



USAGA RANKING & COMPETITION STANDARDS ©

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NOW EVERYONE CAN PLAY GOLF

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FORWARD

The United States Adaptive Golf Alliance (USAGA) was formed in 2014 to create a unified structure and voice for the existing disabled golf organizations in the United States allowing them to join together and enhance their shared mission of introducing the game of golf to people with disabilities. The members of USAGA operate autonomously, with independent boards and leadership, communicate with each other through the Alliance, and work together to promote interest and grow the game for players with disabilities.

Millions of people with disabilities in the United States have been introduced to the game of golf over the last several decades. A percentage of those have “graduated” to an advanced level, having played the game on a regular basis, and even competing in various tournaments for the last 70+ years. However, the “competitive” disabled golf industry has grown without a basic set of unified standards of play.

USAGA felt one of its primary roles in the game was to establish a set of unified competitive standards of play for golfers with disabilities in the United States, and provide competitive pathways to the highest level, regardless of an individual player’s geographic location, age, race, gender, skill level, or disability type.

After 5 years of effort, research, collaborating with numerous organizations and individuals with multiple decades of experience working with golfers with disabilities, USAGA is proud to present this guidance document, titled ***USAGA Ranking and Competition Standards***, for our wonderful sport so all golfers with disabilities can follow and use these standards as we continue our joint mission of introducing and growing the sport of golf for people with disabilities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The USAGA Ranking System and Competition Standards would not have been possible without the efforts, research, advice and years of experience of many individuals and organizations too numerous to name, some of which, are no longer alive. Special thanks to the three individuals who have contributed to the production, editing and publishing of this Manual:

Edmund Q. Sylvester, USAGA Chairman
Alan Gentry, USAGA Vice Chairman
Mark Johnson, USAGA Director of Advancement

Additional thanks to the various golf organizations in this country who have worked to introduce our game to people with disabilities, especially the following:

	<u>Founded</u>	<u>2019 Tournament</u>
• The Royal and Ancient Golf Club	1754	N/A
• United States Golf Association	1894	N/A
• National Alliance for Accessible Golf	2001	N/A
• United States Blind Golf Association	1953	7 National
• National Amputee Golf Association	1960	71 st National 30 th Senior National
• Eastern Amputee Golf Association	1987	33 rd National
• North American 1-Armed Golfer Association	2000	19 th National
• United States Disabled Golf Association	2016	2 nd Open

Thanks to the USGA, our national and rules governing body of Golf in the United States, and the R&A, the oldest governing body of Golf in the world, for their work and adoption of the Rules Modifications for Players with Disabilities. Thanks also to the National Alliance for Accessible Golf (NAAG) for its continued research & efforts in improving access to the game and promoting golf facility compliance in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

And finally, ENORMOUS thanks to the “real” pioneers and leaders of disabled golf in the United States, who persevered for decades on shoestring budgets, providing countless volunteer hours of instruction, inspiration and opportunity to golf for people with disabilities, because they had a passion for the mission, namely USBGA, NAGA, EAGA, WAGA, SAGA, MAGA, NAOAGA, SWAGA, FGA, the , Iowa Amputee Golf Association, Ray Rice and Chris Maled Memorials, and Amputee Golf Charities, among many others.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The USAGA Ranking and Competition Standards publication is described in the following pages and consists of published standards of guidance for:

- player eligibility
- divisional sport classification based on disability type
- competition yardage range standards based on sport classification
- event accreditation process, and
- establishing a competitive pathway to the highest level through a national ranking system and a valuable exemption structure to the USAGA Open Championship

The standards are effective immediately in 2019 for Member Chapter organizations of USAGA. USAGA representatives are available to assist any and all member organizations, and all prospective member organizations, who wish to participate and share in our mission.

2.0 ELIGIBILITY & CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS

USAGA's goal is to promote *inclusion* in the sport of golf, while *recognizing that golfers with disabilities often play the game differently due to varying physical limitations, and as a result, should compete based on their type (and/or level) of disability*. This approach incorporates disabilities encountered across the United States, classifies athletes into defined groups, and recommends distances that are appropriate for those impairments. If abled-body golfers are allowed to compete from different tee distances due to physical limitations based upon age (seniors/juniors) or gender (men/women), it is felt justified that "disabled/adaptive" golfers be given the same privilege and opportunity. The following classification and distance recommendations will be used for the ranking of disabled athletes playing in USAGA accredited tournaments and championships.

2.0 Player Eligibility

The USAGA aligns its eligibility standards with the published standards of the United States Paralympic Committee (USPC). The USPC has established 10 eligible impairments that qualify for participation:

Impaired muscle power: Reduced force generated by muscles or muscle groups, such as muscles of one limb or the lower half of the body, as caused, for example, by spinal cord injuries, spina bifida or polio.

Impaired passive range of movement: Range of movement in one or more joints is reduced permanently, for example due to arthrogyposis. Hypermobility of joints, joint instability, and acute conditions, such as arthritis, are not considered eligible impairments.

Limb deficiency: Total or partial absence of bones or joints as a consequence of trauma (e.g. car accident), illness (e.g. bone cancer) or congenital limb deficiency (e.g. dysmelia).

Leg length difference: Bone shortening in one leg due to congenital deficiency or trauma.

Short stature: Reduced standing height due to abnormal dimensions of bones of upper and lower limbs or trunk, for example due to achondroplasia or growth hormone dysfunction.

Hypertonia: Abnormal increase in muscle tension and a reduced ability of a muscle to stretch, due to a neurological condition, such as cerebral palsy, brain injury or multiple sclerosis.

Ataxia: Lack of co-ordination of muscle movements due to a neurological condition, such as cerebral palsy, brain injury or multiple sclerosis.

Athetosis: Generally characterised by unbalanced, involuntary movements and a difficulty in maintaining a symmetrical posture, due to a neurological condition, such as cerebral palsy, brain injury or multiple sclerosis.

Visual impairment: Vision is impacted by either an impairment of the eye structure, optical nerves or optical pathways, or the visual cortex.

Intellectual Impairment: A limitation in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills, which originates before age 18.

2.1 Player Classification

In accordance to the eligibility standards listed above, USAGA will classify athletes based upon level of impairment under the following definitions:

2.2.1 Golfers with lower limb impairments:

Sport Class G1: The golfers have an impairment affecting one leg, for example an amputation above the knee. They may use a prosthesis or golf on one leg.

Sport Class G2: Golfers in this sport class include those with impairments in the lower parts of one leg, but with less impact on golfing compared to G1. Typical examples are amputations above the ankle or loss of muscle control in one leg or leg length difference.

Sport Class G3: This sport class includes golfers with an impairment in both legs, such as muscle weakness in both legs or double amputation.

2.2.2 Golfers with arm impairments:

Sport Class G4: The golfers in this sport class have impairments affecting one arm and either 1) **do not** use any golf aide or adaptive device to connect to the club, or 2) **do not** intentionally use the impaired arm when initiating a stroke through striking the ball. At the initiation of the stroke through striking of the ball, there can only be one intentional point of contact on the club. All golfers in this category, must play every stroke during a round of golf with one arm - any aid from an artificial appliance, prosthetic, or part of the impaired arm is not allowed. This category includes limb deficiency, impaired passive range of motion and impaired muscle power related to the arm.

Sport Class G5: The golfers in this sport class have impairments affecting one arm and either 1) use a golf aide or adaptive device to connect to the club or 2) use the impaired arm at any time in the swing between when initiating a stroke through striking the ball. At the initiation of the stroke through striking the ball, this class is allowed to have two points of intentional contact on the club while striking the ball for any stroke during a round of golf. This category includes limb deficiency, impaired passive range of motion and impaired muscle power related to the arm.

Sport Class G6: This sport class is designated for athletes with impairments in both arms that prohibit them full use of the golf club. Golfers, for example, have missing hands or cannot grip firmly the club properly. Therefore, you may see them using an adaptive golf tool.

2.2.3 Golfers with combined impairments in arms and legs:

Sport Class G7: This sport class is designed for golfers who have an impairment in arms and legs. Some of the G7 golfers have mild coordination problems in all extremities. Others have amputations affecting at one arm and one leg.

Sport Class G8: Athletes with Neurological Conditions and Coordination Impairments. Abnormal increase in muscle tension and a reduced ability of a muscle to stretch, lack of co-ordination of muscle movements, unbalanced, involuntary movements and a difficulty in maintaining a symmetrical posture due to a neurological condition, such as cerebral palsy, brain injury or multiple sclerosis.

2.2.4 Sitting Golfers:

All sitting-golfers have an impairment affecting their legs. They are allocated different sport classes depending on their trunk control, which is very important for golf.

Sport Class G9: Golfers have an impairment that limits their leg and trunk function. They would be unable to sit without supporting himself or herself with the arms, for example due to paraplegia.

Sport Class G10: Golfers in this sport class have near to normal trunk control.

2.2.5 Golfers with Visual Impairments

G11: These athletes have a very low visual acuity and/ or no light perception.

G12: Athletes have a higher visual acuity than athletes competing in the **G11** sport class and/ or a visual field of less than 5 degrees radius.

G13: Athletes have the least severe visual impairment eligible for Paralympic sport. They have the highest visual acuity and/or a visual field of less than 20 degrees radius.

To ensure safety all **G11** & **G12** golfers **must** use a caddy, while a **G13** may use a caddy.

2.2.6 Short In Stature

G14 - Athletes with short stature compete in this sport class

2.2 Distance Allowances

Golfers with disabilities often play the game differently due to varying physical limitations and may compete from a yardage distance based on their type (and/or level) of disability. USAGA classifies golfers with disabilities into one of fourteen defined sport classes and recommends they compete from within the following distance ranges for each of those impairments.

The recommended distance requirement by classification for Men is defined below:

Class	Description	4,800 - 5,600 Yds	5,400 – 6,200 Yds	5,800— 6,400 Yds	6200 +yds
OPEN	*Championship Tees				X
G1, G2	Single Leg Impairment			X	
G3	Multiple Leg Impairment		X		
G4	Single Arm – Unassisted		X		
G5	Single Arm – Assisted			X	
G6	Multiple Arm Impairment		X		
G7	Multiple Arm and Leg Impairment		X		
G8	Neurological Conditions and		X		

	Coordination Impairments			
G9,G10	Sitting Golfers	X		
G11,G12	Visually Impaired		X	
G13	Visually Impaired			X
G14	Short In Stature			X

*Yardages above are guidelines and provide tournament organizers flexibility to offer distance allowances to players based on their level of impairment. If a tournament director opts to add an “Open” or “Championship Flight” open to all players, regardless of disability, and recognizes the “flight winner” as the player with the lowest gross score, then all players participating in this flight should play from the same distance and the minimum distance requirement should be 6,200 yards.

The recommended distance requirement by class for the Women is defined below:

Class	Description	4,500 – 5,200 Yds	4,800 – 5,500 yds.
G1, G2	Single Leg Impairment		X
G3	Multiple Leg Impairment	X	
G4	Single Arm - Unassisted	X	
G5	Single Arm – Assisted		X
G6	Multiple Arm Impairment	X	
G7	Multiple Arm and Leg Impairment	X	
G8	Neurological Conditions and Coordination Impairments	X	
G9,G10	Sitting Golfers	X	
G11,G12	Visually Impaired	X	
G13	Visually Impaired		X
G14	Short In Stature		X

If a player wants to compete for an overall tournament championship in which the overall tournament champion is defined by the player that records the “lowest gross score” for that event, then that player must compete from the longest distance provided by the Tournament Organizer, as shown above.

As an alternative approach, the Tournament Organizer may opt to award its overall tournament champion as the player who performs the best as defined by the rating he or she achieves over the course of the event using the USAGA rating methodology explained in Section 3.4 below. If the overall tournament champion is determined by the best “event rating” achieved versus the

best “gross score” posted, then all players are eligible for the overall tournament championship award regardless of the distance from which they played from.

3.0 COMPETITIVE PATHWAYS

USAGA will establish competitive pathways for all of its players who participate in accredited tournaments regardless of skill level or disability type through the establishment of a ranking system and associated exemption structure. Players can earn valuable exemptions to the season-ending USAGA Open Championship through high-level performance at ALL USAGA accredited tournaments. At the conclusion of the season-ending USAGA Open Championship, a 30-player United States Para-Golf team will be named and honored by USAGA, and will consist of the top-2 highest ranked players from each of the 14 Sport Class divisions, as well as the top-2 highest ranked women. Details of how this works are explained below.

3.1 USAGA Adaptive Golf Ranking (USAGR™) Standards

The purpose is to create a Ranking System and Exemption Pathway to the USAGA Open for United States golfers with disabilities compiled from tournaments run by USAGA and its Member Chapters. This ranking system will be used to create valuable “exemption” status to the season-ending USAGA OPEN Championship.

The USAGA Golf Ranking System (USAGR™), which comprises a women’s ranking and a men’s ranking for leading golfers with disabilities in the USA, is offered and developed from actual performance at USAGA accredited tournaments following specific incorporation of USAGA standards for their sport class and in compliance with USAGA tournament guidelines.

USAGA and its members offer the most comprehensive and accurate ranking of golfers with disabilities by effectively comparing players’ stroke tournament scores and associated computed ratings from accredited tournaments around the country. For those who may never directly compete against one another, USAGR™ is available to tournaments for golfers with disabilities who may not yet be members of USAGA but used for their events for purposes of inclusion of all golfers with disabilities in the national team selection process.

3.2 Coverage & Inclusion

USAGR™ includes more than 24,000 disabled players from around the USA with the ability to participate or are participating in more than 30 national, regional and local tournaments and championships annually. USAGA agrees with the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) that athletes with disabilities within a sport should be classified based on their disability impairment

to promote fair and equitable competition and avoid the “threat of one-sided and predictable competitions, in which the least-impaired athletes always win.” As a result, USAGA follows “para-sport” protocol by classifying its golfers “by the degree of activity limitation resulting from the impairment,” and has identified and defined 14 different sport classes by which golfers with disabilities are ranked.

3.3 Event Certification

For an event to be sanctioned as an “***Accredited USAGA Tournament***,” it must comply with the following requirements:

3.3.1 Purpose & Location

Event must be held specifically for golfers with disabilities within the United States on a golf course with an official USGA Course and Slope Rating. Certification of International Events in the future is possible if and when a universal worldwide handicapping system that directly correlates to **USAGR™** is adopted.

3.3.2 Participation

Each sanctioned event must be operated by USAGA or a Chapter Member of USAGA. Non-member organizations may have their events sanctioned by USAGA’s Competition Ranking Committee (“CRC”) upon signing up for membership. Non-member organizations may be granted Level III status on a trial basis for 2019 only (see Event Classification below). Subsequent participation beyond 2019 will require membership as a USAGA Chapter Member.

3.3.3 Event Classification

Each sanctioned event will be classified as either a Level I, Level II or Level III status event. Exemption types and weighting within the **USAGR™** may differ based upon which level the event is classified. The USAGA CRC will classify each event into its appropriate “Level” in accordance with its approved event classification protocol. The CRC event classification protocol is created and approved by the CRC, and may be amended on an annual basis by the CRC as necessary.

3.3.4 Size of Event

No specific participant minimums are required for event certification; however, the size and participation level of the event could affect its classification level assigned by the USAGA CRC.

3.3.5 General Standards

The event must comply with USAGA competition standard(s) and the USGA Rules of Golf, including, when applicable, the Modified Rules of Golf for Players with Disabilities unless an application for deviation is approved by the USAGA's CRC. Each event participant must be classified in accordance with the USAGA Classification Standards by the Tournament Director before submitting posted scores to USAGA for purposes of entering player data into the USAGR™. USAGA will provide compliance assistance when necessary.

3.3.6 2019 USAGA Accredited Events - Level Definition

Each **Accredited Event**, upon certification, is classified by the CRC as a Level I, Level II or Level III Event. For 2019, the following events have been certified and classified:

a. Level I Events (*Double-Weighted & Gold Exemption Status)

- 1) United States Disabled Golf Association Championship
- 2) North American One-Armed Golfer Association Championship
- 3) National Amputee Golf Association National Championship
- 4) Eastern Amputee Golf Association Championship
- 5) United States Blind Golfers Association National Championship

b. Level II Events (Silver Exemption Status)**

- 1) United States Blind Golfers Association ISPS Handa US Open
- 2) Southern Amputee Golf Association Regional
- 3) Western Amputee Golf Association Washington Championship
- 4) Michigan Amputee Golf Association Championship
- 5) Midwestern Amputee Golf Association Championship
- 6) Amputee Association of Maine Golf Tournament

c. Level III Events (Silver Exemption, Non-Member Status)**

- 1) Southwestern Amputee Golf Association Oklahoma Tournament
- 2) Southwestern Amputee Golf Association Texas Tournament
- 3) Amputee Golf Charities Kentucky Tournament
- 4) Ray Rice Memorial Georgia Amputee Tournament
- 5) Iowa Amputee Golf Association Tournament
- 6) Western Amputee Golf Association Sacramento Championship
- 7) Pennsylvania Amputee Open
- 8) Connecticut Amputee Open

*** Gold Exemption Status** – Awards exemptions to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place overall finishers, Women's overall winner, and "Net" overall winner (see below)

**** Silver Exemption Status** – Awards exemptions to 1st and 2nd place overall finishers, Women’s overall winner, and “Net” overall winner .

In addition to the Events listed above, the ***United States Adaptive Golf Alliance (USAGA) Open Championship*** is the premiere season-ending event used in USAGR™ and constitutes the nation’s only “triple-weighted” event to-date. At the conclusion of the USAGA Open, the nation’s overall top-ranked male and female golfer for the season will be awarded the ***USAGA Cup***, and a 30-player United States team will be named honoring the top-2 ranked players in each of 14 sport classes.

3.3.7 Event Certification Process

Player ratings and associated rankings are generated using USAGR™ from scores posted in all USAGA accredited events that are certified by the CRC. Accredited events will generally use stroke-play format and set classifications based on impairment. The objective of USAGR™ is to rank players by their overall skill level and by individual sport classes, which levels the playing field for all players with disabilities, but also to allow flexibility for individual tournament organizers that may provide tournament awards under flights or divisions that don’t necessarily replicate the different sport classes being ranked.

When certifying events, the CRC must confirm that events will follow USAGA basic standards. All players with disabilities will be allowed to compete, regardless of amateur or professional status. The Rules of Golf, governed by the USGA, and, when applicable, the USGA Modified Rules for Players with Disabilities must be followed. Local rule amendments approved by the Tournament Director and/or Tournament Committee due to weather and/or local course conditions are permitted.

Generally event certification is limited to events scheduled for a minimum of 36 holes. If fewer than 36 holes are played in a particular event, the stroke play event may still be considered for inclusion pending a decision from the CRC. Cancellation of a round or rounds for reasons of weather, safety, etc., will not necessarily render the event “uncertified.”

Only gross scores are used in USAGR™ from all certified events. Scoring rounds posted in USAGR™ must be 18-hole scores. 9-hole rounds will not be included in the USAGR™ ranking system.

The USAGA’s Championship Ranking Committee (CRC) may consider certifications for new events to USAGR™ system at any time. The final certification of any competition as well as the “level” designation will be at the sole discretion of the CRC. Any new competition for consideration, must complete a CRC evaluation template and will be evaluated accordingly. Any professional event (with participation of players with disabilities) or conducted by a governing body (affiliated to The R&A/ USGA), affiliated to national federations or PGA organizations, may also be included should they meet USAGR™ system criteria.

All rounds played in an accredited event shall be used in the USAGR™ system. In accredited events that have stroke-play qualifiers and match-play finals, only the stroke-play qualifying rounds are used.

3.4 Establishing Rankings using USAGR™

3.4.1 Individual Player Inclusion as a Ranked Player

Gross scores posted from each player with an eligible disability participating in an accredited event will be used in USAGR™. Eligible players are those considered with a disability or impairment in accordance with the eligibility and classification standards listed in this manual. To become ranked, a player must have a minimum of four posted scores from USAGA accredited event(s) within a one-year cycle, in which the final day of the season's cycle is the day of the final round of the season-ending USAGA Open Championships.

All posted 18-hole scores will be used from all accredited events regardless of player classification, division or from which tee box the player's division or classification group plays from. Each player who records a posted score must finish the 18-hole round in its entirety. Partial scores achieved during any round not completed for any reason will not be posted.

3.4.2 USAGA Ranking System - USAGR™

The USAGA will use the following system in defining an overall player rating for each player, and ranking them using USAGR™.

3.4.2.1 Overall Ranking

A player's current **overall ranking** will be established for golfers with disabilities by comparing and ranking, in order, each player's current **Overall Rating (OR)** that is computed using the following equation:

$$\text{OR} = (\text{Sum of all CSRs used}) / \# \text{CSRs posted} = \text{Average CSR posted}$$

Where:

$$\text{CSR} = \text{Competitive Score Rating} = (\text{PS} - \text{CR}) \times (113/\text{SL}) - (\text{EPFA})$$

And:

PS = Posted Score = actual 18-hole tournament score posted by player in any accredited event

CR = Course Rating of golf course from tee box player played

SL = Slope Rating of golf course from tee box player played

EPFA = Event Performance Factor Adjustment (only used if necessary – see below)

3.4.2.2 Event Performance Factor Adjustment (EPFA)

An “Event Performance Factor Adjustment (EPFA)” is applied when the average player rating achieved from a particular round is significantly above a normal expected player-rating range most likely due to factors not measured by Course and Slope Ratings (e.g. inclement weather or tougher-than-normal course conditions). Therefore, when tougher-than-normal conditions generate player ratings high enough to trigger a necessary rating adjustment, a calculated value for EPFA is simply inserted into the equation and subtracted from the actual player rating achieved for that posted score.

The EPFA is always “0” unless the **actual average player rating earned among “previously-rated” players in a given round (AAPR)** exceeds the **average rating of all “previously-rated” players in the event (ARPR)** by 10% or more. “Previously-rated” is defined by either the player’s current overall rating prior to the start of the round, or, the player’s previous year end-of-season rating if said player doesn’t have an updated current overall rating but was rated the previous year.

If the event’s actual average player rating for previously-rated players (AAPR) does exceed the average rating of all previously-rated players (ARPR) in the event by 10% or more for a given round, then the rating computed for that particular round will be adjusted for each player by subtracting an amount equal to the percentage of the variance amount above the 10% limit, referred to as the Percent Variance (PV), multiplied by the actual player rating achieved (APR) . The equation to compute the EPFA for “each” player is shown below:

$$\mathbf{EPFA = APR \times PV}$$

where

APR = Actual Player Rating earned by each player from Round before applying EPFA

PV = Percent of Variance of the Actual Player Rating above the Event Upper Limit (see below)

And

$$\mathbf{PV = ((APR - UL)/UL)}$$

where

UL (Upper Limit) = 10% above the average rating of previously-rated players (**ARPR**), and
UL = 1.1 x ARPR

where

ARPR = Average Player Rating of all Previously-Ranked Players in the Event

Example:

Joe and Tom Golfer play in an event under difficult conditions and, like most of the other players, both shoot a score that is considerably higher than they normally shoot. The event has 12 players participating in it who were previously rated, with an average player rating of 16.2 (ARPR). The average player rating earned that day (APR) for those 12 previously-ranked players was actually 19.2, which is 3.0 above the ARPR of 16.2. Since 19.2 is above the Upper Limit (UL) of rating variance allowed, which in this case is 17.8 (e.g. 1.1 x 16.2, or 10% higher than the PPR), the player ratings earned in this event on this difficult day will be modified by the Event Performance Factor Adjustment (EPFA).

Using the equations listed above, the exact EPFA for “each” player in the event can then be computed in the following manner:

First, we must compute the Upper Limit of variance allowed (UL):

$$UL = 1.1 \times ARPR = 1.1 \times 16.2 = 17.8$$

With that, we can now compute the Percent Variance above the UL (PV):

$$PV = ((APR - UL)/UL) = (19.2 - 17.8)/17.8 = 0.08$$

Now that we know the PV, we can compute the EPFA for each player by multiplying the PV by the Actual Rating that player earned that day (APR). Assuming Joe Golfer earned a 10.0, Joe’s rating of 10.0 will be adjusted down by the following amount:

$$Joe's EPFA = APR \times PV = 10.0 \times 0.08 = 0.8$$

Therefore, Joe’s new modified rating after applying his calculated EPFA is:

$$10.0 - 0.8 = \underline{9.2}$$

Similarly, Tom Golfer earned a 20.2 APR and using the same methodology, we compute his EPFA to be:

$$20.2 \times .08 = 1.6$$

This adjusts Tom's rating to:

$$20.2 - 1.6 = \underline{18.6}$$

A minimum of 10 event participants must be previously-rated before an EPFA can be applied using this methodology. If an accredited event has less than 10 previously-rated event participants but does have at least 10 event participants with an official USGA Handicap Index, then that accredited event may calculate an EPFA using the alternative method described in the next section below.

3.4.2.3 Alternative Method for Calculating EPFA

An alternative methodology to calculate EPFA may be used "**only**" when an accredited event has less than 10 previously-rated event participants but does have at least 10 event participants with an official USGA Handicap Index. Using this alternative methodology, the EPFA for each player can be calculated using the same process as above with the exception of the **alternative percent variance (PVa)** is computed using an **average course handicap for those with a USGA Handicap Index (ACH)** in place of an **average player rating of all previously-ranked players (ARPR)** AND the **alternate upper limit variance (ULa)** is 20% (1.2) versus 10%. The EPFAa using the alternative approach is calculated from the following equations:

$$EPFAa = APR \times PVa$$

$$PVa = ((APR - ULa)/ULa)$$

$$ULa = 1.2 \times ACH$$

This alternative methodology may be used only when less than 10 event participants have been previously-ranked and 10 or more event participants have a USGA Handicap Index.

3.4.2.4 Example -- Computing Overall Ranking for a Season

Example:

The following is a calculation of Joe Golfer's Ranking for the entire year assuming Joe plays in two Level II Events (Connecticut Amputee Open and the Michigan Amputee Championship), one Level I Event (NAGA National Championship), and the season-ending USAGA Open Championship. For simplicity purposes, we will assume the EPFA is "0" for all four events, meaning no "tougher-than-normal" course conditions were

encountered that triggered any EPFA modifications. Joe's season rating is calculated as follows:

- In Event 1, Joe shoots an 82 and an 86 at the single-weighted Level II Connecticut Amputee Open at a USGA rated golf club with a course rating "CR" of 69.0 and a Slope "SL" of 118.
 - $CSR \#1 = (82 - 69) * 113 / 118 = 12.4$
 - $CSR \#2 = (86 - 69) * 113 / 118 = 16.3$
- At Event 2, Joe shoots 78 and 80 at the single-weighted Level II Michigan Amputee on a course with a CR of 68.4 and a Slope of 115
 - $CSR \#3 = (78 - 68.4) * 113 / 115 = 9.4$
 - $CSR \#4 = (80 - 68.4) * 113 / 115 = 11.4$
- At Event 3, Joe then shoots 85, 84 and 88 at the **double-weighted** Level I NAGA National on a course with a CR of 71.2 and a Slope of 130.
 - $CSR \#5 = (85 - 71.2) * 113 / 130 = 12.0$
 - $CSR \#6 = (84 - 71.2) * 113 / 130 = 11.1$
 - $CSR \#7 = (88 - 71.2) * 113 / 130 = 14.6$
- And in the 4th Event used, Joe shot 82, 79, and 78 at the triple-weighted USAGA Open, with a CR of 71.3 and a SL of 132, when he obtained CSRs of:
 - $CSR \#8 = (82 - 71.3) * 113 / 132 = 9.2$
 - $CSR \#9 = (79 - 71.3) * 113 / 132 = 6.6$
 - $CSR \#10 = (78 - 71.3) * 113 / 132 = 5.7$

For every five (5) competitive score ratings earned, the highest rating is removed from the overall rating calculation. Once a player has posted at least four(4) scores and associated CSRs, the golfer is eligible for ranking.

- Joe Golfer earned the following 19 competitive score ratings from the ten scores shot (remember three scores were double-weighted and three were triple-weighted) - 12.4, 16.3, 9.4, 11.4, 12.0, 12.0, 11.1, 11.1, 14.6, 14.6, 9.2, 9.2, 9.2, 6.6, 6.6, 6.6, 5.7, 5.7, 5.7. The three highest ratings can be removed since Joe posted 19 total CSDs. For this calculation, **16.3 and both 14.6s** are removed.

Joe's Overall Rating = 10.8 (Joe's total competitive score ratings used in the calculation are $12.4 + 9.4 + 11.4 + 12.0 + 12.0 + 11.1 + 11.1 + 9.2 + 9.2 + 9.2 + 6.6 + 6.6 + 6.6 + 5.7 + 5.7 + 5.7$)/16 = **10.8**)

Please note that the player's Overall Rating (OR) listed in the Ranking System is in units reflective of his or her average competitive score rating, rounded to the nearest tenth. The lower the number, the better the player ranking.

3.5 Weighting of Tournaments

Each accredited event is classified by the USAGA CRC as a Level I, Level II or Level III event in accordance with the event classifying protocol established by the CRC. Ranking scores posted in all Level I events carry double-weighting, while single-weighting is applied to all Level II and III events. The season-ending premiere USAGA Open Championship receives triple-weighting.

3.6 Exemption Structure

USAGA uses an exemption structure that provides priority entry status and associated value to the highest-performing players with disabilities, both overall and within their distinctive sport class, for participation in the USAGA Open Championship. The exemption structure comprises three different types of exemptions, all of which are earned through high-performance at ALL of the various USAGA accredited tournaments staged throughout the United States. The three exemption types and value associated with each are listed below:

- **Special Exemptions** – A ***“Special Exemption”*** is earned to a USAGA Open Championship when a player achieves the highest overall ranking (using USAGR™) at a USAGA accredited Level I event. A ***“Special Exemption”*** is also awarded to the highest-rated female player in each Level I Event. The value of a ***“Special Exemption”*** is top priority entry status for the player along with a 100% paid entry fee into the USAGA Open Championship.
- **Regular Exemptions** – A ***“Regular Exemption”*** is earned to a USAGA Open Championship when a player achieves the 2nd highest overall ranking at a USAGA accredited Level I event, OR the highest ranking at a Level II or Level III accredited event (using USAGR™). A ***“Regular Exemption”*** is also awarded to the highest-rated female in Level II and Level III Events. The value of a ***“Regular Exemption”*** is 2nd highest priority entry status for the player, behind only that of ***“Special Exemption”*** status, along with a \$200 entry fee credit into the USAGA Open Championship.
- **Conditional Exemptions** – A ***“Conditional Exemption”*** is earned to a USAGA Open Championship when a player achieves the 3rd highest overall ranking at a USAGA accredited Level I event, OR the 2nd highest ranking at a Level II or Level III accredited event (using USAGR™). A ***“Conditional Exemption”*** is also awarded to the overall “Net Score” winner at any USAGA accredited event regardless of event classification level, with “Net Score” being defined as gross score minus course handicap. A ***“Conditional Exemption”*** will also be awarded to the top-3 ranked players in each of the 14 different disability sport classes as of September

1. The value of a “**Conditional Exemption**” is 3rd highest priority entry status for the player, behind “**Special and Regular Exemption**” status, along with a \$100 entry fee credit into the USAGA Open Championship.

3.6.1 Summary of Exemptions Structure

- Players may earn valuable Exemptions to the season-ending USAGA Open Championship through participation and performance in up to 19 Accredited Events in the United States sanctioned by the USAGA Competition Ranking Committee (CRC).
- Three different types of Exemptions will be granted by USAGA that consist of: 1) **Special Exemption that provides top-priority entry status** and a fully-subsidized tournament entry fee, 2) **Regular Exemption** that provides 2nd highest priority entry status and a \$200 credit toward the tournament entry fee, and 3) **Conditional Exemption** - that provides 3rd highest priority and \$100 credit toward tournament entry fee).
- In order to receive Exemptions, organization hosting event must be a USAGA Member Chapter in good standing (paid dues); ***events run by non-member organizations can still have their event accredited and qualify for entry into the ranking system in 2019, but NO exemptions will be granted to non-member organizations or member not current on their dues.***
- Maximum of 10 Special Exemptions will be granted to the 5 Level I Events (5 Men's & 5 Women's Overall Champions).
- Maximum of 33 Regular Exemptions granted to Level I, II and III Events (5 LI runner-ups, 14 LII & LIII Champs, and 14 LII and LIII Women's Champs)
- Maximum of 83 Conditional Exemptions granted (5 LI 3rd place, 14 LII & LIII runner ups, 45 top-3 ranked in each Sport Class plus Women's division, and 19 "Net" Event Champions).
- The **USAGR™** System ranks true player performance in Accredited Events, assigns higher importance through "double-weighting" to Level I Events, and awards Accredited Event "top-performers" with highly-valuable exemptions to the highly-valued (triple-weighted) season-ending **USAGA OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP**.
- The ultimate competitive pathway is completed when, at the conclusion of the USAGA OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP, a prestigious 30-player USAGA United States Para-Golf team based on player performance throughout the year, per player sport class, is named and honored, and the USAGA Cup is awarded to the nation's highest overall-ranked male and female players.
- The USAGA Exemption System promotes increased player participation in events held at the national, regional and local level by its Members who comprise the grass-roots operations of the competitive disabled golf industry in the USA.

3.7 Reporting Requirements of USAGR™

When an authorized USAGA Ranking official is not present to collect data from a particular accredited event, the Tournament Directors of such accredited events or individuals appointed by them, should follow specific reporting requirements listed below:

- Tournament Directors will directly email official results (scores and other pertinent data) within 48 hours following the conclusion of their accredited competition to the USAGA “CRC”.
- Should USAGA “CRC” need to contact a tournament director for clarification, a reply must be received within seven (7) days or the results may not be included in USAGR™ System.
- If results are sourced from the internet they will be verified against the results provided by the Tournament Director.
- Tournament Directors have a limited amount of time to return results in order for them to be included in the USAGR™ System. This will ensure that USAGR™ System remains accurate. Players should encourage event results be submitted as soon as the competition concludes.
- If necessary, any amendments to the USAGR™ System will be made upon results entry.

National ranking results will be maintained and posted on USAGA’S website only by the USAGA CRC.

3.8 Updating & Reporting

- In most cases, rankings will be updated within 7 days after each accredited event.
- Rankings will not be weighted by recent play.
- The results of all accredited events are used for ranking purposes, are added and incorporated into the national USAGR™ System, and are made available on USAGA’s website.
- The final Rankings for any given year are compiled immediately upon completion of the USAGA Open.
- The **USAGA Cup** is awarded to the overall number one ranked female and male players using **USAGR™** upon conclusion of the USAGA OPEN™.

4.0 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS(FAQs)

1) Does the USAGR™ affect the WR4GD world ranking system being advocated by the USGA in any way?

No. USAGR™ is totally unrelated to WR4GD. Tournament Directors may opt to participate in USAGR™ regardless of whether or not their event is considered to be a WR4GD event eligible for world ranking points.

2) How many scores must a player post in accredited events before that player is ranked?

“4” competitive score ratings (CSRs) are needed before a player can be ranked, meaning 4 posted scores in a single-weighted Level II or Level III accredited event, or 2 scores posted in a double-weighted Level I event. Also, all scores posted in the USAGA Open are triple-weighted.

3) Is it better to have a higher or lower overall rating number?

Players are ranked by USAGR™ based on their overall rating number. Much like a USGA Handicap Index, the lower rating number reflects a better player. For example, a player with an overall rating of 2.3 will be ranked “ahead” of a player with an overall rating of 3.6.

4) Are all competitive scores posted in accredited events used by USAGR™?

Every competitive score posted by a player in an accredited event will receive a competitive score rating (CSR). However, for every “5” CSRs posted for each player, the highest CSR (remember low means best) will be removed and not included in the player’s overall rating.

5) Does USAGR™ rank players based on their disability type/impairment level or overall regardless of disability type/impairment level?

Both. USAGR™ can rank players overall or by their disability type/impairment level as defined by 14 separate sport classes.

6) Are Accredited Events required to run their individual tournaments using the 14 different sport classes and the recommended distance guidelines for each sport class in order to be eligible for USAGR™ and the USAGA Exemption System?

No. Tournament Directors have the flexibility to use divisions as they see fit for their individual events. However, each player must be classified into one of the 14 sport class categories when their performance CSRs are recorded into USAGR™. USAGA representatives will assist Tournament Directors in player classification when necessary.

7) If 2 players play from different distances (tee boxes) but have established identical overall ratings are they considered “tied” in the rankings, and, if so, how is the tiebreaker broken for purposes of determining the USAGA United States Para-Golf team or winners of the USAGA Cup?

Yes, they would be tied even though they played from different tees. An overall rating takes into account both the player’s actual scores posted and the level of difficulty of the course played. For tiebreaking purposes of determining the USAGA United States Para-Golf team or winners of the USAGA Cup, preference is given to, in chronological order: 1) the player who participates in the USAGA Open, 2) the overall rating obtained during play at the USAGA Open, 3) the overall rating obtained during the final round of the USAGA Open, 4) the player who has posted the greater number of competitive score ratings (CSRs) during the season, and 5) a coin flip.

8) How can an Accredited Event run by an Organization that is “not” a USAGA Member become eligible to receive the valuable Exemptions to the season-ending USAGA Open?

Contact USAGA, join the Alliance, and pay the required dues.

9) If a Round is shortened to 9 holes, can the score be used in USAGR™?

No. Only 18-hole scores posted in accredited events are used in **USAGR™**.

10) If a player earns a Conditional Exemption in an accredited event, and later earns a more “valuable” exemption, such as a Special or Regular Exemption, what happens?

Player may use the “most valuable” exemption earned.

11) How long do I have to accept and redeem an earned exemption?

Players have 30 days from the date of notification to accept a granted exemption, or until September 1 of that year, whichever comes first, to secure his or her priority entry status. Players may still use earned exemptions after the 30-day period up until the tournament entry deadline, but their priority entry status will be lost and their entry may depend on availability. Exemptions earned can NOT be carried over to the next season.

12) Can I still sign up and play in the season-ending USAGA Open if I do not earn an Exemption during the season?

Yes, based on availability. The USAGA Open Championship is open to all golfers with a disability that meet the disability eligibility criteria established in this manual, however, priority entry status is enjoyed by the players earning exemptions that accept their exemptions within the 30-day notification period discussed above.

5.0 CONCLUSION

After nearly 5 years of collaboration with many leaders in the United States competitive and recreational disabled golf industry, USAGA proudly publishes this ***USAGA Ranking and Competition Standards***® manual. This manual provides guidelines and standards that can be used by organizations running golf events in the United States for golfers with disabilities, allows ALL golfers with disabilities to participate in a fully-inclusive, fair and equitable ranking system, and provides a competitive pathway, regardless of disability type, impairment or skill level, with obtainable valuable exemptions, for maximum personal achievement.

USAGA believes these standards and ranking system will unite the various organizations across our nation that run events for golfers with disabilities, promote competition at all skill levels and within different sport classes, accurately identify the nation's best players amongst the different sport classes, and ultimately improve outreach efforts to carry out the shared mission of introducing more people with disabilities to the wonderful game of Golf.



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