Handicap Explanations

The T.A.P. handicap scoring system is the most complex in the industry. There are a numerous variables that are used to formulate a player's handicap rating. This sheet is intended to address the most commonly asked questions and to provide a better understanding of how and what determines a players rating.

Handicap complaints are common in all leagues because the players don't have access to all the data that formulates the handicap. All you really have is the wins, losses and game win percentages which only accounts for 30% of your rating. The other 70% is performance variables within the system that you don't know or see. Keep in mind that no system is perfect, but we believe we have the most accurate one in the league business. There will always be under ranked and over ranked players, but that percentage is very small and the system will weed those players out over time.

1. I've lost 5 weeks in a row. Why haven't I gone down…He's won 6 weeks in a row, why hasn't he gone up? These are basically the same question. If you look at the entire scoring system, wins & losses alone only account for 30% of the overall rating. The other 70% is based on performance variables. Those variables are: completions…misses…defense…MOB…LOT…the handicap race-to…the outcome of the race-to and the handicap of your opponent.

2. Playing lower ranked players won't move you up or down as quickly as playing equally ranked players. When a higher ranked player plays a lower ranked player they often times don't bring the same game to the table they would if their opponent was equally rated and therefore they don't play to their full potential which is not a true measure of performance. Unfortunately, we've all had this experience.

3. When a player moves up to the next level, here's what happens in most cases. There is a sandbagging variable in the system to prevent that player from bagging down the following week so they drop back down in rating. In each handicap level, there is an A, B, & C rating. A is the highest. For example: when a player moves from a (4A) level to a (5), they are moved to a high (5C) level. To drop back to a (4A), the player may have to play 3 or 4 weeks before the average settles back down if they cannot hold on to the new (5) rating.

4. Averages: Everybody's handicap is based on the averages of their weekly play or their history in the league. If for example, a player is rated a (4) and starts shooting well, they should eventually go up. In order for this player to become a (5), they must start shooting like a (5), which means someone is going to complain that this player is no (4). *You must be shooting at the next level in order to move to the next level.* The player will move when their average catches up to their quality of play. We have all experienced times when we shot lights out for 3 weeks in a row and then the pool Gods took it away as fast as they gave it to us. That is what consistency of play and averages are all about. The difference between one handicap level and the next is consistency of play. Higher rated players are more consistent than lower rated players. The only thing consistent about pool players is inconsistency. EVERYBODY agrees with that statement.

   Some Examples: A (4C) player who starts shooting like a (5C) player will take longer to reach a (5) than a (4B) player shooting (5C) level because the (4B) player is closer to a (5) than the (4C) player. A (5A) player shooting like a (6B) player will reach a (6) faster than a (5B) player

shooting like a (6B) player because the (5B) player has further to go before their average catches up with them.

5. Sometimes a player just gets all the breaks and the balls are set up perfectly for a 4 or 5 ball run, even for a (2) or (3). With the 2 it would require some luck thrown in.
6. <u>About new players</u>: Remember that you were once a new player also and somebody probably complained about your rating. The reason it may not have been as accurate as it needed to be is because you were new and there was only a minimal amount of data collected. It takes time to establish a solid rating. A <u>*minimum*</u> of 10 weeks of scores is required to establish a solid rating because it is averages that create the rating.
7. If two (5's) play each other and one player wins 4-0, but both players shot (5) speed, that doesn't mean the winner is under ranked. It might mean that one player is a (5A) player and the other is a (5C) player "or" the winner is shooting (6) speed, but their average hasn't caught up to them yet "or" the loser wasn't shooting their best game "or" the loser had too many beers "or" the winner had just the right amount of beers. You can analyze this thing to death, but it's not worth it. Let the system do the analysis. Just have fun, win or lose. Ok, winning is better.
8. Most player audits come in from players that lost their match. Ask yourself. Did I shoot my best game? Sometimes it's not that your opponent is under ranked, but rather that you didn't shoot your normal game or your opponent was shooting their best game or a little better than normal. Just because a player has a couple of good weeks, doesn't mean they should automatically be raised. Those strong scores are averaged with all their other scores. The strong scores do push them closer to the next level, but it takes time.
9. Players submit audits on their own players they believe are rated too high, but NOBODY submits audits on their own players they believe are underrated. Why is that ok if you are concerned about accuracy of ratings?
10. <u>The Handicap Race Grid:</u> This is what the race grid means. Example: (5) plays a (4)…4-3 race. If these two players played 7 games total, on average the (5) would win 4 games and the (4) would win 3 games. In a match, you just don't know in what order those wins will occur.
11. I'm a (7) and my personal opinion is that (3's & 4's) are the scariest of all players because you never know when they will step it up big time and kick your ass, right out of the blue. On any given night they can shoot 1 to 2 levels higher than the norm, but they can't do it consistently. If you've faced a (3 or 4) on one of those nights, my sympathy goes out to you.
12. All unrated players at the (4C) level which has proven to generate a rating that is fairer to those lower ranked players.
13. Ratings in the TAP league move slower than what many players expect them to. One of the reasons for this is to safeguard against sandbaggers who think that when they move up, can play poorly for one week and drop back down. This is not the case. The result of this safeguard is that players must play their game or risk hurting the team. The system also moves ratings slowly because ratings are a series of averages. Just because someone plays well for four weeks doesn't mean they should necessarily go up because all pool players are inconsistent.
14. Different leagues use different systems for calculating handicaps. Even though our rating numbers (2-7) are the same as another league in Phoenix, the method or scale used to calculate the handicaps are different. For example; a H/C-5 in this other league may only be a H/C-4 in T.A.P. In many cases, our ratings are ½ to 1 full rating lower than this other league. This means that a weak (5) may be a strong (4) in T.A.P. or a strong (5) in the other league may be a weak (5) in T.A.P. A lot of you are conditioned from the other system which makes it harder to understand the new system you've chosen to play in. In addition, handicap movement is also slower because of the rating scale.
15. When players challenge ratings, they always talk about the great shots that were made: Incredible banks shots, great kick shots, impossible cuts shots etc. Those are the shots that are memorable. However, the easy missed shots are never talked about or recalled because there is nothing special about them. When questioning a players rating, watch how many bad shots that

player makes along with their good shots. Then decide if an audit is really necessary. If so, by all means send it in.

16. Why does it take an audit to get a player's H/C raised? The computer system determines rating based ONLY on the statistical data it is given. What if the data is wrong? It could be wrong because the scorekeeper made a mistake, accidentally or intentionally. The data entry person could have entered a wrong number or the computer had a glitch and didn't record some of the data. The computer only reads the numbers it is given. When corporate performs audits they look for discrepancies in the data base compared against the score sheets. If discrepancies are discovered they make adjustments that may or may not raise or lower a players H/C/. Due to the number of audits sent in, corporate does not have the time to respond to every audit with a reason. They make a decision based on the information they have available.

17. To help determine a basis for player ratings, examine the following grid: Remember.

H/C	# of balls made on each shot, *"ON AVERAGE"*
7	5-7 balls
6	4-6 balls
5	3-5 balls
4	2-4 balls
3	1-3 balls
2	0-2 balls

This is an actual Audit Request on a specific player. The player in question will be referred to as "Joe Pool" (JP), and the other player as "Opponent" (Op).   Review at the completions, misses, defense shots and the LOT's for BOTH players. It has already been established that this players record at the time of the audit was (18) games won (1) game lost (which, by the way, was an E-8 that JP made) and his match wins are 6-0.

The argument here is that no player with this kind of record could possibly still be a (4) and he misses balls on purpose to sandbag his rating down. Notice his consistency. Here are his stats from those six matches.

Op (H/C 4): Comp 16 / Miss 9 / Def. 2 / LOT 10 / Won 1 / Lost 3 /
JP (H/C 4): Comp 23 / Miss 13 / Def.1 / LOT 4 / Won 3 / Lost 1 (this was the E-8 match)

Op (H/C 4): Comp 16 / Miss 12 / Def. 0 / LOT 2 / Won 0 / Lost 3
JP (H/C 4): Comp 23 / Miss 7 / Def. 0 / LOT 0 / Won 3 / Lost 0

Op (H/C 3): Comp 7 / Miss 7 / Def. 2 / LOT 12 / Won 0 / Lost 3
JP (H/C 4): Comp 15 / Miss 10 / Def. 0 / LOT 5 / Won 3 / Lost 0 (had 8 on break)

Op (H/C 3): Comp 15 / Miss 10 / Def. 0 / LOT 3 / Won 0 / Lost 3
JP (H/C 4): Comp 22 / Miss 8 / Def.0 / LOT 0 / Won 3 / Lost 0

Op (H/C 4): Comp 10 / Miss 10 / Def. 1 / LOT 8 / Won 0 / Lost 3
JP (H/C 4): Comp 20 / Miss 10 / Def.1 / LOT 0 / Won 3 / Lost 0

Op (H/C 4): Comp 17 / Miss 19 / Def. 0 / LOT 2 / Won 0 / Lost 3
JP (H/C 4): Comp 22 / Miss 18 / Def.3 / LOT 0 / Won 3 / Lost 0
(This is the match that generated the audit. Examine the numbers)

The next two matches are this players' performance in the Masters the weekend <u>after</u> the audit came in (This a bonus for additional reference). Notice that he lost both matches. If he was truly sandbagging, would he have played like this. These scores are consistent with the other six above. This would have been the time he should have stepped up. As an additional point of consideration, this tournament was played at this player's home bar.

Op (H/C 4): Comp 27 / Miss 12 / Def. 3 / LOT 3 / Won 3 / Lost 1
JP (H/C 4): Comp 27 / Miss 18 / Def.1 / LOT 1 / Won 1 / Lost 3

Op (H/C 5): Comp 30 / Miss 12 / Def. 0 / LOT 5 / Won 4 / Lost 2
JP (H/C 4): Comp 19 / Miss 12 / Def.1 / LOT 15 / Won 2 / Lost 4

The easiest way to analyze this is to compare completions to misses which will give you and understanding of how many balls both players made each time at the table. JP is clearly inconsistent. The number of LOT's for both players will tell you how close the match was by game. Note the first match with the E-8. Seven of those LOT's came from the E-8. Also note Match #3 LOT's for JP. He had five because of an 8 OTB, which means that 5-7 of his opponents LOT's were from that 8-OTB. Finally, look at how JP's opponent played based on their rating.

Below is a summary to make this a little more understandable. Included are the first six matches because those are the only ones entered into the data base at this time and the handicaps are generated by the data the computer system is given. The other questions to ask would be…is the system doing its job; correctly rating this player based on the data it has been given? If so, the claim that the system doesn't work would be false. Although the system is not perfect, it is approximately 95% accurate. It is because of the additional 5% that audits are encouraged. We admit we don't catch them all because we are also human.

How could a player with a record of 18-1 games and 6-0 matches possibly still be a H/C-4?????? The answer is below.

Summary
Op (H/C 3's & 4's): Comp 81 / Miss 67 / Def. 5 / LOT 37 (-10 to 12) / Won 1 / Lost 18
JP (H/C 4): Comp 125 / Miss 66 / Def. 5/ LOT 9 (from E-8 & 8-OTB) / Won 18 / Lost 1

JP pocketed more balls, but missed as much as his opponents. He averages 1.89 balls per shot and only plays a few defensive shots. Out of 6 matches and 19 games his opponents only had 37 LOT's. Even with the10 to 12 balls from the 8-OTB and E-8, that's only 6.17 LOT's per match or 1.95 balls per game.

"The Safety Myth"
Based on the example above, the question; how do safeties/defense shots affect a players rating. There is a belief out there that if you shoot a safety, your H/C will go up and therefore some players don't call safeties because they think they are helping to keep their H/C down or even get it lowered. There is an iota of truth to this belief simply because safeties are one of the variables in the system, but nowhere near the extent that some players believe. Shooting a couple of safeties every time you play will have almost no affect on your rating at all. The system is designed that way.

Safeties do play a part in TAP player ratings, but on a very small scale. The Myth was created from a different league where safeties were 50% of the scoring variables that determined your rating. Naturally, abusing safeties in this format would certainly affect your rating and would be easy to manipulate. This idea has seemed to carry over to TAP. Our system doesn't work that way and has absolutely no similarity or affect like this other leagues system.

There are 80 different algorithms that go into the computation of each players H/C rating. Match wins and losses on your rosters only account for 25% to 30% of a players rating. Completion & miss ratios also account for about 25% or so. With these two alone, we have used up over 50%. Some of the other things that go into the computation are: MOB's & LOT's for both players; completions to total balls counts; completion/miss/def ratios; miss/def ratios; the H/C of who you played vs. your handicap; how badly did you beat your opponent and vice versa; plus other comparisons I am not aware of. There are also a series of anti sandbagging measures built into the system to prevent manipulation of player

ratings. With that in mind, how much impact or weight do you really think is placed on safeties alone? "Not much" is the answer, only about 5 to 7%.

Finally, scorekeepers and players have the option of marking safeties against their opponents if they believe it was a safety. If this isn't happening, then the system can't be to blame. To determine if a specific player is trying the cheat by not calling safeties, score sheets are compared. If someone is trying to cheat, the numbers should be dramatically different if all the scoring is fair and accurate. Notice the consistency of safeties played by "Joe Player". His team did not score all those matches. You could bring a second score sheet to also score that players match and compare it to the other teams for similarity if you believe someone is not calling safeties on purpose.

The bottom line is this. Shooting safeties is a small part of the big picture and only has a minimal affect on a players rating. Will it change it over time? Absolutely; it is a variable in the system, but it will take longer than a few weeks. In all reality it could take months or it could never happen. Players may shoot 5-20 safeties each week and their handicap may not change because of all the other variables that made up their matches. Safeties are a strategy of play and equivalent to not attempting to pocket a ball - and pocketing the balls is still required to win. Safeties should be called and should be marked because those are the rules, and that is what fair play is all about, and they are one of the variables that go into making the rating as accurate as possible.

The system it isn't perfect, never will be, but it is the best in the league industry and it is up to all of you to keep it that way by playing fair, sending in audits and following the rules. Remember, we are all here to have fun. Cheating doesn't make you a winner - playing your best every time you step to the table, whether you win or lose your match does.

Your assessment of someone's rating can't be based on one experience with that player. It must be based on the entire history of the player, which is impossible to do unless you play them every week. This is not intended to discourage player audits. We still want those to insure the accuracy of the league scoring from corporate and to prevent sandbaggers. We have found mistakes. Some are corporate scoring errors, some are computer glitches, but 90% of the mistakes come from score sheets that are illegible or filled out incorrectly. Please check the accuracy of your score sheets before turning them in to insure proper data entry.