



Stroke Index Recommendation

Stroke Index Allocation (Handicap Stroke Table)

Rule of Golf 33-4 requires Committees to publish a table indicating the order of holes at which handicap strokes are to be given or received. To provide consistency at Clubs it is recommended that the allocation is so made as follows:

- (a) Of paramount importance is the even spread of the strokes to be received at all handicap differences over the 18 holes.
- (b) This is best achieved by allocating the odd numbered strokes to the more difficult of the two nines, usually the longest nine, and the even numbers to the other nine.
- (c) The first and second stroke index holes should be placed close to the centre of each nine and the first six strokes should not be allocated to adjacent holes. The 7th to the 10th indexes should be allocated so that a player receiving 10 strokes does not receive three strokes on consecutive holes.
- (d) None of the first eight strokes should be allocated to the 1st or the last hole, and at clubs where competitive matches may be started at the 10th hole, at the 9th or 10th holes. This avoids a player receiving an undue advantage on the 19th hole should a match continue to sudden death. Unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary, stroke indexes 9, 10, 11 and 12 should be allocated to holes 1, 9, 10 and 18 in such order as shall be appropriate.
- (e) Subject to satisfying the foregoing recommendations, when selecting each stroke index in turn holes of varying length should be selected. Index 1 could be a par 5, index 2 a long par 4, index 3 a shorter par 4 and index 4 a par 3. There is no recommended order for this selection, the objective being to select in index sequence holes of varying playing difficulty. Such a selection provides more equal opportunity for all handicaps in match play and Stableford and Par competitions than an order based upon hole length or difficulty to obtain par.

Note 1: Par is not an indicator of hole difficulty. Long par 3 and 4 holes are often selected for low index allocation in preference to par 5 holes on the basis that it is easier to score par on a par 5 hole than 4 on a long par4. Long par 3 and 4 holes are difficult pars for low handicap players but often relatively easy bogeys for the player with slightly higher handicaps. Difficulty in relation to par should not be taken into account when selecting stroke indexes.

Note 2: When allocating a stroke index it should be noted that in the majority of social matches there are small handicap differences thereby making the even distribution of the lower indexes of great importance.

The above recommendations supplement those made by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews contained in 'Guidance on Running a Competition'.