

Returning Matchplay Cards

NZ Golf support the view held by the USGA in that the more information returned for handicap purposes then the more accurate the handicap index will represent a players ability. That means that in both forms of play, stroke and match play, cards are to be returned for handicap purposes, which has been the situation for over 15 years. If the **'most likely score'** concept is followed correctly and the score card signed by a marker, then there should be no chance of an error or mis-representation of the score. NZ Golf have advised that of the nearly 10,000 members that replied to our survey 61% believed match play cards should be entered for handicap purposes.

There seems to have been some confusion in regard to match play cards with some clubs believing they now no longer need to be entered for handicapping. This is incorrect. What may have caused such confusion is that a list of exemptions has been created, whereby some matches could be played, and it is not a requirement for cards to be entered for handicapping.

MATCH PLAY CARD EXEMPTIONS FOR HANDICAPPING

Following the feedback from the 2014 handicap survey New Zealand Golf has relaxed the requirement for all match play cards to be returned for handicap purposes. However, there are matches played where cards must be returned.

Formats where scorecards are exempt for handicap purposes include:

- Club match play championship
- Inter Club / Pennants (off the stick format)
(e.g. Mens A Grade, Palmanui , B Grade & Women's Championship)
- National / District / Provincial Match Play Championships
(e.g. New Zealand Amateur)
- Inter-District team events
(e.g. Men's & Women's Interprovincials, Shand Cup, etc)
- International team events
(e.g. Trans-Tasman Cup, Michael Bonallack)

NOTE 1: If a District Association or Golf Club conducts a match play competition under a format which qualifies for exempt status and wishes to override the exemption, they are permitted to do so provided a clause is included within the competition conditions requiring that all scorecards must be returned for handicap purposes.

NOTE 2: If an individual player, when competing under a format which has been listed as qualifying for exempt status, wants to return a scorecard for handicapping, provided the scorecard is correctly attested, they are permitted to do so.

Formats where scorecards are not exempt from handicap purposes and must be returned include:

- Interclub / Pennants / using handicaps (e.g. Handicap Pennants, Presidents & womens Weekend or District Pennants)
- Groups of three or four that play a best ball competition

Whilst New Zealand Golf has provided flexibility in regard to the exempt status, District Associations and Golf Clubs must continue to ensure that scorecards in all other formats, including 9-hole rounds, are entered for handicap purposes

MOST LIKELY SCORE EXPLAINED

The game of golf is based on the premise that a player will play as well as the player can play. For handicap purposes each player is required to record a hole score for a hole not finished, not played, or not played under "The Rules of Golf," and to reduce any hole score when it is higher than the maximum number allowed under Equitable Stroke Control (ESC)

It is accepted that occasionally a decision is required as to what the "most likely score" may be and we recommend that if in doubt then the marker of the score card should be involved. The card needs to be attested when returned then it is logical that the marker be involved.

A "most likely score" is the score a player must post for handicap purposes if a hole is started but not completed or if the player is conceded a stroke. The most likely score consists of the number of strokes already taken plus, in the player's best judgment, the number of strokes the player would take to complete the hole from that position more than half the time. This number may not exceed the player's ESC limit.

There is no limit to the number of unfinished holes a player may have in a round, provided that failure to finish is not for the purpose of handicap manipulation.

Example 1: A and B are partners in a four-ball stroke play competition. On a hole on which neither player receives a handicap stroke, A lies two, 18 feet from the hole. B lies two, 25 feet from the hole. B holes a putt for a 3. A picks up on the hole, because A cannot better B's score. A records 4 on the scorecard because 4 is A's most likely score.

Example 2: A and B are playing a match. On a hole on which neither player receives a handicap stroke, A has holed out in 4; B has a 30-foot putt for a 5. B has lost the hole, and picks up. B records 6 on the scorecard because 6 is B's most likely score.

Example 3: A and B are playing a match. On a hole on which neither player receives a handicap stroke, A is one foot from the hole, lying 4. B is 10 feet from the hole, lying 3. B putts and misses. They both concede a half. Both players record 5 because that is their most likely score.

Example 4: A and B are playing a match. A drives straight down the middle of the fairway but B hits it into the trees and fails to find the ball. Rather than return to the tee B concedes the hole. In this case Player A records par plus any handicap shots received on the hole and B records the maximum score on the hole allowable under ESC.

If a player does not play a hole or plays it other than under the principles of the Rules of Golf (except for preferred lies), the score recorded for that hole for handicap purposes must be par plus any handicap strokes the player is entitled to receive on that hole.

Example: A player with a Course Handicap of 10 receives a handicap stroke on the first 10 allocated handicap-stroke holes. If the player does not play the sixth allocated handicap-stroke hole, which is a par 4, the player must record a score of par plus one for handicap purposes.