OGA
OREGON GOLF ASSOCIATION

ADJUSTING HOLE SCORES
Section 4 of the USGA Handicap System

The game of golf is based on the premise that a player will play as well as the player can play! Under the USGA Handicap System, each player is required to record a hole score for a hole not finished, not played, or not played under The Rules of Golf, and to reduce any hole score where it is higher than the maximum allowed under Equitable Stroke Control (ESC). Do not use ESC as a "catch-all" adjustment, as this is contrary to the Rules of Handicapping.

Here are the three ways to adjust a hole score, depending on the scenario:

- ### **Unfinished Holes and Conceded Strokes**

A player who starts, but does not complete a hole or is conceded a stroke, must record for handicap purposes the "most likely score". This consists of the number of strokes already taken plus, in the player's best judgment, the number of strokes needed to complete the hole from that position most of the time. The player must evaluate each situation based on what the player can reasonably expect to score. This number cannot exceed the players ESC number (see chart below).

- ### **Holes Not Played or Not Played Under the Rules of Golf**

If a player does not play a hole at all, or plays it other than under the Rules of Golf (as in using mulligans), the score recorded for that hole for handicap purposes must be par plus any handicap strokes the player is entitled to receive on that hole. This hole score, when recorded, should be preceded by an "x".

- ### **Equitable Stroke Control**

All scores for handicap purposes, including tournament scores, are subject to the application of ESC. This mandatory procedure reduces high hole scores for handicap purposes in order to make handicaps more representative of a player's potential ability. ***ESC is used when a player's actual or most likely score exceeds a maximum number***, based on the table below, for the player's Course Handicap from the tees played (remember to take your USGA Handicap Index and convert to the slope of the tees you are playing to arrive at a whole number).

Course Handicap	Maximum Number on Any Hole
9 or less	Double Bogey
10 through 19	7
20 through 29	8
30 through 39	9
40 or more	10