

# AUSTRALIAN MEN'S COURSE RATING SYSTEM (Copyright)

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*Revised 1 September 2008 (reflects the increase from 27.4 to 36.4 of the maximum Australian Men's Handicap by the Golf Australia Handicapping & Course Rating Committee). Deleted text is shown but is struck-out; new text is denoted by **bold, underline & italics**.*

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## 1. Introduction

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The Australian Men's Course Rating System is a system of evaluating the playing difficulty of individual courses to provide a uniform basis for the computation of handicaps. It is quite different from par, which is used for a different purpose. The system has two important components; the Australian Men's Course Rating (AMCR), which is determined for each course by the State Association or a body approved for the purpose by the Association, and the Men's Calculated Course Rating (MCCR), which is determined by GOLF Link or the club committee and is the base figure for the computation of handicaps.

## 2. Australian Men's Course Rating (AMCR)

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The AMCR is the hypothetical score that a male scratch handicap golfer should have on a course when playing to his handicap in "ideal" weather conditions. The figure is based on the total length of the course, standard run of 25 metres on tee shots on any flat fairways, little or no wind, and includes an evaluation for course difficulty factors such as hazards, width of fairways, mounds, severity of rough, proximity of out of bounds, and the shape, contour, and size of greens. A club shall advise the State Association or other approved body of any alterations to the course that could affect its AMCR or Par. The State Association may allocate a Temporary AMCR to a course that is significantly altered while renovations are undertaken.

The AMCR, rounded to the nearer whole number (-5 being rounded up), should be printed on the club's score card.

## 3. AMCR Procedure for Measuring Courses for Rating

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Holes shall be rated from permanent rating markers and measurements shall be made from these points. Each hole shall be measured horizontally with surveying instruments from the rating markers to the centre of the green. In the case of a dog-leg hole, measurement shall be in a straight line down the fairway to the axis, and then in a straight line to the centre of the green. These figures shall be used on the club score card.

Permanent rating markers must be placed at both sides of each tee and should be blue in colour. Concrete set flush with the ground is recommended. The purpose of an accurate measurement is defeated if a permanent marker is not installed to establish the points from which measurements are made. A permanent marker helps the player determine the playing length of the hole.

Some clubs may see benefit in adopting a balancing (or cyclical) method of tee placement that gives the advantage of a constant course length and evens out wear to the tees. Under this method the permanent markers would be placed at the sides of each tee at the middle of the teeing area normally used for club competitions (Refer Section 9a).

**For clubs that have large or alternative tees, it is strongly recommended that two or more AMCRs be measured and rated. A rating from back medal tees may have little significance to regular competitions played from forward daily markers. The different rating markers should be distinguished by different colours.**

At all times the permanent markers and daily tee markers should be placed not less than 3 club-lengths from the rear of each teeing ground.

**Note:** All measurements shall be in metres (yardage figures are optional, but are not recommended).

## 4. Preparation by Club for Rating

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A club will be advised in advance when its course is to be rated by the State Association or other approved body.

On the day of the rating, the club should:

- a. provide information on the par and length of each hole.
- b. place the daily markers opposite the permanent rating markers.
- c. indicate on each green, by hole placement or otherwise, an average location commonly used during competition play. This should be a fairly easy location as close as possible to the centre of the green.
- d. make available club personnel who have thorough knowledge of the course's playing characteristics and who can indicate the driving zone from each tee for a Scratch golfer, and second shot zones on par 5 holes.

## 5. Method of Establishing AMCR

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The AMCR is made up of two components - length rating, plus or minus the course difficulty rating, to one decimal place.

a. **Length Rating**

Having established the total length of the 18 holes of the course as per Section 3, the following calculations, under the appropriate formula, provide the length rating, rounded to two decimal places.

- For courses under 3600 metres, State Associations should use discretionary powers after studying the club's handicapping records and competition results.
- For courses 3601 to 4800 metres Length rating is  $Lm/300 + 49$ .
- For courses 4801 to 5800 metres Length rating is  $Lm/200 + 41$ .
- For courses over 5800 metres Length rating is  $Lm/150 + 31.33$ .

It should be noted that a relatively small error in the whole measurement of the course can make an appreciable change in the length rating and therefore accuracy in measurement and calculations is important.

b. **Course Difficulty Rating**

Each club's Course Difficulty Rating is determined by a hole-by-hole inspection of the course by the rating personnel, utilising the procedures and examples set out in the following section – Australian Men's Course Difficulty Rating System. Points are allotted for each item of difficulty on each hole. A total of 90 points would give a zero Difficulty Rating. Totals less than 90 would give a minus factor and over 90 a plus factor.

A new or revised AMCR figure shall be utilised only following receipt of official notification from the State Association, or approved body.

**STATE DISCRETION** – The State Association may adjust a club's AMCR by up to two strokes higher or lower than the calculated figure. This discretion should only be applied in rare situations where an AMCR obviously does not equitably compare with the majority of other courses. Examples would be a course that always has excessive run, or a course that has predominantly very sloping fairways, or extremely difficult greens.

## 6. Men's Calculated Course Rating (MCCR)

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The MCCR is the figure, calculated by GOLF Link or the person so authorised by the Club Committee, which reflects the playing conditions of each competition round. Unlike the earlier system of Daily Course Rating, this system utilises the actual net scores returned by the competitors in each round.

The MCCR, rounded to the nearer whole number, (.5 being rounded down) must be calculated for every competition round conducted by the club in which more than 20 players compete. For fields of between 2 and 20, the AMCR is used, subject to exceptions explained later.

If weather or course conditions alter during the day and a competition field can reasonably be segregated into two sections of similar quality, eg am and pm, each section's MCCR should be calculated.

When two or more competitions are conducted at the same time, the MCCR for the affiliated club's field should be used by any unaffiliated group or secondary competition. (GOLF Link will produce an MCCR for each competition processed by it.)

The field size is the number of competitors who commence the round, except for any who do not finish due to illness, bad weather or a reason other than performance, as approved by the Committee.

Unless evidence dictates otherwise, unapproved non-returned cards and incomplete cards shall be considered as "worst" scores for the purpose of MCCR calculation.

**NOTE:** Subject to the exception below, the MCCR cannot be higher than 2 strokes above nor lower than 1 stroke below the course's Australian Men's Course Rating (AMCR). When "tee-up through the green" applies, the lower limit below the AMCR is 4 strokes.

**EXCEPTION:** Notwithstanding the above Note, for fields of more than 7 competitors, if the MCCR is calculated at less than or equal to the best net (stroke) score returned, it must be raised to 1 stroke higher than that score, but only up to a maximum of 4 strokes higher than the AMCR. In many cases this enables the competition winner to receive a handicap reduction.

**SEVERE WEATHER ALLOWANCE – State Discretion** – For courses that are regularly exposed to severe weather conditions, State Associations are empowered to approve up to an additional 2 strokes allowance above the AMCR ie to a maximum of 4 strokes above the AMCR under the above Note (and 6 strokes above the AMCR under the above Exception). Once this approval has been given, it must be utilised at all times unless withdrawn by the State Association. Discretionary use on a day-to-day basis is not permitted.

## 7. Method of Establishing MCCR

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a. **Singles Stroke Rounds**

i) **Small Fields (2-20 competitors)**

When a competition field consists of more than 1 and less than 21 competitors, the AMCR is used as the MCCR. **Note** however that the Exception in Section 6 applies to all fields of more than 7 competitors.

**Example 1:** Field of 6: AMCR of 66.

Net scores of 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73: MCCR = 66 (AMCR applies)

**Example 2:** Field of 8: AMCR of 66.

Net scores of 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75: MCCR = 69 (1 higher than best net score – ie the Exception applies.)

ii) **For fields of greater than 20 players.**

- Calculate to the nearer whole number 12.5% of the field (-5 of the result being rounded down).

- Place cards in net order of merit from best to worst.

- From the best card, count down the cards to the 12.5% number previously determined. The net score on this card is the MCCR, **subject to the Note & Exception to Section 6**.

**Example 1:** Field of 36:  $12.5\% = 4.5 = 4$  (rounded down to nearer whole number): AMCR of 70.

Net scores of 64, 67, 68, 69, 70, 76, etc., MCCR = 69.

**Example 2:** Field of 97:  $12.5\% = 12.125 = 12$ : AMCR of 71.

Twelfth best net score is 68, MCCR = 70, as difference below AMCR cannot be greater than 1.

iii) **For fields of low markers.**

For low handicap fields of more than 20, such as in open amateur competitions, club, district, and state championships, the MCCR shall be determined as above except that the figure of 20% shall be used instead of 12.5%.

A low handicap field is one in which at least 80% of the players are in category A (ie handicaps up to 4.4).

In events such as State Open Championships in which less than 21 amateur low markers participate, the committee in charge of the competition shall estimate an MCCR, bearing in mind the scores returned by all competitors and the course and weather conditions which prevail. An MCCR under the conditions of this paragraph should not be below the AMCR, nor more than 2 above the AMCR.

iv) **For fields of high markers.**

When a field larger than 20 comprises at least 51% of the competitors on handicaps of 20 or higher, the percentage to be used to calculate the MCCR shall be 10% instead of 12.5%.

b. **Four-Ball Rounds**

When Four-ball rounds are used for handicapping, the course AMCR shall be used as the MCCR. (No exceptions apply.) See Australian Men's Handicapping System – Section 1.a.(iv).

c. **Stableford and Par Competitions**

For these competitions, the same procedures as in a. and b. above apply but the cards utilised must be converted to stroke scores.

**Examples:**

- 36 Stableford points or square in Par = course net par.
- 40 Stableford points or +4 in Par = 4 strokes below net par.
- 34 Stableford points or -2 in Par = 2 strokes above net par.
- In a field of 45,  $12.5\% = 6^{\text{th}}$  card = say 35 points.
  - Par 68, AMCR 67, MCCR = 69.
- In a field of 121,  $12.5\% = 15^{\text{th}}$  card = say +1.
  - Par 68, AMCR 65, MCCR = 67.

**Note (Club Handicaps over 36.27):** For the purpose only of calculating the MCCR, net scores from club handicaps over 36.27 shall be adjusted by using 36.27 as the handicap. For Stableford and Par competitions, the adjustment is made to the total score rather than having to reassess points at individual holes.

**Example:** 40 points off a 39.30 handicap is adjusted to 37 points (off 36.27) to calculate MCCR.

## 8. Summary

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- a. The AMCR is determined by the State Association or its approved body. It should be printed on the score card.
- b. The MCCR is determined by GOLF Link (or by the Club Committee's representative) and is a statistical reflection of the conditions under which the competition was played.
- c. The MCCR is the base figure for the computation of handicaps and should be calculated and displayed as soon as possible after the conclusion of the competition.

## 9. Course Management

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### a. Balancing Placement of Tees (Recommended option)

Placement of tee-markers should be balanced so that the course's playing distance is substantially the same from day to day. In the illustration below, the total area represents a teeing ground, the heavy line in the centre indicates the point of the permanent markers from which the hole was measured.



Balancing of tee placement is as follows:

Place tee-markers on odd-numbered holes on front half in area A (or B or C); on even-numbered holes, on back half in same-lettered area.

When changing tee-markers, place the odd-hole markers on back half and even-hole markers on front half. In other words, alternate between the halves and rotate among the lettered areas, always using areas of the same letter at the same time.

On courses with tees that cannot accommodate six areas as above, four areas, designated as A and B can operate in the same manner. On courses with very small tees (less than 5 metres in length), it may be practical to have only two areas, front and back, alternating the odd and even numbered holes.

A cyclical method (see Appendix A) may be favoured, but any method that maintains a substantially constant playing length is acceptable.

### b. Hole Positions

It is strongly recommended that holes should not be placed closer to the edge of the green than 5 metres; they should not be placed in any position in which a player who is on the green has a putt the line of which would take him off the green; they should not be placed on excessive slopes or in tricky positions; the level or slope should be fairly constant in the immediate vicinity of the hole. Consider the holding quality of the green, the length of the shot to the green, the probable conditions for play, and the design of the overall hole.

### c. Rough

Where possible, rough should be graduated outwards from the fairway. The shaping of fairways should be carefully considered as this can effect the rating of the hole. As length can alter a rating, so can widening or narrowing of fairways lead to a rating or handicaps being based on a wrong premise. Where holes are lined with trees it is generally desirable that there be rough inside this line so that a running ball has to pass through an intermediate stage which might hold it before going out to the trees.

# AUSTRALIAN MEN'S COURSE DIFFICULTY RATING SYSTEM (Copyright)

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## Introduction

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The Australian Men's Course Rating System states that the Australian Men's Course Rating (AMCR) of a course is the hypothetical score that a scratch handicap golfer should have, playing to his handicap in "ideal" weather conditions.

The AMCR is made up of two components – length rating (see Section 5 of Men's Course Rating System) and course difficulty rating. It is based on assessing each hole of a course individually and allotting points for the various factors that influence play. Using the table at the conclusion of this System, the total points are converted to a difficulty rating, either plus (for extremely difficult courses) or minus. Ninety points give a zero difficulty rating which is approximately the rating which would be obtained by a metropolitan course of over 6,000 metres with a large number of hazardous features. A plus difficulty rating should not be approved unless a State Association official participated in the actual rating or has a good knowledge of the course.

## Basic Rules for Course Rating Teams

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1. Form rating team of at least two experienced persons, who have been authorised to act by the State or appropriate District Association. One member should be designated the team leader.
2. Have on hand draft rating sheets showing the length of each hole and columns to insert points under the various headings.
3. Be accompanied by club personnel (no more than 2) who have a thorough knowledge of the course's playing characteristics and who can indicate a scratch golfer's driving zone (and second shot zones on par 5 holes) from each tee.
4. View each hole from the teeing ground, the drive zones of the scratch golfers (approximately 200-250 metres from tee), the second shot zones on par 5 holes, and the green.
5. Rate the factors in accordance with the guidelines as described below; not based on how you or the club officials would play the hole.
6. If inexperienced members are in the team, discuss each factor and arrive at a consensus while on the spot. Experienced members may rate independently and their final totals averaged. The team leader should encourage discussion where any large variance appears.
7. Do not play a course while rating it. Playing the course after rating can provide greater insight.
8. Do not serve as a team member when your home course is being rated.
9. Advise the club that the new rating has to be approved by the State Association, or approved body.

## Difficulty Factors

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It is important that difficulty be considered under "ideal" weather conditions, based on a scratch player's tee shot to the drive zone and running 25 metres on a flat fairway, with little or no wind.

As the scale of points for each factor has a limit of one or two, the effectiveness of a factor must be carefully considered. For example, a creek 50 metres in front of a tee has no effectiveness; the same creek across the fairway at 150 metres has a degree of effectiveness, while a pond in or very near a tight fairway at 200 metres is highly effective. Shallow bunkers may be ineffective. Use the full range of decimal points from .1 to 1.0 to rate effectiveness.

The examples given under each factor are guides only, and can be varied having regard to factor effectiveness. However, the maximum points listed against each factor cannot be exceeded.

### 1. Fairway (Par 4 and 5 holes)

Consider the drive zone on a par 4 and the drive zone and second shot zone on a par 5 hole.

#### a. Hazards (maximum 1 point per side per zone) 2 POINTS

Bunkers, water hazards, large mounds, OOB etc. Consider the proximity of Out of Bounds and/or effectively placed hazards at drive length, eg

- |       |  |          |
|-------|--|----------|
| (i)   | Highly effective hazard/s or OOB one side of fairway | 1 point  |
| (ii)  | 2 reasonably effective hazards one side              | .5 point |
| (iii) | Highly effective hazards or OOB both sides           | 2 points |
| (iv)  | Mounds on one side                                   | .2 point |
| (v)   | Effective water hazard one side                      | .7 point |

In most cases the requirements to take a penalty as from OOB or a water hazard would rate higher than a mound or bunker.

#### b. Width of Fairway (maximum 1 point per zone) 1 POINT

The accepted width of effective driving areas is 36 metres, unless sideways slope and/or severe contours require added width to offset these factors, eg

- |      |  |         |
|------|--|---------|
| (i)  | Width 25 metres to 36 metres with severe contour | 1 point |
| (ii) | Width 25 metres or less                          | 1 point |

(iii)	Width 25 metres to 36 metres	.5 point
(iv)	Width more than 36 metres with severe contour	.5 point
(v)	Width more than 36 metres with little or no contour	nil
<b>c.</b>	<b>Rough, Vegetation and Terrain (maximum .5 per side per zone)</b>	<b>1 POINT</b>

This factor covers rough, trees, bushes, rocks, sandy wastes etc. The rating for rough (minimum 4 cm depth) depends on its height and thickness. The ratings for vegetation and terrain depend on their size, density and location, eg

(i)	Moderate to heavy density of vegetation both sides of fairway close to landing area	1 point
(ii)	Effective density of vegetation on one side, close to landing area, relatively clear other side	.5 point
(iii)	Effective rough only, or scattered trees both sides	.5 point
(iv)	Ineffective rough and scattered young trees	nil

## 2. Greenside

### a. Hazards

**2 POINTS**

Bunkers, water hazards, mounds, fall-aways, vegetation, OOB etc.

(i)	Effective hazards around most of the green	2 points
(ii)	Two effective hazards per green	1 point
(iii)	One effective hazard per green	.5 point

### b. Approach Shot

**2 POINTS**

Consider probable length of shot, size and shape of target area and if more than two effective hazards. A small grass green could be deemed to be one under 400 square metres, a large green to be over 550 square metres.

The target for a sand green is considered for this exercise to be the area measured 20 metres radially from the centre of the sanded portion. This is based on the assumption that a scratch player will generally get "up and down" from 20 metres and closer on sand greens.

Examples	Grass Greens POINTS	Sand Greens POINTS
(i) Approach shot over 190 metres	1.5	1.5
(ii) Approach shot 155-190 metres to small green	1.5	N/A
(iii) Approach shot 155-190 metres to large green	1.0	1.0
(iv) Approach shot 125-160 metres to small green	1.0	N/A
(v) Approach shot 125-160 metres to large green	.5	.5
(vi) Approach shot 100-130 metres to small green	.5	N/A
(vii) Approach shot 100-130 metres to large green	nil	nil
(viii) Approach shot under 100 metres to small green	.3	N/A

When more than 2 effective greenside hazards exist or other factors such as an elevated green, unusual green design or difficult green-holding qualities exist, up to .5 of a point can be added.

## 3. Putting Green

### a. Grass Greens

**2 POINTS**

This is an evaluation of the difficulty of a green from a standpoint of a scratch golfer holing out in two putts. Speed and contouring are the main factors. Multi-tiered greens with difficult hole locations warrant a high rating, as do greens normally in poor, uneven condition. When using a stimpmeter to measure speed of greens, a measurement of 6 feet denotes a slow green, 8 feet a medium green and 10 feet or more a fast green. e.g.

(i)	large, fast, contoured green	2 points
(ii)	large, normal, contoured green	1.5 points
(iii)	small, fast, contoured green	1.0 point
(iv)	large, slow, fairly flat green	.5 point
(v)	small, normal paced, fairly flat green	nil

### b. Sand Greens

**1 POINT**

Consider length of putt, contours, surface and surrounds, eg

(i)	Small green with rough surrounds	1.0 point
(ii)	Medium sized green with approach of average difficulty	.5 point
(iii)	Large green with grassed approaches	nil

**Summary Note:** Please remember that all the examples are guides only and should be varied by increments of .1 according to effectiveness.

## **Conversion Table for Course Difficulty Adjustments**

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<b>POINTS</b>	<b>DIFFICULTY FACTOR</b>	<b>POINTS</b>	<b>DIFFICULTY FACTOR</b>
110	+0.50	89	-0.04
109	+0.48	88	-0.08
108	+0.45	86	-0.15
107	+0.43	84	-0.23
106	+0.40	82	-0.30
105	+0.38	80	-0.37
104	+0.35	78	-0.45
103	+0.33	76	-0.53
102	+0.30	74	-0.60
101	+0.28	72	-0.68
100	+0.25	70	-0.75
99	+0.23	68	-0.83
98	+0.20	66	-0.90
97	+0.18	64	-0.98
96	+0.15	62	-1.05
95	+0.13	60	-1.13
94	+0.10	55	-1.31
93	+0.08	50	-1.50
92	+0.05	45	-1.75
91	+0.03	40	-2.00
90	ZERO	35	-2.25
		30	-2.50
		25	-2.75
		20	-3.00
		15	-3.25
		10	-3.50
		5	-3.75
		0	-4.00