



Changes to Four-Ball Match Play Handicap Calculation

Throughout a given year, most clubs run some form of Four-Ball match play, with the most common forms being a Season Long Bracket Tournament or Round Robin Invitation (5 9-hole matches: Member-Member and/or Member Guest).

Starting in 2024, the method for calculating "off low" Playing Handicaps has been updated to ensure that rounding is the final step in the process. In the past, "off low" was determined based on the rounded Playing Handicap. However, from January 1st, 2024 onwards, "off low" for specifically Four-Ball and Foursomes tournaments will be calculated using the unrounded Course Handicap, and then the allowance will be applied before rounding to determine the Playing Handicap.

The below example looks at a 7.4 index playing a 12.6 index at a course rated 70.6/137, par 71 using both the old and new method.

Old Method (2020-2024)

	Player 1	Player 2
Index	7.4	12.6
Course Handicap	8.571681	14.87611
Allowance (90%)	7.714513	13.3885
Round	8	13
Off Low	0	5

New Method (2024-pres)

	Player 1	Player 2
Index	7.4	12.6
Course Handicap	8.571681	14.87611
Off Low	0	6.304425
Allowance (90%)	0	5.673982
Round	0	6

The change in methodology, which is laid out on page 142 of the [Rules of Handicapping](#), results in Player 2 receiving one more shot now than in the previous rounding method.

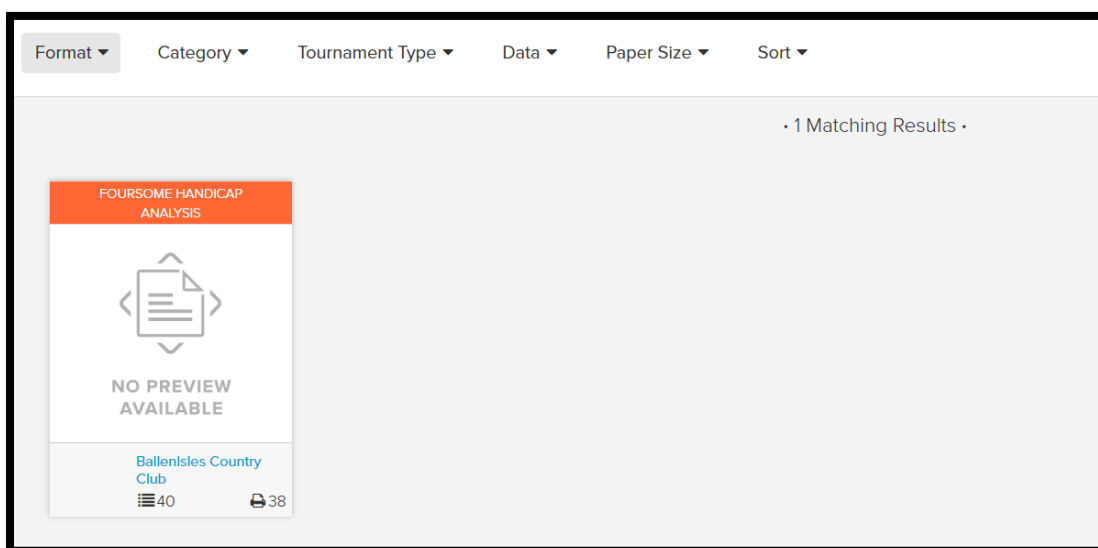
In the majority of courses and index levels, there will be no difference in the number of strokes received, but the example above shows that there will be some discrepancies. Golf Genius Tournament Management has updated their software to ensure the order of operations is done correctly, but the way scorecards are printed may lead to some confusion for your members:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	Init	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total	PH	Strk
White - Men (70.6/137)	371	397	403	186	526	377	372	192	473	3297	405	407	155	284	440	314	484	130	289	2908	6205	(18)		
Par	4	4	4	3	5	4	4	3	5	36	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	4	35	71			
Stroke Index	9	1	5	17	13	3	7	15	11		2	6	14	18	4	12	8	10	16					
Player 1 (7.4 Index)											P1												9	0
Player 2 (12.6 Index)		*	*			*					P2	*	*		*								15	6
vs.																								
Player 3 (7.9 Index)			*								P3												9	1
Player 4 (15.6 Index)	*	*	*			*	*				P4	*	*		*	*							19	9

In the case of Player 1 and Player 2, the math is actually pretty straightforward and should not lead to any questions. The confusion in this case will be with Player 3, a 7.9 index, showing a 9 in the PH column (same as Player 1), but getting 1 shot. The easiest explanation here is that the PH column is each player's rounded course handicap. When looking at unrounded values, Player 1 is 8.57 and Player 3 is 9.17, both of which round to 9. After making the Off Low Adjustment, player 3 is down to 0.6, and after the 90% adjustment, is still at 0.54 which rounds up to the 1 seen in the stroke column.

The takeaway here for your members is that the math is being done correctly, but subtracting the PH of the lowest player in the group from each player will not always result in the value seen in the stroke column.

- Our recommendation is to always Add the [Handicap Analysis Page](#) to your Event or League portal and distribute it to all playing in the event beforehand.
- If preferring a paper copy, our friends at the Florida State Golf Association created a community report titled Foursome Handicap Analysis that will print the breakdown for each foursome on a separate page



Workaround for Old Rounding Method

If using Golf Genius for Tournament Management, there is a workaround that exists that will revert back to the old rounding method. When choosing a Pair vs. Pair Match tournament, the Balls menu will default to "Best Ball per Hole". If this is changed to "Balls Selected By Hole", with a 1 for each hole, the allowance will occur before the Off Low adjustment is made.

When looking at the scorecard for this tournament format, the Stroke column will always be the difference of the player's PH and the low player's PH:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	Init	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total	PH	Strk	
White - Men (70.6/137)	371	397	403	186	526	377	372	192	473	3297	405	407	155	284	440	314	484	130	289	2908	6205	(18)			
Par	4	4	4	3	5	4	4	3	5	36	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	35	11		
Stroke Index	9	1	5	17	13	3	7	15	11		2	6	14	18	4	12	8	10	16						
Player 1 (7.4 Index)											P1												8	0	
Player 2 (12.6 Index)		*	*			*					P2	*			*								13	5	
vs.																									
Player 3 (7.9 Index)											P3												8	0	
Player 4 (15.6 Index)	*	*	*			*	*				P4	*	*		*	*							17	9	

A couple caveats here:

- We don't know how long this workaround will be effective
- This is not recommended by the USGA, and MGA supports the USGA methodology

Is the new Method reflected in the GHIN Mobile App?

The new rounding method only applies for Four-Ball match play circumstances. If navigating to the "Play with GPS/Games" button on the GHIN Mobile App, the new rounding takes place and will be identical to the first Golf Genius Scorecard above:

Handicap Allowance ⓘ		90% ▾			
Player 1		White ▾			
H.I.	C.H. ⓘ	P.H. ⓘ	S.O. ⓘ		
7.4	9	0	0		
Player 2		White ▾			
H.I.	C.H.	P.H.	S.O.		
12.6	15	6	6		
VS					
Player 3		White ▾			
H.I.	C.H.	P.H.	S.O.		
7.9	9	1	1		
Player 4		White ▾			
H.I.	C.H.	P.H.	S.O.		
15.6	19	9	9		

If navigating to the "Handicap Calculator" from the home page of the GHIN App, stroke play is assumed, and the old rounding method takes place and will match the second Golf Genius card (achieved by the Balls Selected by Hole workaround). Note - 85% is the recommended allowance for Four-Ball Stroke Play, and Off Low for stroke play events is rare.

Handicap Allowance ⓘ		90% ▾			
Player 1		White ▾			
H.I.	C.H. ⓘ	P.H. ⓘ	S.O. ⓘ		
7.4	9	8	0		
Player 4		White ▾			
H.I.	C.H.	P.H.	S.O.		
15.6	19	17	9		
Player 2		White ▾			
H.I.	C.H.	P.H.	S.O.		
12.6	15	13	5		
Player 3		White ▾			
H.I.	C.H.	P.H.	S.O.		
7.9	9	8	0		

In the Handicap Calculator, there is no ability to arrange the ordering on this page. The player in the app will always be Player 1, and any subsequent player(s) will be in alphabetical order.