



How Your Handicap Is Calculated

“I won my match two weeks ago and my handicap went up, but when I lost last week, it didn’t go down. How can that happen?”

“I lost last week and my handicap is higher this week – what’s going on?”

These questions are some of the most common that the American Poolplayers Association Inc. and Local League Operators hear from the APA members around the country. Although the process of calculating your handicap is explained in your APA team manual, we have addressed some of the effects of routine weekly handicap calculations below.

Your handicap is based on your performance in each match you play. Your score is calculated from the previous information recorded on your weekly scoresheet. When that score is averaged in with your previous scores, some surprising effects can occur. Here are some possibilities:

- You could shoot a very good score, but not increase your skill level.
- Losing a match, which usually results in a poor score, probably won’t lower your skill level because handicaps are calculated by counting your best scores first.
- In a very close match where each player plays very well, it is possible for you to lose the match but still receive a good score for the week. This score, if it is among your best, could possibly raise your handicap even though you lost.

Now that you understand what can affect your handicap, you might be wondering if this is the best method to use. Remember, **The Equalizer®** scoring and handicap system was developed over a period of years by a committee of professionals with extensive League and tournament experience. Consider the following:

- Using several good scores when calculating your handicap lends stability. The alternative would result in your handicap consistently changing, which would cause problems with the 23-Rule. An unstable handicap is technically inaccurate, when you consider that your handicap reflects your true ability.
- Using your best scores eliminates the matches where playing conditions were bad, you weren’t feeling well, or you just had a bad night. Only the matches where you play your best should determine your handicap. Other sports’ handicap systems leave out scores for the same purpose, and all effective handicap systems attempt to stabilize handicap ratings at or near a player’s true ability.

The Equalizer® scoring and handicap system works perfectly when players concentrate on the game and let the system take care of itself. In fact, **BOTH** players in a given match must break the rules before the system will fail. One player must deliberately miss shots resulting in more turns (innings), and his opponent must fail to mark the deliberate misses on the scoresheet as defensive shots. If you mark deliberate misses as “defensive shots”, they don’t count. For more information about defensive shots, consult your Team Manual, ask your APA Team Captain, or League Operator for more details.

As you can see, **The Equalizer®** scoring and handicap system really does work. It effectively equalizes the difference in player abilities, which creates a more exciting and competitive match. However, it is dependent on a player’s willingness to follow the system. There has never been an 8-Ball or 9-Ball team handicap system as accurate as ours. All that’s required is a positive team spirit in order to achieve its full potential. The rest is up to you!