5	3	2																
	-2		18	16	13	10	8	6	4	3	2														
	-1			17	15	12	10	8	6	4	3	2													
	0			18	17	14	12	10	8	6	4	3	2												
	1				18	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	3	2											
	2					17	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	3	2	2									
	3						18	17	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	3	3	2	2						
	4							18	17	16	14	12	10	8	6	5	4	3	3	2	2				
	5								18	17	16	14	12	10	8	7	6	5	4	3	3	2	2		
	6									18	17	16	14	12	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	3	2	2
	7										18	17	15	13	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	3	2
	8											18	17	16	14	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
	9												18	17	15	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
	10													18	17	16	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6
	11														18	17	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7
	12															18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9
	14																18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10
	16																	18	17	17	16	15	14	13	12
18																		18	17	17	16	15	14	13	
20																			18	18	17	17	16	15	

Changing to the New System

If you were using **the New System during 2015** as part of the East Anglian Croquet Federation trial, then keep your current handicap and handicap index and continue using them.

For players from all other federations, convert your existing handicap to the New System by applying whichever one of the following rules is most applicable to you:

a) if your **existing handicap is in the range 12 to 3** (inclusive), convert your index as follows:

- If your existing handicap is between 12 and 6, keep your handicap and add 1100 to your existing index to get your new index.
- If your existing handicap is 5, keep your handicap and add 1150 to your existing index.
- If your existing handicap is 4 or 3, add 1200 to your existing index. If your new index is 1800 or above your new handicap becomes 2; otherwise keep your old handicap.

Note for rule (a): If you were below the trigger point for your current handicap before the change, you will remain below the trigger point on the new system. Your handicap should NOT be increased during the conversion.

b) if your **existing handicap is 12 and** you have been struggling to get your index much above 0, ask your club handicapper to reset your handicap to 14 with a new index of 1050.

c) a new **complete beginner** should be started on 16, 14, 12 or lower – see [Setting Initial Handicap](#) on the CA website (from mid-February). Take their handicap index from the trigger point table (Table 1) for the handicap you set. Please do not routinely start all new beginners on the same handicap.

d) if your **existing Actual Handicap is 2 or below and** you have a current CGS Grade (“ranking grade”), take your current CGS Grade and use that for your new handicap index. Lookup your new handicap from the trigger point table (Table 1) - take the handicap of the next trigger point at or below your Grade. Note however that if this method would result in your handicap increasing, then instead keep your existing handicap but with the new index taken from Table 1 for that handicap.

e) if your **existing Actual Handicap is 2 or below and you DON'T** have a current CGS Grade, then your new handicap should be set between your Actual and Effective Handicaps, with a starting handicap index set as follows:

- a player with an Actual Handicap of 2 and an Effective Handicap of 0 will become a 1 (index of 1900)
- a player with an Actual H'cap of 1 and an Effective H'cap of -2 will become a 0 (but with an index of 2050)
- a player with an Actual H'cap of 0 and an Effective H'cap of -4 will become a -1 (but with an index of 2150)
- a player with an Actual H'cap of -1 and an Effective H'cap of -5 will become a -2 (but with an index of 2250).

It is believed there are relatively few players to whom rule (e) will apply, and it is the least ‘precise’ of the rules. Handicappers will have to apply judgement in this category to ensure an appropriate handicap is set, especially where there is little recent recorded evidence to work from.

For rules (b, c, d and e) there will be [further guidance to handicappers](#) on the CA website from mid-February, for dealing with problematic cases such as players returning after a gap of some years, or players with few recorded games.

If you are uncertain how to apply these rules or have found a case which doesn't seem to fit any of them, please contact Martin French (martin.french@btinternet.com) for advice.