



Adverse/Extreme Weather Reference Guide & Supporting Rules for World Handicap System™ Purposes

This document replaces any previously issued 'Winter Checklist'

Players should be encouraged to return scores for handicapping throughout the year, as WHS™ does not have an off-season within GB&I. This document is to assist clubs to prepare for winter golf, extreme weather conditions, or exceptional circumstances throughout the year. Your county office will be pleased to offer further advice, if required.

Golf clubs can utilise Model Local Rules throughout the year, but **ONLY** when it is absolutely necessary to do so. Any Model Local Rules **MUST** be removed as soon as practicably possible.

This is to ensure all relevant scores for handicap purposes can continue to be submitted throughout the whole year, where possible. This document will cover the following areas:

Tee Set and Yardage Compliance

Model Local Rules (*The Rules of Golf*)

- a) MLR E-2 – Cleaning Ball**
- b) MLR E-3 – Preferred Lies**
- c) MLR E-12 – Compulsory Use of Fairway Mats**
- d) MLR F-16 – Bunkers**

Temporary Greens



Plastic Hole Stabilising Rings

Closed Holes

Default Markers on WHS™ Portal

Please note the following points:

- As WHS™ allows for scoring submission throughout the year (over a measured and rated tee set), any reference to a 'Winter', 'Roll Up', or 'Swindle Handicap' is not acceptable under the Rules of Handicapping. A player must only have **ONE** handicap. Clubs, and/or other competition organisers, **MUST NOT** run their own handicapping system.
- Handicap Reviews – Although a Handicap Index® review can be done at any time, there is a mandatory requirement to complete an annual handicap review between October 1st and December 31st each calendar year. Handicap committees have access to a Handicap Review report with the WHS™ platform, in addition to other reports which can be used to support any decision-making process. Specific criteria to consider when completing a handicap review is detailed in the WHS™ Rules of Handicapping (Appendix D page 105).

Tee Set & Yardage Compliance

The Rules of Handicapping require that for a score to be acceptable for handicap purposes it must have been played over a measured and officially rated tee set. The set of tees must be registered on the WHS™ platform by England Golf. Every golfer should be made aware of the available course/tees for the day on arrival at the first tee; and whoever controls the first tee (professional, starter, etc) or signing in process should be fully informed.

Appendix G of the WHS™ Rules of Handicapping clarifies that the front of the teeing area **should not** be placed more than +/- 10 yards from the fixed measurement point on each tee (*doing otherwise is not an option and should only be used for reasons where the tee cannot be placed normally*). The overall length



of the course **MUST NOT** be more than +/- 100 yards from its measured length (from the fixed markers).

A 300 yards Rule provides for situations where there is a necessary shortening or lengthening of one or more holes by a total of more than 100 yards, but less than 300 yards: **BUT this would only be acceptable on a 'temporary' basis e.g., course excavation work, drainage, etc.** This 'temporary rating' **must be submitted to, and approved by, England Golf.** This will permit 'acceptable scores' to continue to be returned. The maximum duration of this approval is one year. For such ratings, please use form CR003 obtainable from the England Golf website: please submit the completed form together with the required documents to course.rating@englandgolf.org

Relevant handicap committee personnel, club staff and green staff teams must be made aware of these requirements when setting up a course or tee set.

Model Local Rules

Golf clubs can utilise Model Local Rules throughout the year, but **ONLY** when it is absolutely necessary to do so, on specified areas of the course and when the conditions would mean that acceptable scoring would not be possible without them being in place. Furthermore, the Model Local Rules **MUST** be removed as soon as practicably possible. When implementing any of the Model Local Rules for your golfers, it must be clearly communicated and signposted which MLRs are in place and the areas in which they are to be used.

It is very important to remember that Model Local Rules should only be used when absolutely necessary, to ensure equity within the World Handicap System™.

a. MLR E-2 - Cleaning Ball

The Local Rule for marking, lifting, cleaning and replacing on the same spot may be used anywhere within the General Area. It is recommended that this is limited to specific areas where extreme conditions make the playing of the game difficult, or unfair using relief available under the usual Rules of Golf. Scores will still be acceptable for handicapping purposes. See Model Local Rule E2 [here](#) for further guidance and sample wording of the Rule. Model Local Rules are available for



other specific course conditions such as cracks in the fairways (F-8), relief from aeration holes (E-4), or extensive damage due to heavy rain and traffic (F-4); and these may be more appropriate than using 'preferred lies'.

b. MLR E-3 – Preferred Lies

Ensure that all members and visitors are aware of any Local Rule for the authorisation of preferred lies. For scores to be acceptable for handicapping, the Local Rule may only allow the lie to be preferred on grass cut to fairway height or less, within six inches of the original lie of the ball. See the Model Local Rule E-3 [**here**](#) for further guidance and sample wording of the Rule.

c. MLR E-12 – Compulsory Use of Fairway Mats

Acceptable Scores may be returned in Competitions and in General Play when there is a Local Rule in place requiring the compulsory use of fairway mats to protect the natural surfaces of the course. The use of fairway mats is not allowed within the teeing area, as this would breach Rule of Golf 6.2b(2) and 6.2b(3).

See the Model Local Rule E-12 [**here**](#) for further guidance and sample wording of the Rule.

d. MLR F-16 – Bunker Filled with Temporary Water

Scores are still acceptable for handicap purposes when bunkers have been individually marked as ground under repair, with relief taken under Rule 16.1. This would apply for situations such as severe or prolonged wet weather, or during maintenance work. In situations where there are multiple bunkers that need to be designated ground under repair, it is acceptable to define them along the lines of 'all greenside bunkers on Hole 4' (or 'all bunkers on Hole 4'), via a notice to players and without having to place 'GUR' signs in all bunkers. Alternatively, the Local Rule could read 'any bunker identified by (for example) a blue stake' See MLR F-16 for full details and wording.

There is no limit on the number of bunkers that can be treated as ground under repair for scores to be acceptable for Handicap Index® purposes. Please ensure



that players are aware of the correct procedure for using the 'nearest point of complete relief' outside the bunker for the reference point.

Temporary Greens

For scores to be acceptable for an 18-hole score, no more than two temporary greens are allowed to be used. For a 9-hole course, only one temporary green will be allowed. Whilst temporary or alternative greens are acceptable for handicapping purposes, whenever the length of the course has been increased or decreased by more than 100 yards for an 18-hole round or 50 yards for a 9-hole round, the adjustments to the Course Rating™ and Slope Rating™ set out in Appendix G of the Rules of Handicapping must be applied; with prior authority from the county.

Plastic Hole Stabilising Rings

The R&A have revised their position on the use of stabilising rings. As of 03/05/24, any scores returned for handicap purposes when the stabilising rings are in place **are acceptable** for handicap purposes.



The definition of 'hole' in the Rules of Golf states that if a lining is used, its outer diameter must not exceed 4.25 inches. The lining must be sunk at least one inch below the putting green surface.

The R&A recommend that the one-inch stipulation be followed as far as possible, as having the liner higher can result in other issues. For example, there is an increased risk of:

- the ball bouncing out of the hole; or
- the liner/stabiliser protruding above the ground; or
- the earthen wall moving away from the liner/stabiliser leaving the liner/stabiliser exposed or protruding, so further increasing the risk of bounce-outs.

The R&A appreciates that our current climate can result in considerable challenges for greenkeepers and course managers. Consequently, if there are times of the



year when the nature of the soil is perhaps crumbling due to extreme dry conditions, or falling away due to excessive water, and having a hole liner closer to the surface will help to protect the integrity of the hole, there is flexibility now within the Rules to allow for that. It is also important to note that as soon as the ground conditions are not affected by extreme conditions, hole liners are no longer acceptable, and they **must** be removed.

The position within the Rules for large 'bucket holes' is unchanged, and they **will not** be acceptable for handicap purposes (see Rule of Golf definition of 'hole').

Closed Holes

During winter months, there are various situations, such as course conditions and maintenance plans, where holes may be closed and declared out of play. In these circumstances, the committee may decide to declare some holes out of play and could also still meet the requirement for up to two temporary greens.

These scores continue to be acceptable for handicap purposes - the golfer would follow Rule 3.2 of the WHS™ Rules of Handicapping, 'When a Hole is Not Played', with the software calculating and awarding an expected score accordingly. Players **must not** play the closed hole, as this would breach Rule of Golf 5.5b. This may also be applicable during a summer maintenance programme.

Default Markers - WHS™ Portal

Within the WHS™ Portal, clubs have the opportunity to switch on and off available tee sets. This functionality will stop scores being submitted from general play rounds (when using the MyEG app). The image below illustrates the tick boxes involved (ensure all boxes are unticked, unless available for scores). Any changes need to be saved.

Note: depending on the local club software being used, additional settings may need to be configured within that software to prevent general play or competition scores being submitted from tee sets that are not available.



ACTIVE MARKERS FOR EACH DAY - (advanced)

COURSE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SHOW ALL	18 HOLE	9 HOLE	ACTIVE DAYS							
	MENS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	
	WOMENS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Blue	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Green	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	White	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Yellow	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Blue F9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Green F9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	White F9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Yellow F9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Heather	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Red	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Heather F9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Red F9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Options

SAVE CHANGES CANCEL



Supporting Rules

Situation	Rule to use first	Additional Rules which can support	Acceptable for Handicap Index®
Adverse conditions (regardless of the time of year) such as heavy snows, spring thaws, prolonged rains or extreme heat can sometimes damage the course or prevent use of heavy mowing equipment.	MLR E2 – specify the areas of the course where this rule applies. Can be implemented anywhere within the General Area.	MLR E3 – specify the specific areas, only applicable to areas closely mown to fairway height or less.	Yes
Ground under repair (GUR). Bunker full of water for example.	MLR F-16		Yes
Closed hole/s. Hole or holes closed for play by the club or organisers, so long as the golfer can play the minimum number for an acceptable score.	WHS™ Rule of Handicapping 3.2 (minimum 10 holes for an 18-hole score)		Yes
Relief from abnormal course conditions (including immovable obstructions), dangerous animal condition, embedded ball, or temporary water for example.	Rules of Golf - Rule 16		Yes