

THROUGH THE GREEN By Jim Cowan, Director of Course Rating & Handicapping

Taking on Tiger



From time to time we publish a breakdown of the handicap ranges of all NCGA members. The breakdown identifies what percent of members carry a Handicap Index down to a single stroke (i.e., 1.5% of men carry a Handicap Index between 3.5 and 4.4; 5% of all NCGA men are 4 or better).

It's always interesting to stack up your game against the other golfers and see where you rank. How about stacking up your Handicap

Index against the greatest player in the world?

That is what I will attempt to do here as I calculate a quasi handicap for Tiger Woods.

First I must offer a couple of disclaimers.

One, the calculations are based upon scores from the five most recent 72-hole stroke play tournaments Tiger played domestically with the exception of The Masters (Augusta National does not have USGA Course Ratings).

Two, I've had to take some liberties with the Course and Slope ratings for the five Tour courses in question. It's simple enough to look up the back tee ratings for Bay Hill, site of the Arnold Palmer Invitational, however, these numbers don't quite paint the full picture. The Tour players are greeted with firmer, faster greens than those Bay Hill normally maintains and the rough is undoubtedly longer and thicker than the other 51 weeks of the year. For the sake of argument, on average I have bumped up the ratings around a stroke and boosted the Slopes to try to reflect the added difficulty.

Here's how Tiger's record pans out:

Score	Diff.	Course Name
72	-5.6	Torrey Pines-South
68*	-8.5	Torrey Pines-South
70*	-7.1	Torrey Pines-South
73	-4.9	Torrey Pines-South
67*	-7.7	Doral
66*	-8.5	Doral
72	-3.9	Doral
68	-6.9	Doral
70	-5.0	Bay Hill
68	-6.5	Bay Hill
66*	-8.0	Bay Hill
66*	-8.0	Bay Hill
67*	-8.8	Torrey Pines-South
65*	-10.3	Torrey Pines-South
66	-7.0	Torrey Pines-North
66*	-9.6	Torrey Pines-South
69	-4.9	Sherwood CC
62*	-10.2	Sherwood CC
67	-6.4	Sherwood CC
68	-5.7	Sherwood CC

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Not bad.

Running through the math, Tiger's scores work out to an Index in the neighborhood of a +8.3. Even more remarkable, if you actually tally the worst 10 of his 20 differentials, you still get a +5.4.

So how does my 3.8 fair against Tiger in a head-to-head match?

I stand to receive 13 strokes from Tiger from the back tees at Pacific Grove (118 Slope) where I would play to a 4 and Tiger a +9.

From the back tees at Poppy Hills (142 Slope), three additional strokes come into play as I move up to a 5 and Tiger becomes a +11.

Some might be surprised to learn that the Handicap System works the same on the plus side of "scratch" and that Tiger's Course Handicap moves up, not down, when playing Poppy Hills. It's quite simple, though. The easier the course, the more my game can "hang" with Tiger's and the fewer strokes I need to compete with him. As the courses get tougher, the more his superiority kicks in and the more strokes I need. Even scratch golfers require two more strokes to compete with Tiger at Poppy Hills than they do at Pacific Grove.

Of course, this is all theoretical. If Tiger can intimidate the best players in the world, what chance would I have of keeping my cool and playing my normal game against him? I should have challenged him when he was still on crutches.

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TALKIN' TURF

By Mike McCullough, Director of Environmental and Water Resources

Protect your Skin



Being active in the great outdoors has some inherent risks. Extended exposure to the sun's rays can be detrimental to your skin. Playing golf does not mean a person has to become the next statistic at the dermatologist's office.

When I was growing up I had my share of sunburns, but nothing I considered out of the ordinary at the time. Available products were mostly suntan lotions with maximum protection of 10 or 12 SPF (sun protection factor). Even though I spent most summers outdoors, I rarely used suntan lotion. Those perceived minor incidences during my formative years have had major consequences later in life: skin cancer.

I was first diagnosed with basal cell carcinoma on my neck at the age of 25. Two surgical procedures were performed

at the time to remove the cancer from my neck. Fifteen years later, a new basal cell was found on another area of my neck. Reports claim there are as many as 1 million new cases of skin cancer each year. According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, about 90 percent of non-melanoma skin cancers are associated with exposure to UV (ultraviolet) radiation.

There are three major types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and malignant melanoma. Most skin cancers can be easily cured when detected at an early stage. If there is a spot or mole that has grown or changed colors recently, get it checked out by a dermatologist immediately. Skin cancer, if left undetected, can have fatal outcomes.

Today most dermatologists recommend applying a product with a minimum SPF factor of 15 for all skin types, at least 30 minutes before anticipated exposure to the sun. Re-apply sunscreens after two hours

Raising the Bar



The tournament committee has some new and innovative changes for the 2009 season. One of which is the extension to 2024 of the 50-year contract with the Pebble Beach Company for the use of Spyglass Hill for 30 days. The compromise is that the NCGA gives up 10 days starting in 2009 and will only have 20 days for its tournament program through 2015 which is the year that the original contract was scheduled to end. The 10 days that the NCGA gave up will be reinstated by the Pebble Beach Company beginning in 2016 and ending in 2024, allowing the NCGA use of Spyglass for 10 days from 2016-2024.

The Zone championships are directly affected. It now takes 15 days to administer the zone tournaments so they will be played at Bayonet GC. Each zone will play one day at Poppy Hills and one day at Bayonet. The top two teams from each zone will still play in the Zone Championship at Spyglass Hill and Poppy Hills. The committee has moved the NCGA

Junior and Senior Championships to Spyglass. These two events have always been hosted by our member clubs and have never been played at Spyglass. The Master Division, Women's Championship, Associate Club Four-Ball Net and Four-Ball Net will each have one day at Spyglass and one day at Poppy Hills. The Four-Ball, Public Links and Amateur Match Play remain at Spyglass.

Number of Entries

The allocation of entries a club can submit based on the number of active golfers has changed for the following events: Four-Ball Net, Associate Club Net, Associate Club Four-Ball Net, Senior Four-Ball Net and Net Amateur. This allows more players and teams from clubs to participate in NCGA local qualifying. Each of the events mentioned have varying policies, so please check the NCGA website or paper entries that were sent to the clubs.

Handicap Index Eligibility NEW FOR 2009

Required indexes for the different events must be met at the **time of registration**, not the month of closing. If you want to register



a couple of months early you must have the required index at that time. For scratch players this means that if you enter early and meet the index requirement, you will remain in the event even if your index exceeds the maximum required the month of closing. For net players, you can register at any time if you meet the index requirement. However, you will play in the championship using your current index of the month of closing.

Master Division Formats

Over the last few years participation in the Master Division championships (ages 40 to 54) has declined. In fact, the Master Division Four-Ball no longer has enough teams entering to justify local qualifying. The staff and tournament committee do not want to eliminate these events. To spark more interest there will no longer be an upper end cap for the age requirement. Beginning this year, both events' age requirements will be 40 years and up which allows seniors to participate. Also the Master Division Championship will be played at Spyglass one day and Poppy Hills one day while the Master Division Four-Ball will be played at the newly-renovated Bayonet course.

California Golf Association

A change has been made for qualifying in the State Amateur and State Senior Amateur. A player may now choose a site in Northern California or Southern California for qualifying. The number of qualifying spots for each site will be based on the combined total number of entries received by each Association. This should make it easier to find a site and date that will work for everyone. The CGA Board has also combined the exemption criteria which can be viewed on the NCGA website.

Something Is Missing

If you haven't noticed, part of the directory including "Attention Tournament Players" and tournament history are no longer in this magazine. This information is now on the NCGA website where it will always be current. The R&C Department and the Communications Department have worked to make the tournament section of the website professional and user friendly.

Club Tournament Chairmen

I want to remind all tournament chairmen to pay attention to entry closing dates and the dates of the qualifiers and championships so your members who qualify at the club level know where and when they go next. We highly recommend this information be part of club announcements.

Have a great tournament season and remember that the Rules and Competition staff is always available to help in any way.

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Sun vs. Shade



In order for golf course superintendents to produce high quality turf, there are three basic needs: water,

nutrients and sun. If you remove one of the legs the quality of turf suffers and things can fall out of balance. Plants use light from the sun for photosynthesis which produces carbohydrates. For most golf courses, shade from trees is one of the greatest obstacles for growing quality turf. Finding the perfect balance between trees, turf and golf is a process that needs to be constantly evaluated.

In order for golf courses to have healthy turf that is capable of withstanding stresses such as low mowing heights (putting greens), moisture stress (special events or tournaments), disease and insect and weed infestations, turf should be exposed to as much sun light as possible.

little precaution. It is never too early or too late to protect the skin from the sun's damaging rays.

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outside. Remember, the larger the SPF number, the more protection for the skin. It is a good habit to apply sunscreen no matter if the exposure is two minutes or four hours.

Other important tools in the fight against skin cancer are lip balms with SPF, wide-brimmed hats, sunglasses that block all UV rays and clothing that has built-in SPF protection. All hats should have at least a one-inch brim. While traditional golf hats may provide adequate protection for the face and scalp, they do not do a good job protecting the ears and neck.

Annual visits to the dermatologist are highly recommended along with monthly skin self-examinations. Since I am a high-risk candidate, I schedule two appointments a year with my dermatologist. My most recent check-up detected the latest basal cell carcinoma skin cancer. This frequent monitoring definitely provides peace of mind.

Whether your next round is on a bright and sunny day or under dull and overcast skies, take a few minutes and apply a