Stroke Index Allocation - World Handicap System

With all of the changes that are happening, there is one that has been a long time coming. Every time the Course Rating team is out doing our duties, we are asked why the holes are ranked the way they are. We get the following inquiries: "We think hole X is harder than hole Y, why is Y the #1 hole?" "When will the ranking change?" Until now, the OGA has not had the ability to update this information. It has always been done at the course.

One key point to remember is that the #1 hole is not the hardest hole, but the hole where the higher handicapped golfer deserves a stroke. This is not changing. The holes should still be ranked 1-18 in the order of relative difficulty between golfers of different abilities.

Here's a bit of (very recent) history: When done properly, the ranking of the holes has been done by collecting cards, LOTS of cards. 400-500 cards from one set of tees are entered hole-by-hole, with full score (no ESC), and Course Handicap. For the formula to work, there should be scores from about 1/3 low handicap, 1/3 mid handicap and 1/3 high handicap golfers. The problem lies in the fact that the low handicap players play different tees than the mid and high handicap resulting in odd groupings. Because of this, it has always been a somewhat flawed system.

USGA has come up with a way to use the Course Rating information to provide what is now called Stroke Index Allocation (SIA).

Approximately once every seven years, barring major changes, the OGA sends a Course Rating team to assess the course for Women and Men. We look at every hole, every tee, green, fairway landing zone, bunker, trees, penalty area and more. Each is assessed for the Scratch golfer and the Bogey golfer. After formulas, notes, adjustments, charts and computers get involved, we have a whole set of information that gives us the Course Rating, Bogey Rating and Slope Rating.

Up until last week, we have only seen this information in a 9- hole or 18-hole format.

USGA has determined that using the Scratch and Bogey information on a hole-by-hole basis, would give us a foundation to build on for a Stroke Index Allocation. All of the measurements and chart numbers we gather are added up for individual holes, instead of only by the nines.

Appendix E of the Rules of Handicapping outlines the formula:

Difficulty Value = Scratch Value + Bogey Value – (2 x Par)

For example, on a par 4 hole where the Scratch Value is 4.2 and the Bogey Value is:

4.2 + 5.3 - (2 x 4) = 1.5

This formula is used for every hole to produce the Stroke Index Allocation sample report.

Stroke Index Progression:

Hole	Difficulty Value	Ranking	Odds/Evens Distribution	Stroke Index
1	1.31...	6	5	7
2	1.51...	4	3	3
3	1.10	9	9	9
4	1.04...	11	11	11

5	2.87...	1	1	1
6	0.48...	17	15	15
7	1.27...	7	7	5
8	0.38...	18	17	17
9	0.54...	16	13	13
10	1.48...	5	6	8
11	0.83...	15	18	18
12	1.81...	2	2	2
13	0.83...	14	16	16
14	1.06...	10	10	10
15	1.22...	8	8	6
16	1.74...	3	4	4
17	0.94...	13	14	14
18	0.97...	12	12	12

Difficulty Value: Calculated value based on the recommended formula within Appendix E of the Rules of Handicapping. This value represents the combined strokes over par for Scratch and Bogey Players.

Ranking: This is the raw ranking value of each hole based upon all holes Difficulty Value. The highest Difficulty Value will have a ranking of 1 and the lowest Difficulty Value will have the ranking of 9 or 18 (depending on how many total holes are available for the tee set rating).

Odds/Evens Distribution: The Odds/Evens Distribution applies only to those tee sets that have 18 holes. Based on the value of each holes Ranking, the front nine holes will receive odd number values and the back nine holes are given even number values. The lowest value on the front nine based on the Ranking value will be assigned the number 1. The highest value on the front nine based on the Ranking value will be assigned the number 17. The lowest value on the back nine based on the Ranking will be assigned the number 2. The highest value on the back nine based on the Ranking value will be assigned the number 18.The Odds/Evens Distribution is described in Appendix E within Rules of Handicapping. If a tee set is only nine holes, then the odds/evens concept is not applied and is ranked 1 through 9.

Stroke Index: Maintains the Odds/Evens Distribution (for 18 holes) but includes the "Triads" concept described in Appendix E of the Rules of Handicapping. Nine hole tee ratings will also use the "Triad" concept.

 It is an instant 'click' for the report to be run once the set of tees is chosen. We would then share it with the course, ask you to get your Committee to look at and approve the Stroke Index Allocation. If you have any questions or would like to make any adjustments, we can do that.

If your course has performed a proper Stroke Hole Allocation (former term!) within the last few years, we can use your numbers.

If we run the Stroke Index Allocation (SIA) and your Committee disagrees, we can have a conversation. None of this is written in stone. We can make any adjustments necessary and over-write the holes in the program.

If no one at the course can remember the last time the process was performed, we need to run the SIA.

Remember, with the WHS taking effect in 2020, we MUST enter Stroke Index Allocation for EVERY course. OGA needs your information ASAP. We will be sending out letters as well as calling all 200+ courses under OGA's purview in the coming weeks.

The SIA for the most likely set of tees played and posted, for Men and Women, will be entered into GHIN.

The goal is to have the SIA for every Golf Course in GHIN and ready by the beginning of February 2020.