



Adverse/Extreme Weather Guidance

This document replaces any previously issued 'Winter Checklist' or 'Extreme Weather Guidance'

Key Points:

1. Clubs **MUST** switch off courses and tee sets when:
 - conditions mean acceptable scoring is not possible, even with the Model Local Rules in place, or
 - the course set-up does not comply with the rules of handicapping
2. Clubs may only use the Model Local Rules when acceptable scoring is not possible without them. Outside the defined winter period, county permission is required.
3. Using Model Local Rules on specified parts of the course will extend the period when acceptable scoring is possible, but will not necessarily allow it throughout the year.

Introduction

Golfers are encouraged to return scores for handicapping throughout the year. As WHS™ does not have an off-season within GB&I, clubs are expected to provide, whenever possible, a golf course on which acceptable scores can be posted.

This document is to assist clubs to prepare for winter golf, extreme weather conditions, or exceptional circumstances. Your County Office can give advice and approval for any circumstances which a club is unsure on, or needs further support.

This document will cover the following areas, to ensure all relevant scores for handicap purposes can continue to be submitted:

Tee Set and Yardage Compliance

Temporary Greens

Model Local Rules (The Rules of Golf)

Plastic Hole Stabilising Rings



Closed Holes

Tee Set & Yardage Compliance

Appendix G of the WHS™ Rules of Handicapping clarifies that the front of the teeing area **should not** be placed more than +/- 10 yards from the fixed measurement point on each tee (*doing otherwise is not an option and should only be used for reasons where the tee cannot be placed normally*). The overall length of the course **MUST NOT** be more than +/- 100 yards from its measured length (from the fixed markers).

There may be a need on occasion to reduce or lengthen the course by more than 100 yards for a temporary period (maximum one year), due to course maintenance or safety concerns. Clubs can apply for an adjustment to any ratings affected (Appendix G) for adjustments between 100 and 300 yards. A [CR003 form](#) found at the [EG website](#), should be completed/submitted to course.rating@englandgolf.org ahead of the temporary course change. If there is no time to request an adjustment to WHS™ in advance of the change, clubs should consider taking that hole out of play (See Closed Holes) rather than making scores ineligible for handicapping, until an adjustment to WHS™ can be made.

For any temporary course changes longer than 300 yards, or changes that are to be an annual occurrence (and therefore not classed as temporary), clubs should consult their County Rating Team.

Relevant handicap committee personnel, club staff and green staff teams must be made aware of these requirements when setting up a course or tee set.

Temporary Greens

For scores to be acceptable for an 18-hole score, no more than two temporary greens are allowed to be used. For a 9-hole course, only one temporary green will be allowed. Whilst temporary or alternative greens are acceptable for handicapping purposes, whenever the length of the course has been increased or decreased by more than 100 yards for an 18-hole round or 50 yards for a 9-hole round, the adjustments to the Course Rating™ and Slope Rating™ set out in Appendix G of the Rules of Handicapping must be applied; with prior authority from the county.

Relevant handicap committee personnel, club staff and green staff teams must be made aware of these requirements when setting up a course or tee set.

Model Local Rules

Golf clubs can utilise Model Local Rules E-2, E-12, and E-3 between 1st October and 30th April, but **ONLY** when it is absolutely necessary to do so, on specified areas of the course and when the conditions would mean that acceptable scoring would not be possible without them being in place. Furthermore, the Model Local Rules **MUST** be removed as soon as practicably possible. When implementing any of the Model Local Rules for your golfers, it must be clearly communicated and signposted which MLRs are in place and the areas in which they are to be used. Outside this period, permission must be obtained from their County Office.

It is very important to remember that Model Local Rules may only be used when absolutely necessary, to ensure equity within the World Handicap System™.

While using these rules will extend the period when acceptable scoring is possible, under some conditions such scoring will not be possible even with these rules in place. In those circumstances your tee sets/course must be switched off for handicapping purposes (see Active Markers below).

a. MLR E-2 - Cleaning Ball

The Local Rule for marking, lifting, cleaning and replacing on the same spot may be used anywhere within the General Area. It is recommended that this is limited to specific areas where extreme conditions make the playing of the game difficult, or unfair using relief available under the usual Rules of Golf. Scores will still be acceptable for handicapping purposes. See Model Local Rule E2 [here](#) for further guidance and sample wording of the Rule.

b. MLR E-12 – Compulsory Use of Fairway Mats



Acceptable Scores may be returned in competitions and in general play when there is a Local Rule in place requiring the compulsory use of fairway mats to protect the natural surfaces of the course. The use of fairway mats is not allowed within the teeing area, as this would breach Rule of Golf 6.2b(2) and 6.2b(3).

Please note that the mats used should be plain (see above) and may not have lines which help with alignment (see right) as they would then be considered a training aid.



See the Model Local Rule E-12 **here** for further guidance and sample wording of the Rule.



c. MLR E-3 – Preferred Lies

Ensure that all members and visitors are aware of any Local Rule for the authorisation of preferred lies. For scores to be acceptable for handicapping, the Local Rule may only allow the lie to be preferred on grass cut to fairway height or less, within six inches of the original lie of the ball. See the Model Local Rule E-3 **here** for further guidance and sample wording of the Rule.

Model Local Rules are available throughout the year for specific course conditions such as cracks in the fairways (F-8), relief from aeration holes (E-4), relief from tree roots (F-9), damage by Animals (F-10) or animal hoof damage (F-13); and these may be more appropriate than using MLR E-3 Preferred Lies.

Other Model Local Rules which can assist throughout the year when dealing with the consequences of severe weather include the following:

d. MLR F-1 – Defining Abnormal Course Conditions and Integral Objects

Definitions must be clear and specific but can be useful where, for example, damage may be caused in several areas by the movement of water and this would unfairly affect play before repairs are possible. Refer to The R&A guidance here: [MLR F-1](#)

e. MLR F-16 – Bunker Filled with Temporary Water

Scores are still acceptable for handicap purposes when bunkers have been individually marked as ground under repair, with relief taken under Rule 16.1. This would apply for situations such as severe or prolonged wet weather, or during maintenance work. In situations where there are multiple bunkers that need to be designated ground under repair, it is acceptable to define them along the lines of 'all greenside bunkers on Hole 4' (or 'all bunkers on Hole 4'), via a notice to players and without having to place 'GUR' signs in all bunkers. Alternatively, the Local Rule could read 'any bunker identified by (for example) a blue stake' See MLR F-16 for full details and wording.

There is no limit on the number of bunkers that can be treated as ground under repair for scores to be acceptable for handicapping purposes. Please ensure that players are aware of the correct procedure for using the 'nearest point of complete relief' outside the bunker for the reference point.



f. MLR F-8 – Relief from Cracks in Ground

In certain conditions, parts of the course may suffer due to cracks in the ground. The lie of a ball could be seriously affected if it comes to rest in such a crack, but a player's stance may not be hindered by the condition, in which case a Local Rule that gives relief for the lie of ball and area of intended swing only is recommended.

Plastic Hole Stabilising Rings

The R&A have revised their position on the use of stabilising rings. As of 03/05/24, any scores returned for handicap purposes when the stabilising rings are in place **are acceptable** for handicap purposes.

The definition of 'hole' in the Rules of Golf states that if a lining is used, its outer diameter must not exceed 4.25 inches. The lining must be sunk at least one inch below the putting green surface.

The R&A recommend that the one-inch stipulation be followed as far as possible, as having the liner higher can result in other issues. For example, there is an increased risk of:

- the ball bouncing out of the hole; or
- the liner/stabiliser protruding above the ground; or
- the earthen wall moving away from the liner/stabiliser leaving the liner/stabiliser exposed or protruding, so further increasing the risk of bounce-outs.

The R&A appreciate that our current climate can result in considerable challenges for greenkeepers and course managers. Consequently, if there are times of the year when the nature of the soil is perhaps crumbling due to extreme dry conditions, or falling away due to excessive water, and having a hole liner closer to the surface will help to protect the integrity of the hole, there is flexibility now within the Rules to allow for that. It is also important to note that as soon as the ground conditions are not affected by extreme conditions, hole liners are no longer acceptable, and they **must** be removed.

The position within the Rules for large 'bucket holes' is unchanged, and they **will not** be acceptable for handicap purposes (see Rule of Golf definition of 'hole').

Closed Holes

During winter months, there are various situations, such as course conditions and maintenance plans, where holes may be closed and declared out of play. In these



circumstances, the committee may decide to declare some holes out of play and could also still meet the requirement for up to two temporary greens.

These scores continue to be acceptable for handicap purposes - the golfer would follow Rule 3.2 of the WHS™ Rules of Handicapping, 'When a Hole is Not Played', with the software calculating and awarding an expected score accordingly. Players **must not** play the closed hole, as this would breach Rule of Golf 5.5b. This may also be applicable during a summer maintenance programme.

WHS™ uses an expected score for closed holes. For this calculation to work either the front or back nine must have scores returned for all holes. If there are closed holes on both nines the golfer should enter net pars for the closed holes on the front nine and "not started" for the closed holes on the back nine.

Active Markers - WHS™ Portal

Within the WHS™ Portal, clubs must switch on and off available tee sets as required. This functionality will stop scores being submitted from general play rounds (when using the MyEG app), and must be used when it is not possible to present the course in a suitable condition for scores to be returned for handicapping purposes.

The image below illustrates the tick boxes involved (ensure all boxes are unticked, unless available for scores). Any changes need to be saved.

COURSE		SHOW ALL	18 HOLE	9 HOLE	ACTIVE DAYS							
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin			☒	☒	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Blue		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Green		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	White		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Yellow		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Blue F9		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Green F9		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	White F9		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Yellow F9		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Heather		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Red		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Heather F9		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	Options
Woodhall Spa-Hotchkin	Red F9		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	Options

[SAVE CHANGES](#) [CANCEL](#)

Link to video: [Default markers](#)

Note: depending on the local club software being used, additional settings may need to be configured within that software to prevent general play or competition scores being submitted from tee sets that are not available.