



# **MGA Position Paper**

## **Score Posting – Playing Alone**

**Background:** There has been a great deal of discussion about the USGA’s decision to no longer allow rounds that are played alone to be posted for handicap purposes. This change was announced last fall and went into effect on **January 1, 2016**, and is now officially part of the USGA Handicap System and must be adhered to by all golf associations and clubs issuing USGA Handicaps. The MGA would like to outline some of the reasons for this change and to clarify what constitutes a “solo round” or playing alone.

### **Reasons for Change:**

- **Peer Review** is an essential part of the USGA Handicap System. It allows fellow golfers to ensure that a golfer is posting his or her scores properly and reasonably, following both the letter and spirit of the Handicap System. When a golfer plays alone, this important element of the system is lost. Several things are important to note here: over the years at MGA Handicap Seminars and through calls to our office, many golfers and club leaders have questioned whether scores made while playing alone should be posted. It is also common for golfers while playing alone to use the round as practice, hitting multiple shots and not following the Rules of Golf. So, the question of whether or not rounds played while playing alone should be posted is not a new one.
- **World-Wide Handicap System** – Creating a unified Handicap System around the world is something the USGA and other global golf organizations are committed to accomplishing by **January 1, 2018**. There are currently six different handicap systems in place around the world. While these systems use most elements of the USGA Handicap System, none of the other systems allow rounds played alone to be posted, so this prohibition has been in place around the world for many years. The process of moving to one world-wide

handicap system is a complex one and will require compromise on the part of the various systems. Solo posting is one of the few areas where the USGA Handicap System will be modified and the USGA felt comfortable with the change. It is important to note that the other systems will be agreeing to much more numerous and significant changes and, as noted, will be adopting much of the USGA's Handicap System. In addition, the USGA Course Rating System will be adopted almost "as is" around the world.

- **Golf Growing Globally** – With golf returning to the Olympics this year and with golf becoming much more of a global game, we feel that moving aggressively to one world-wide Handicap System is good for the game and having a Handicap Index that means the same thing all over the world will be a positive step for golfers everywhere. The MGA will keep area clubs and golfers up-to-date on developments as we move to a worldwide Handicap and Course Rating System over the next two years.

**Clarity on What Constitutes Playing Alone:** As long as someone accompanies the player during the round, the player is not playing alone. This has been misinterpreted and, to clarify, rounds played with a caddie, golfers you don't know, a non-playing friend riding in a cart or walking with you during your round, can all fulfill the requirement of peer review, and eligible rounds played under these circumstances can and must be posted.

**Clarity for Handicap Chairmen, Golf Professionals, and Those Responsible for Handicapping at Your Club:** The prohibition against posting scores while playing alone is not a recommendation but a requirement of the USGA Handicap System as of January 1, 2016. Clubs should be sure their members know about this new requirement and ensure that all the rules of handicapping are followed consistently and that making any exceptions will only cause confusion and will undermine the integrity of the entire system.

Please direct any questions about this important new part of the USGA Handicap System to the MGA office: Kevin Kline – [kkline@mgagolf.org](mailto:kkline@mgagolf.org) – 914-347-4653.