HANDICAP - Q&A's

Please consult the FPG's site for the EGA Handicap System manual and further handicapping information

www.fpg.pt

What is an EGA Handicap?

A Handicap is a value that represents the player's ability. By having a handicap, players with less ability receive a number of additional strokes, distributed through the holes.

The EGA Handicap is the official designation of a handicap within the EGA Handicap System of the European Golf Association (EGA), which is administrated by the Portuguese Golf Federation, in Portugal, since 2000.

EGA Handicap is an index that represents the player's ability, in relation to a golf course with standard difficulty.

What is a Playing Handicap?

It is the number of handicap strokes that a player receives for a specific set of tees at a golf course, corresponding to the player's EGA Handicap. The EGA Playing Handicap can be looked up on the playing handicap table, displayed on the starting tees and on the golf course notice board.

Playing Handicaps are also available on the FPG's website.

How to obtain an EGA Handicap?

To obtain an EGA Handicap the player must be affiliated to the Portuguese Golf Federation (FPG).

The player must contact the entity through which he is registered in the FPG, for handicapping purposes. That is the entity responsible for the player's handicap management, that will inform the player about the procedures of how to obtain a handicap and that will assign the handicap.

- Beginners can obtain their first EGA Handicap by submitting at least one score
- To obtain a handicap of 36 or less, the player needs to submit four scores.

The rounds may be played on any rated golf course, for 18 or 9 holes. The scorecards have to be duly signed by the player and the marker.

To obtain an EGA Handicap, the player must have essential knowledge of The Rules of Golf and Etiquette. Additional information regarding the player's playing ability, or previous golf record, may be taken in consideration.

Specific conditions apply to Category 1 players. Specific conditions apply to new affiliated players that have a handicap abroad.

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How to obtain/register a Handicap in Portugal for a new affiliated player that has a handicap abroad?

If the player, when becoming affiliated in Portugal, already has an EGA Handicap allotted by another European Association, he needs to submit his playing record, for registration and to maintain his record during the period playing in Portugal.

If the player, when becoming affiliated in Portugal, already has a Non-EGA Handicap (CONGU, USGA), from another jurisdiction, he needs to submit his playing record to the Handicap Committee, for scrutiny, subsequent allotment of the EGA Handicap, and management during the period playing in Portugal.

How many Handicap Categories are there?

EGA Handicaps are grouped within the following categories:

Category 1: "plus" – 4.4

Category 2: 4.5 – 11.4

Category 3: 11.5 – 18.4

Category 4: 18.5 – 26.4

Category 5: 26.5 – 36.0

Category 6: 37 – 54

How does the EGA Handicap change?

As the playing ability of the player improves or declines, the handicap is updated according to the scores posted. If a player submits good scores, the player's handicap will be reduced, or vice-versa.

In general, the EGA Handicap of a player is changed based on EDS and Tournament scores, and additionally it can be updated by other adjustments, such as the Handicap Review or, occasionally, by the Handicap Committee.

What scores are used for handicap purposes?

Are eligible for handicap purposes all rounds played in Stroke Play and Stableford, with 100% playing handicap and played under handicap conditions. Meaning that the rounds are played on rated golf courses, within the parameters approved by the FPG, complying with The Rules of Golf and with the score confirmed by a marker.

18-hole and 9-hole scores are eligible for handicapping purposes, being 9-hole scores only eligible for handicap categories 2 to 6.

Qualifying scores can be played:

- in competitions organised by entities approved by the FPG and deemed to be qualifying;
- as EDS.

What are EDS scores – Scores for Handicap?

EDS ("Extra Day Scores") are scores played under handicap conditions and complying with The Rules of Golf, with a marker, apart from competitions and duly pre-registered.

There are two process available for pre-registering and submitting EDS – the digital process and the manual process. The player must check with his Home Club about any specific conditions, applicable within the scope of the internal bylaws and procedures of each club. For example, regulations referring to the submission procedures - physical scorecard or digital imaged - and timing for scores approval.

a) Digital Process:

Through the Scorecards functionality available on myFPG, the player has to pre-register and then submit the score, including:
- score date
- identification of the course, holes and played tees
- handicap round set as YES
- validation of the marker
- scorecard (the image can be uploaded to myFPG)

b) Manual Process

Before playing an EDS, the player must pre-register the round in the Clubhouse of the golf course, identifying himself with the federation number, as well as identifying the marker and informing which course, tees and number of holes he is playing.

The player is responsible for returning the EDS score to the entity responsible for managing his handicap.

Additional information:

Handicap category 2 to 5 players may submit up to four EDS per month. Handicap category 6 players do not have any limit regarding the number of EDS scores per month;

Players can only submit one 9-hole EDS per day;

Handicap category 1 players can't submit EDS, unless by prior approval of the FPG to make up the shortfall required to revalidate the EGA Handicap. Handicap category 2 players may not be reduced to handicap category 1 through an EDS.

How to apply Stableford points for Handicap?

Stableford points are applied to reduce the impact of a specific bad score in a hole, which does not reflect the true playing ability of the player. For handicap calculation purposes, all qualifying scores are converted into Stableford points.

A player plays exactly to his handicap when submitting a score of 36 Stableford points (in normal conditions, before CBA calculation).

To obtain a 9-hole qualifying score, 18 Stableford points are added to the score obtained in 9 holes.

For handicap purposes, the Stableford points are assigned according to the PAR for each hole, as follows:

Two or more strokes above Net PAR	0
One stroke above Net PAR (*Bogey*)	1
Net PAR	2
One stroke under Net PAR (*Birdie*)	3
Two strokes under Net PAR (*Eagle*)	4

How is the EGA Handicap updated?

Qualifying scores are recorded as Stableford points on the player's playing handicap record. Adjustments are made according to whether the player has played in or outside his "Buffer Zone".

If the score is inside the buffer zone, the EGA Handicap remains unchanged;

If the score is below the buffer zone, the EGA Handicap will be increased by 0.1;

If the score is above the buffer zone, the EGA Handicap is reduced by a certain value for each Stableford point above the buffer zone, according to the handicap category of the player.

The Handicap calculation table shows the degree of adjustment for each category:

Handicap Categories	EGA Handicap	Buffer Zone 18 holes	Buffer Zone 9 holes	Stableford points below the BZ add only	Subtract for each Stableford point above the BZ
1	"plus" – 4.4	35 – 36	-	0.1	0.1
2	4.5 – 11.4	34 – 36	35 – 36	0.1	0.2
3	11.5 – 18.4	33 – 36	35 – 36	0.1	0.3
4	18.5 – 26.4	32 – 36	34 – 36	0.1	0.4
5	26.5 – 36.0	31 – 36	33 – 36	0.1	0.5
6	37 - 54	-	-	-	1*

Note: For a handicap category 6 player, subtract a whole stroke for each Stableford point above 36 points. Handicap adjustments, based in 18 holes competitions, are done after CBA calculation.*

What is CBA and how is it used for Handicap calculation?

It is acknowledged that certain factors outside the players' control, e.g. weather or course conditions can affect the playing conditions and, consequently, the scores. CBA is calculated to reduce the impact of those external factors, when they are significant.

CBA calculation is based on players' performance in handicap categories 1 to 4 and affects players in handicap categories 1 to 5. It may vary from +1 (better performance than anticipated) and -2 (worse performance than anticipated). A "Reduction Only" status may also apply to the handicap calculations when conditions are extreme.

In what circumstances is a General Play adjustment applied?

The Handicap Committees are empowered to adjust a player's handicap, when clear evidence is available to show that a player's handicap does not reflect his playing ability.

Are taken in consideration, namely, all rounds and scores obtained in formats that are not directly eligible for handicap purposes, as well as any other relevant data about the player's playing ability.

The adjustment allowed is a minimum of one full shot – upwards or downwards, and it is applied under clause 3.16 of the EGA Handicap System.

What is the Handicap Review?

The Handicap Review is a mandatory procedure, carried out at least once per year. The main objective is to assess whether the scoring performance of the player is representative of the players' ability, as indicated by their current EGA Handicap.

The range where the EGA Handicap should be located is calculated, based on the scores from each player. When the handicap is outside the expected limit, the system suggests an adjustment, to be validated by the player's Handicap Committee.

How to maintain a valid EGA Handicap?

In order to maintain a valid handicap, the player must submit at least four qualifying scores per calendar year. The player must also renew his FPG and club membership, if applicable.

What is the meaning of the different EGA Handicap status?

These conditions apply to Cat 1 to 5:

- Active – Handicap maintained with four or more qualifying scores submitted in the current or previous calendar year;
- Pending – Handicap with three or less qualifying scores in the previous calendar year. "Pending" handicaps can be reactivated by submitting the missing qualifying scores;
- Inactive – When the handicap remains "pending" for more than 12 months. An inactive handicap can be reactivated by submitting four qualifying scores. Handicap Committees will take into account the last held handicap and current form prior to allocating an "active" handicap. Players with a "pending" or "inactive" handicap are not eligible to win net prizes. This restriction does not apply to gross prizes.

How to update the handicap of players who are affiliated in Portugal and also in another National Association abroad?

Affiliated players in the FPG, who are also affiliated in another national association, need to submit their foreign playing record from abroad each time they return to Portugal, so that their "international away" scores can be examined and an adjustment can be made in the players' EGA Handicap record.

The "international away" scores abroad are also recognised as qualifying scores and are used towards the minimum four scores required each calendar year, to maintain the handicap as valid, in Portugal.

Players must also provide their playing record of the scores played in Portugal, to the other national association abroad.

What is Handicap Category 6 and what specific features apply to it?

Handicap category 6 ranges from handicap 37 to 54.

The specific features are intended to be more inclusive, allowing for more players to be included within the system, such as beginners, juniors and players whose ability has declined and to be simpler, in order to attract newcomers to the sport.

- One score card only is required for first handicap allotment;
- Only automatic reductions are applied;
- For every point above 36, one full shot is deducted;
- No restrictions regarding the number of EDS allowed;
- No obligation to submit a minimum number of scores per year to retain the handicap.

Having in consideration these specific features, eligibility restrictions may apply to participation in competitions and for net prizes, under the Conditions of the Competition.

If the Playing Handicap Tables for Handicap Category 6 are not available in the golf course, it is possible to calculate the playing handicap:

look up what 36 EGA Handicap would be allowed

Subtract 36 to that value (or subtract 18, for 9-hole rounds);

Add this difference to the category 6 EGA Handicap (or half, for 9-hole rounds) Playing Handicaps are also available on the FPG's website.

Which specific features apply to Handicap Category 1 players?

Some restrictions apply specifically to players in handicap category 1 (plus to 4.4):

- Handicap allotment, reinstatement or general play adjustments (including foreign adjustments) made by the player's home club, must be ratified by the FPG.
- Handicap category 1 players may not return 9 holes for handicapping
- Handicap category 1 players may not return EDS, except for purposes of allotment and reactivation of a "pending" and "inactive" handicap when it is necessary to make up a shortfall in the scores required. This action must have written authorisation from the FPG.
- Cat 1 players are subject to regular audit by the FPG, namely checking for possible omissions of scores from national and international competitions.

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