

### **Get a USGA Handicap....It's easy:**

Simply go to your Canongate golf shop and tell one of the golf professionals that you would like to start a handicap. They will enter your name and member number into the handicap system, and show you how to post a score. At this time you should print a handicap label which will show your GHIN number (**golf handicap information network**). This is a six or seven digit number that distinguishes you from every other golfer in the system. The cost for a USGA handicap is \$30 per year, and is billed every January.

### **Posting a score is easy:**

Just sit down at the handicap computer and follow the simple directions on the screen. You will be prompted to enter your member number (or you can access using your last name by pressing the "member look-up" button). Then you will be prompted to put in the proper date, number of holes (9-hole scores should also be posted), course played, which tee box, and score. Once you have entered at least five scores, you will be given a USGA Handicap Index.

Each Canongate location has a handicap computer, in fact almost every course in the country has one! And you will be able to post your scores from any location. Again it's fairly simple. If you are anywhere other than your home course, choose the button that reads "Guest Score Posting". The next thing it will ask for is your GHIN number. Remember this is the number that is on the handicap label that you should have already printed. From here you will enter all the information as before, and that info will be electronically sent to your home course.

If you ever forget to post a score, and you want to make sure it gets recorded, you may post it using the internet. The web site is [www.ghin.com](http://www.ghin.com). Again you will need your GHIN number, and all of the same info as before.

### **A word about handicaps....it's not so easy**

Your handicap is NOT an average score. In fact, it is an average of the BEST 10 of your most recent 20 **differentials**. A differential is equal to **your score** minus the **course rating** for the particular course you've played, multiplied by 113 (which is basically the average slope in the country) and then divided by the **slope** of the course you've played. Course rating is a measurement of the difficulty of a course for a scratch golfer, and the slope rating is the measurement of the difficulty of a course for the non-scratch golfer. This all sounds very confusing, but it simply means that a score of 80 on a more difficult course will produce a smaller differential than a score of 80 on a relatively easy course. Also, a score of 80 on the same course, but played from different tee markers, will give two different differentials.

So, be very careful to post your scores from the correct tees, and make sure you are using the correct course rating for that particular set of tees. Mistakes can greatly affect your

handicap. Speaking of mistakes, if you happen to make one when entering a score, don't hesitate to let your golf professional know about it. He will be able to enter the system using a management password, and he will be able to correct any errors that have been made.

Ok, we have our scores posted and every 28 days (always on a Friday) our handicap will be updated. The handicap will not be a whole number, but instead it has a decimal point (such as 13.4). This decimal is your official USGA Handicap Index, but will never be the handicap that you use in a round of golf. Let me explain; The USGA Index is the number you bring with you to the golf course (any golf course). Once at a golf course, you should determine the set of tees that you will be playing and find out what the slope is from that set of tees. Then you should go to the slope chart that almost every course has, and determine what your USGA Index converts to on that particular course from that particular set of tees. Again, it sounds more complicated than it really is. Simply said, that 13.4 index might have a course handicap of 16 from the back tees of a difficult course such as Mirror Lake, and only a course handicap of 13 from the forward tees at an easier course such as Canongate I. The USGA Index tells what caliber of golfer you are, but the shots you receive are determined by the course and slope ratings.

### **Why do we need handicaps?**

The GHIN handicap system gives golfers a tool so that they may compete against others who also possess a USGA handicap. In fact, having a handicap is a requirement to play in most tournaments. It levels the playing field, and allows golfers of all skill levels to play against one another. Making sure that every score is posted is paramount to having an accurate handicap, and it is up to golf professionals, their staffs, and every golfer in the world to police each other.

There are other reasons to have a USGA handicap. At many courses, you will be told which tees to play from to maximize your enjoyment based on your handicap. Also, if you ever want to play overseas (Scotland for example) you will need proof of your ability to even get on some of the more famous courses. And finally, what better way to track your improvement? With a USGA handicap, you can monitor the ups and downs of your game, set goals, and compare your progress with others.

**USGA HANDICAPS ARE COOL!!!!**