

# COVID-19: Guidance for Clubs and Golfers on playing rounds and submitting Acceptable Scores for handicapping



With regard to the below modifications to the Rules of Golf which have been permitted during the COVID-19 pandemic, please note the following:

- 1) Clubs can continue to operate these provisions - at their discretion - for the purposes of allowing counting scores to be returned. This discretion will apply until 31 March 2022.
- 2) Subject to the public health outlook continuing to improve, from 31 March 2022, in order for counting scores to be permitted these provisions must be withdrawn and the Rules of Golf as set out prior to the COVID-19 pandemic must apply.

<p><b>Removal of rakes from bunkers</b></p>	<p>Where club committees continue to proceed without rakes, they may introduce a local rule allowing placing in bunkers using the wording in <a href="#">Model Local Rule E-3</a>.</p> <p>Please note that where rakes are reintroduced in bunkers, this local rule must be withdrawn in order for scores to be acceptable for handicapping purposes.</p>
<p><b>Modifications to Flagsticks</b></p>	<p>Golf Clubs may continue to employ the protective measures around flagsticks and hole depths that were used in 2020 (see R&amp;A guidance above for approved measures). A further FAQ on flagsticks and hole depths is set out <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p><b>Using Physical Scorecards without cards being counter-signed</b></p>	<p>If physical scorecards are used, in all cases <b>the MARKER should enter the player's scores on a scorecard</b> (it is advisable that each player keep their own score as well as the score of the person they are marking). At the end of the round, <b>the marker should ask the player to verbally certify his/her scores</b>, and then write the player's name in the player's signature slot. The marker signs the card in the marker's signature slot.</p>

## Electronic Devices

While the use of electronic devices to record scores in place of or alongside a physical scorecard increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic, it must be noted that Committees are permitted under the standard Rules of Golf to accept electronic scores. However, clubs must protect the integrity of the score return process for handicapping purposes, and this will be facilitated by observing the below provisions:

<p><b>Electronic Devices as an alternative to physical scorecards</b></p>	<p>Committees may continue to determine that an electronic score return is sufficient without the return of a physical card, but this should happen only where the software or solution which the Committee employs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows the hole scores to be electronically certified by the player and his/her marker,</li> <li>• Has a facility to register intent to return a score before the player starts the round on the day of play only</li> <li>• Allows verification/amendment of the player's Handicap Index</li> </ul>
<p><b>Electronic Devices used alongside scorecards</b></p>	<p>If the electronic solution used by the Committee does not have this functionality, it may still be used, but used only to assist the Committee in the same way as players may in the past have returned scorecards and entered scores on a computer terminal. <b>A physical scorecard should also be returned to the Committee.</b></p>
<p><b>General Play Rounds counting for handicapping purposes</b></p>	<p>As the World Handicap System permits scores recorded in general play rounds to count for handicapping purposes, please note the following requirements for such scores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course must be in "Acceptable Score" condition</li> <li>• Players must register their intention to return a general play score for handicapping purposes before they start their round.</li> <li>• The above guidance on using physical scorecards and electronic devices applies for general play rounds. The Golf Ireland app allows players to register the intent to return a score, electronically certify scores by a player and marker, and facilitates verification / amendment of the player's Handicap Index, and therefore can be prescribed as the method for returning General Play scores by any club, should the Club so determine. A club may also choose alternative methods for accepting such scores provided they comply with the above guidance.</li> <li>• Where an App/electronic device is being used to return a general play score for handicapping purposes as an alternative to a physical score card, the player and the marker should verbally agree on the scores immediately after completing the round.</li> </ul>

**All scores must be promptly returned to the Committee on the day of play in accordance with Rule 3.3B(2) of the Rules of Golf and Rule 4.3 of the Rules of Handicapping. For more information on the World Handicap System and the Rules of Handicapping, see [www.golfireland.ie/handicap-system](http://www.golfireland.ie/handicap-system)**