



USGA Course Rating System™ Changes, 2016-2017

Reference Document for Authorized Golf Association Administrators

General

- Merged the Men's and Women's Guides into a single, dual-gender Guide.

This will help streamline the rating process and allow for more efficient use of resources for associations/teams rating for both genders. The Metric version of the Guide has been a dual-gender version and had positive response from international rating associations using it. Where applicable, two tables, consistently placed, are available with different colors (blue = men; gold = women; gray = unisex) and labels for gender distinction.

- Added definition of **Punitive** – An obstacle or situation that is unusually difficult, often requiring a demanding recovery shot or likely to cost the player a stroke.

Term added to Bunkers under the Extreme adjustment, and other pertinent areas. This will help clarify and distinguish from the definition of Significant.

- For the "Obstacle does not exist" qualification, reduced the men's distance from >60 yards to >50 yards to match the distance for women.

Adds simplicity and better reflects recent data on shot dispersion from the USGA Handicap Research Team (HRT) and other sources.

- Increased obstacle replication limit for women from 20 to 25 yards to match the limit for men.

Increasing this limit for women to match men adds simplicity and consistency with virtually no change to the overall Ratings.

- Modified Decision 4-3/1 by adding the following to the end of the first paragraph in the answer:

"Also please note that if the transition concept has been used on a hole for the scratch golfer, it cannot be considered a par-3 hole for obstacle weighting and effective playing length factors. The hole is rated as a par-4 hole. In this situation, consideration may be given to Roll and a value is required for Fairway (averaging a fairway value of zero as a one-shot hole with the fairway value just short of the green). A par-3 (one-shot) hole where the transition concept has been used for the bogey golfer remains as a par-3 hole for obstacle weighting, since par is determined on the effective playing length of a hole for a scratch golfer."

Adds clarity on how to handle a par-3 hole in scratch transition, as obstacle weighting is different for par-3 holes than par-4s and par-5s.

- Added Decision 3-1 as follows:

3-1 Tweeners and "Toggling"

Q: Is it appropriate to use a tweener, or "toggle" rating values or adjustments when the rating team cannot clearly determine the best value to use for a rating?

A: Usage of tweeners or the toggling concept are not required in the rating process but may provide a better rating value when the table value is close to a breakpoint or if an adjustment is debatable. A tweener is typically used when there is a two-point gap between the potential rating values.



Tweener example:

- A bogey golfer has a full tee shot with out of bounds about 29 yards from the center of the fairway landing zone. Based on the lateral distance of 29, the value from the Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough Rating Table is 6, but the rating team discusses that if the out of bounds was 30 yards away (a change of only 1 yard), the table value would be 4. Assuming there are no conditions that make the out of bounds more or less likely to come into play, the rating team decides that a tweener value of 5 best represents this rating value.

Toggling is typically used when the potential rating values are only one point apart. When this situation arises it would be appropriate to move back and forth or “toggle,” between columns or rows of a table, or alternate the use of a particular adjustment.

Toggling examples:

- The first two greens of a golf course could both be classified as either relatively flat or moderately contoured. In an effort to reflect average obstacle difficulty, the rating team agreed to identify the first green as relatively flat and the second green as moderately contoured.
- A golf course has moderate, but not significant, mounding bordering many of its greens. On the first of these holes, the rating team could not reach a consensus on whether to apply the Mounds adjustment. Ultimately, the team agreed to apply the adjustment in this case, but not to apply it on the next similar situation and continue to use this same concept throughout the rating.
- On the first hole, bunkers border about 1/2 the circumference of the green and the rating team uses the third column (>1/2 to 3/4) of the Greenside Bunker Rating table. On the second hole, bunkers border about 1/4 the circumference of the green. The since the rating team used the higher value on the first hole, they should consider using the lower value (<1/4) on the second hole.

Note: If there are multiple teams on a rating it is important for them to calibrate these applications to ensure consistency is applied throughout the rating process. (NEW)

This provides distinction between the use of tweeners and the new concept of “toggling.” Both are optional techniques, but are useful in assigning the most appropriate value to an obstacle or averaging out ratings and adjustments that are not clear cut on a given hole in the rating process.

Roll

- Modified the Roll Table as follows:

TEE-SHOT ROLL RATING TABLE						
(A full (tee) shot to a level area of average firmness rolls between 15 and 25 yards)						
Downhill			Level	Uphill		
Significant Slope	Moderate Slope	Minor Slope		Minor Slope	Moderate Slope	Significant Slope
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

The new table name (was Roll Rating Table) emphasizes that it is used only in tee-shot landing zones. The table no longer incorporates fairway condition (firm, average, and soft) as that will be covered with the new Extreme adjustment. The ability to assign tweener values to Roll was also removed as the table has more values available to cover the various degrees of slope in a landing zone.



- Added Extreme adjustment:

(E)* +1 or +2

If **EXTREME** soft or steep fairway conditions result in excessive loss of roll on the tee shot.

or -1 or -2

If **EXTREME** firm or steep fairway conditions result in excessive extra roll on the tee shot.

This adjustment is used for holes with fairways that are noticeably soft or firm and these conditions must be present during midseason. It can also be used when the slope of the landing zone is extreme where a ball will gain/lose excessive roll (e.g. hitting into a steep hill where the ball rolls backwards after hitting the ground).

- Retained the (2) adjustment and listed it as the second adjustment (after Extreme).

The Roll Rating value range is now -6 to 6 on any given hole (-5 to 5 in previous cycle).

- Added statement that each point of roll may change the approach shot by about 5 yards and that landing zones should be adjusted accordingly.

This is a general recommendation; e.g., a Roll Rating value of 4 would change a mathematical approach shot of 110 yards to an adjusted approach shot of 130 yards with loss of approximately 20 yards.

Dogleg/Forced Lay Up

- Revised language in lay up by choice definition to:

“Lay up by choice occurs when a significant obstacle or a combination of obstacles near the normal landing zone results in a scratch or bogey golfer choosing to hit less than a full shot. A fairway landing zone that is less than 15 [13] yards wide but without severe obstacles may be a reason for a lay up by choice. The lay up by choice would also be employed, primarily by scratch golfers, in their course management decisions. In order to qualify, the normal landing zone must present an unpleasant situation (e.g., downhill stance/lie to an elevated green).”

- Revised language in lay up by choice under Dogleg/Forced Lay Up – General to:

“Lay up by choice occurs when a significant obstacle or a combination of obstacles near the normal landing zone results in a scratch or bogey golfer *choosing* to hit less than a full shot. A fairway landing zone that is less than 15 [13] yards wide but without severe obstacles may be a reason for a lay up by choice. The lay up by choice would also be employed, primarily by scratch golfers, in their course management decisions. In order to qualify, the normal landing zone must present an unpleasant situation (e.g., downhill stance/lie to an elevated green). In this type of lay-up a Dogleg/Forced Lay-up yardage correction is not made, however the Lay Up (L)* adjustment for R&R and Fairway applies.”

The example of “laying up to avoid hitting half shots rather than full shots to the target area” was removed to apply lay up by choice in a consistent manner and only for an unpleasant or obvious situation. A short approach shot is no longer a sole reason for a lay up by choice; the mathematical landing zone must carry some risk and/or undesired situation.

Prevailing Wind

- Changed name of category from Prevailing Wind to Wind.

If wind is a factor on a golf course, then it has an impact on effective playing length whether or not it is prevailing and regardless of direction.

- Changed procedure from a hole by hole evaluation of wind to an overall yardage adjustment based on average daily wind speed at times when golf is played. The local weather service and local airports can provide information on wind speed, but it is important to check with club authorities for this information as well.

WIND RATING TABLE		
Wind Speed (Miles Per Hour)	9-Hole Adjustment	18-Hole Adjustment
< 5	0	0
5-6	18	36
7-8	27	54
9-10	36	72
11-12	54	108
13-14	72	144
15-16	90	180
17-18	126	252
19-20	162	324
>20	198	396

The yardage adjustment will apply to the entire golf course, instead of on a hole-by-hole basis. Nine-hole adjustments are available for 9-hole courses or courses that may have different wind speeds on the front and back nine; e.g., seaside on one nine and inland on the other. Shot lengths are no longer to be adjusted for wind as conditions can vary day to day or even hour to hour. This change is intended to assist those associations that currently rate for wind by making it an easier and a more consistent process.

Fairway

- Reduced Fairway Rating Table values in far-right column by one point.

WOMEN FAIRWAY RATING TABLE						
Hole Length (in Yards)	Fairway Width (in Yards)					
	> 45	35-45	30-34	25-29	20-24	< 20
< 270	1	1	2	3	4	5
270-309	1	2	3	3	5	6
310-355	2	3	4	4	6	7
> 355	2	3	4	5	7	8

Removes the tweener value between the 20-24 and <20 columns.



- Added **VISIBILITY** +1 adjustment as shot specific so it may be used for any landing zone. Removed the use of visibility problems from the **WIDTH** adjustment.

For example, a Visibility adjustment may be applied on the second shot of a three-shot (par-5) hole.

- Width adjustment – Added language to state that a plus **WIDTH** adjustment cannot be applied to a rating value that comes from the far-right column.

Reduces the potential obstacle value when a fairway width is extremely narrow; i.e., less than 20 yards wide. This promotes consistency with other areas (e.g., not using plus Bounce adjustment when rating in far-right column).

- Revised language in Obstacle Rating Measurements – Fairway (p. 29 of Manual, p. 7 of Guide) to:

“An average width should also be used when a punitive obstacle(s) (bunker, water hazard, etc.) is towards the end of a landing zone. Conversely, when the fairway width is reduced by a punitive obstacle(s) at the beginning of a landing zone, use that measurement exclusively as the fairway width of that landing zone.”

A punitive obstacle(s) at the beginning of a landing zone defines the fairway width because that is where the ball initially lands; i.e., the ball has virtually no chance of coming to rest in the fairway behind the punitive obstacle. This change puts more emphasis on evaluating the beginning of the landing zone in this situation.

- Added Decision 12-2/2 as follows:

12-2/2 Fairway Landing Zone is Rough

Q. How does one rate a “landing zone” when there is no area cut to fairway height?

A. If the rough where the ball lands results in less than normal roll for that shot, an adjustment for roll should be applied. If the rough results in difficult lies, it should be accounted for under Topography. For the Fairway rating, using the <20 yard wide column would be appropriate, since a fairway does not exist. However, the rater should consider using the Width (-1 or -2) adjustment if the rough is benign and the ball can be played easily from the rough. For the other obstacles in the landing zone, the rater should determine a reasonable center of the landing zone to make all lateral measurements. This spot will often be obvious by looking forward to where the fairway does exist and using a similar line of play to determine the center of the landing zone. (NEW)

Addresses a common situation, primarily for the bogey golfer, in an effort to create consistency on how Fairway ratings, length correction factors, and other obstacles are evaluated.

Green Target

- On the Green Target Rating Table, reduced the second row values from 4 to 3 in columns 1 and 2.

This eliminates the tweener option that is not needed due to the short length of the approach shot.

- Transition Zone: Changed the bottom row of the Green Target Rating Table to remove unrounded values, so bottom row is 3, 4, 4, 5, 5, 6, 6.

The Transition Zone values have been rounded up to the next whole number as the general consensus is that golfers will try to go for the target more than not, and bring additional difficulty into the shot. However, the ability to adjust up or down one point when the center of the green is near the front or back of the Transition Zone was retained.

MEN GREEN TARGET RATING TABLE (Assumes Green is Generally Flat and of Average Firmness)								
Scratch Golfer Shot Length (Yards)	Effective Diameter of Green (in Yards)							Bogey Golfer Shot Length (Yards)
	(7) > 36	(6) 32-36	(5) 27-31	(4) 22-26	(3) 18-21	(2) 13-17	(1) < 13	
< 60	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	< 30
60-79	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	30-44
80-99	2	2	3	3	4	4	4	45-59
100-119	2	2	3	4	4	4	5	60-74
120-139	2	3	4	4	4	5	6	75-89
140-159	2	3	4	4	5	6	7	90-109
160-179	3	3	4	5	6	7	7	110-129
180-199	3	4	5	5	6	7	8	130-149
200-219	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	150-164
220-240	4	5	6	7	8	8	9	165-180
> 240	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	> 180
50/50 Transition Zone Rating Value	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	50/50 Transition Zone Rating Value

- Removed the option of using a weighted average for Transition Zone.

Rating teams should use the 50/50 Transition Zone value in the Green Target rating table and adjust +/- 1 point as needed. This procedure creates simplicity and consistency without compromising the integrity of the Green Target rating. In most cases the team is choosing between rating values of 4 to 6, which indicates an average to above average rating for these situations, which is appropriate.

- Added the following to end of 4th sentence under Oddly Shaped Greens (p. 49 of Manual, p. 36 of Guide):

“If using the circle concept, do not reduce the effective green diameter of any circles used in the calculation, even if they meet the >2:1 or >3:1 concept (see examples A & B) since the overall effective green diameter will be reduced by the circle concept itself (see example C).”

Applying the >2:1 or >3:1 concept to one or more circles (or ovals) when the circle concept is also being used would result in an effective green diameter that is too low and potentially a Green Target rating that is too high. Essentially it would be doubling the effect of reducing the green size.

Recoverability and Rough

- Changed language to indicate that the R&R Rating Table uses the average rough height of each hole, not the average of the entire course.

This allows a course that does not maintain a consistent rough height on all holes to be more accurately rated.

- Eliminated the “Fairway Height” column in the R&R Rating Table.

If a hole has rough cut to fairway height, i.e., no distinguishable rough, then utilize the <2” {<1”} column to determine the R&R table value. This eliminates determining the fine line between fairway height and <2” (which by definition includes all rough below 2”).

WOMEN RECOVERABILITY AND ROUGH RATING TABLE (Assumes a 5' or Less Rise and/or Drop Around the Green)						
Scratch Green Target Rating	Average Rough Height of Hole (in Inches) – Cool Season Type Grass (Warm Season Type Grass in {Braces})					Bogey Green Target Rating
	< 2" (< 1")	2" to 2½" (1" to 1½")	> 2½" to 3½" (> 1½" to 2")	> 3½" to 5" (> 2" to 3")	> 5" (> 3")	
2 or 3	1	3	4	6	7	2
4	2	4	5	7	8	3
5 or 6	3	5	6	8	9	4 or 5
7 or 8	4	6	7	9	10	6 or 7
9 or 10	5	7	8	10	10	8 to 10

- Added Decision 12-4b as follows:

12-4b Rough Height Not Matching Difficulty

Q. How does one account for rough that is particularly dense or thin and does not match the normal recoverability of similar height from the rough height category in R&R?

A. In general, there is enough range within each category that rough will usually be properly rated by using the actual average height. However, if the rough height is close to a breakpoint and it is obvious that it plays easier or tougher than other rough of similar height, a rating team can move into the next category if warranted. For example, if a course has cool season rough that averages 2 ¾" [2 ¼]" but it is very thick and dense due to regular irrigation and fertilizer application, moving into the 3-4" [2 ½ - 3 ½]" column would be allowable (see also Decision 3-1 on averaging values). (NEW)

This empowers rating teams to select a higher or lower rough height category if characteristics of the rough create a different degree of difficulty than what is typical for its height. Also, the option is available to toggle between columns to compensate for these types of situations in an effort to average out the impact of the rough.

Bunkers

- Modified Greenside Bunker Rating Table so bottom row reads: 5, 6, 7, 8.

GREENSIDE BUNKER RATING TABLE (Assumes There Are Bunker(s) Near a Fairway Landing Zone)					
Scratch Green Target Rating	Fraction of Green Closely Bordered by Bunkers				Bogey Green Target Rating
	> 0 to ¼	> ¼ to ½	> ½ to ¾	> ¾	
2	1	2	2	3	-
3	2	2	3	4	2
4	2	3	4	5	3
5 or 6	3	4	5	6	4 or 5
7 or 8	4	5	6	7	6 or 7
9 or 10	5	6	7	8	8 to 10

The bottom row value on the >0 to ¼ column is 5 instead of 4. This eliminates the unnecessary tweener value that was available in the previous cycle.

- Modified Bunker Carry adjustment to:

- (C)* +1** If the player must **CARRY** a bunker(s) that protects more than half the green. For the scratch golfer, the bunker(s) must be closely bordering the green and the Green Target must be **5** or greater. For the bogey golfer, the bunker(s) may be anywhere along the line of play with no minimum Green Target qualification.
- or **+1** If the player must **CARRY** a significant bunker(s) to reach a fairway landing zone. For the scratch golfer, the bunker(s) must be near the start of the fairway landing zone. For the bogey golfer, the bunker(s) may be anywhere along the line of play.

Clarifies when the (C) adjustment may be applied on an approach shot to the green for the scratch golfer, and provides an additional opportunity to use the adjustment for the bogey golfer as the bunkers that protect more than half the green may be anywhere along the line of play to qualify. Also, in order to apply a (C) adjustment on a shot to a landing zone for the scratch or bogey golfer, the rating team must consider the bunker(s) a significant obstacle, which provides some discretion (e.g. not applying the Carry adjustment to a small patch of sand directly in front of the tee box).

- Changed description of Extreme adjustment to:

- (E)* +1 or +2** If pot bunkers, unusual bunker features, or punitive fairway bunkers make recovery **EXTREME** difficult (e.g., extreme rough interferes with swing or blocks the recovery shot, railroad ties or stacked sod shore up the bank, or a large bunker or series of bunkers on the line of play generates long bunker shots over sand to the green, etc.). “Extreme” bunker(s) must be closely bordering the green or near a fairway landing zone in order to apply this adjustment for either the scratch or bogey golfer.

Changed Extreme to a shot-specific adjustment and tied in near and closely bordering qualifier to use the adjustment. Also, removed the statement about depth of fairway bunkers, replacing that concept with punitive (as per definition) to apply this adjustment. The intention is to evaluate bunkers based on their punitive features without being restricted by a specific depth qualification.

- For the N adjustment, changed None in the Manual to No to match Guide.

Creates consistent terminology between the Manual and Guide.

- Changed description of first case of No adjustment to:

- 1** If there are **NO** fairway bunkers on a two (or more) shot hole near a landing zone for the scratch golfer or anywhere along the line of play for the bogey golfer. Greenside bunkers do not count as fairway bunkers unless the golfer has a landing zone just short of the green and the greenside bunkers are near that landing zone.

The first sentence of the adjustment is unchanged. The second sentence was modified to clarify when greenside bunkers may also count as fairway bunkers. It requires a golfer having a landing zone just short of the green and greenside bunkers near that landing zone to get credit as a fairway bunker. In this situation, the golfer has potential to be in this bunker(s) on two separate shots—the shot to the landing just short of the green and the short approach to the green.

Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough

- Amended **PERCENTAGE** adjustment to include "...or a significant barrier (tall net, steep slope, etc.) minimizes the chance that a shot would reach the OB or extreme rough."

This change provides for adjusting in addition to a -1 Bounce for tall nets, steep slopes, etc. where a -1 isn't enough to accommodate reducing the number to a suitable rating value. For keeping with the consistency of a +1 and -1 Bounce, this was placed under the Percentage adjustment as it is a rare occurrence.

Water

- Amended **PERCENTAGE** adjustment as noted above in OB/ER.

Trees

- Modification of entire Trees category by evaluating the overall impact of the trees on the play of the hole. Once the entire hole has been evaluated for trees, a rating value must be assigned based on whether the trees are a minor problem, moderate problem, significant problem, or extreme problem.

New language as follows:

Trees create a condition on each hole that requires the rater to consider the overall difficulty that the trees present to the scratch and bogey golfer. Trees at the landing zones and green should be evaluated. Any trees along the line of play that could impact the ball while in flight must also be considered. The length of the shot(s) to be played on the hole is also important, as the probability of getting into the trees goes up as shot length increases. Generally, the impact of trees in the tee shot landing zone will be the most important factor in determining the correct Trees rating for the hole.

Determining the correct difficulty factor for trees requires consideration of the following for each shot that is to be played on the hole, based on the scratch golfer's ability:

- Number, height, and density (at midseason) of trees at each landing area and on the line of play to the next target.
- Length of shot to the target landing zone or green - trees on a full tee shot are more likely to come into play than when a player lays up or hits less than a full shot.
- Distance of the trees from the center of the landing zone – Are trees likely to come into play, even on good shots? Do trees closely border a narrow fairway landing zone?
- Length of shot required to reach the next landing zone or the green – Is it a long iron/wood or a short iron? Recovery is typically easier with a shorter shot as there are more types of shots that can be played. Does a ball in the trees mean that the golfer will likely need an extra shot in order to reach the green?
- Presence of low-hanging branches that impact swing and obstruct recovery shots.
- Conditions under the trees that impact the lie of the ball.
- Proximity of trees to the ball when in flight.
- Conditions along the line of play from the trees that limit the shot options due to intervening water, bunkers, or even additional trees (e.g. a water hazard between the trees and green limiting a low shot to avoid tree branches).

TREES RATING TABLE				
Hole Length	Minor Problem	Moderate Problem	Significant Problem	Extreme Problem
1 Shot Hole (Par 3)	1	2	3	4
2 + Shot Hole (Par 4/5)	2	4	6	8
All values may be adjusted +/- 1 point				

Adjustments (*Scratch and Bogey Ratings*):

- (Q)** - +1 to +4 If a shot must be hit through a narrow chute. The amount of adjustment depends on the width and length of the chute (see table on page 30).
- +1 or +2 If obstacle **SQUEEZE** occurs because substantial trees are within 20 yards (+1) or 15 yards (+2) of the center of the fairway landing zone on both sides.
- (O)** - +1 or +2 If trees **OBSTRUCT** the shot to the target (landing zone or green). Do not apply if the trees that obstruct the shot have been used to determine a **SQUEEZE** adjustment on the same shot.

This revision serves to create a simple, accurate, and more consistent procedure for rating Trees. Trees are quickly visited at each landing zone to evaluate potential Squeeze (Q) and Obstruct (O) adjustments, but the table value is based on the impact of trees throughout the hole. Tweeners are available for two or more shot holes and all values may be adjusted up/down a point as well based on the discussion among the rating team.

- Added Decision 12-8 as follows:

12-8 Explanation of Trees Rating Procedure

Trees are like other obstacles such as out-of-bounds or water in that shot lengths and the proximity to the obstacle from the center of a landing zone or green is the primary consideration. The key difference between trees and these other obstacles is measuring recovery, and doing so based on the scratch golfer's ability to recover, even when evaluating Trees for the bogey golfer. Trees can affect shots in the air anywhere along the line of play, not just in the landing area, and no two tree situations are the same. As a result, approaching trees as a "condition," much like Topography or Green Surface, is a more consistent way to evaluate their overall difficulty on the hole. Based on the factors that a rating team must consider on each shot, the "condition" of trees on a hole is assigned to one of four categories: minor, moderate, significant, or an extreme problem. Below are common tree problems that a course rater must consider when determining their impact on scoring and the overall Trees rating for a hole:

1. A long par-4 hole has trees that tightly line the fairway. A tee shot that is hit offline by 15 yards right or left and strikes an overhanging branch may wind up well short of the normal landing zone, which already requires a long approach shot. Any reduction in distance would require an extra shot to reach the green.



2. From the tee on a dogleg hole, hitting the fairway on one side of the dogleg may result in trees partially obstructing the next shot from that side of the fairway. However, it is a par-5 (three-shot) hole, and these trees would likely not prevent a player from still reaching the green in three shots. However, if this was a two-shot hole the recovery problems would be more significant, since the player may not reach the green from the trees.

3. Most of the trees on a hole are within the extreme rough and they are not near a landing zone. However there is a large tree in the middle of the fairway that affects the landing zones from a number of tees. The tree cannot be played over, but can be played around on both sides. Recovery from the area around the tree is minor; however the tree may obstruct shots to the landing zone or green depending on the golfer and tee being evaluated.

Instead of using strict measurement guidelines, the rating team evaluates the tree problems in reaching each landing area and green and then decides on the overall impact of trees on the hole. "Tweener" usage is encouraged as warranted. The only adjustments to consider are **O**bstructed or a **S**queeze or **C**hute (**Q**) situation. A successful rating team will find that looking back down the hole from the green toward the tee is a great way to validate the final rating values for trees. (NEW)

This new decision provides additional perspective for evaluating the difficulty of Trees, as well as relevant examples to assist raters in the adoption of the new procedure.

- Added Decision 12-8/1 as follows:

12-8/1 Explanation of using only the Scratch Golfer's Ability to Recover from Trees

Q: The bogey golfer is not as skilled as the scratch golfer in recovering from the trees, yet we rate recovery for the bogey golfer based on the scratch golfer's ability to recover from trees. Is this a fair way to rate Trees for the bogey golfer?

A: There is both a practical reason and a technical reason why recovery for both golfers is based on the scratch golfer's ability. From a practical standpoint, it is difficult to consistently predict a bogey golfer's ability to play the wide variety of recovery shots that trees can present. It is easier to visualize how a scratch golfer is able to recover from the trees, which enables rating teams to be more consistent in the rating process.

From a technical standpoint, the final rating values for Trees are subject to a weighting factor for both the Trees obstacle and the overall obstacle stroke value. The weighting factor for Trees and the overall weighting of obstacles is much higher for the bogey golfer, which ensures that the impact of the Trees rating is higher for the bogey golfer, even if the rating value for Trees is the same as the scratch golfer. This process is designed to provide consistent, accurate, and fair ratings for both golfers. (NEW)

This new decision clarifies the requirement to assess recovery from Trees based on the scratch golfer's ability, even though the bogey golfer plays the same hole and will be assigned an obstacle value for Trees on Form 1.

Desert (Men only)

- Amended **PERCENTAGE** adjustment as noted above in OB/ER, see page 9.