

Keeping Scorecard Statistics, How This Helps Your Game

Most of us join a handicap site to post our scores in order to obtain a handicap. Tracking our scores, and establishing a handicap is a good thing, but can keeping track of other information about each round really help improve our game? Let me put it a little differently by asking a few questions. What are the specific weak spots in your game? What are the strengths in your game? More importantly which clubs do you need to focus on at the driving range, or the chipping / putting green from week to week to make the best improvements? What is your best and worst putting range? Do any of your clubs behave abnormally which may indicate the need for adjustments? If so how do you know? What about the weather, how does it impact your gameplay? The list can go on and on, but there is absolutely no way to answer these questions unless you keep good scorecard statistics. Of course this is only necessary if you really want to improve your scores right? Absolutely, it is a must!

So now you know a little about why the pros OBSESS over their statistics. Keeping good scorecard statistics is really the only way anyone can answer most of these questions. In fact it will do more than you realize in helping you move forward in your game improvement. Statistics will tell you exactly where you need to focus your efforts. Not only that, but they can reveal to you specific patterns that are developing from week to week, month to month, and they can also reveal anomalies about your clubs.

These simple notations on your card are really pretty easy to list. The best way to do this is to start simple, and build on your notations as you go. Be sure to use notations that make the best sense for you, and ensure that the information can be easily recognized, especially when referring to your scorecard weeks, or even months later. You can start by simply keeping the number of putts, fairways hit, and greens in regulation. These simple stats are already a part of the hole-by-hole entry system on GHIN, so use them when you can. It takes just a little more time to enter the information, but it is well worth it.

I will share with you some of the other information I use, but again this is just my method of notation. It works for me, and it keeps evolving, but you may find a better way for you. It is okay to experiment, but settle on a method that works for you, and whatever method you do choose to use, stick with it, because it really will help!

I started simple by noting the number of putts in the lower left hand corner of the score box for each hole. I listed the fairway hit by using a dot on the bottom line of the score box of the hole. If I missed the fairway I used an L for left, R for right, or TH for through (that told me I hit it straight but it went through a dogleg). I also listed the green hit in regulation for the hole by putting an X next to the fairway notation. If I missed the green I used an L, R, S for sand, SH for short, or OV for over. This told me how I missed the green and where. These simple notations gave me some basic information, and told me where I was missing things. It told me how my drives were doing, and a little about my approach shots, but then I realized I needed a few other pieces of information to help fill in some of the blanks.

I added the initial putt distance in the lower right hand corner of the score box for each hole. Then in the two boxes below the score box, I added the final approach distance, the club used for the approach, and on the par 5s the club used for the layup. I moved the fairway and green notations from the bottom line of the score box, to the bottom line of the approach club boxes (I found the fairway and green notations easier to read if they were near the bottom). I also added 'P'unch, 'B'lade, or 'C'hunk notations next to the club used to let me know if I had to make a punch shot, or if I miss-hit it. I discovered I had some interesting information. Now I could see the approach distance, what club was used for the shot, how I hit it, and where it went. This told me how consistent I was with each approach club, and let me see the anomalies. Over time this showed definite patterns if a club was consistently misbehaving. Sometimes it is the arrow and not the Indian, and maybe some of those clubs are in dire need of loft and lie adjustments. This kind of information can help you see just that, if so, come see me, and I'll make sure all your clubs are nicely graduated (btw... I have built and adjusted hundreds of sets over the years, and I have RARELY found a set that was evenly graduated, with the exception of sets that were actually adjusted by someone else).

The initial putt distance revealed a couple other meaningful pieces of information. First it was an indicator of how accurate my approach shots were if I hit the green in regulation. If I am seeing Xs with long putting distances I know I need to work on my approach accuracy, and I also know which club I need to work with, because of the approach distance and club notations. Secondly if I see 2 putts with initial putt distances inside of 10 feet, or if I see 3 putts from 20+ feet, I know what type of putting I need to work on. If I see one putts in this area, then I know how well my practice is working, and to stay with the putter that is working best for me.

Just by adding these small pieces of information, I discovered a volume of helpful knowledge about my game. I could see at a glance the areas that needed work, and more of the specifics of what clubs I needed to work with on the range, and what type of putts to practice on the putting green, instead of just putting from hole to hole. Of course I always practice the wicked breaking 4 to 6 footers first thing before every round, but now I know what putts to work on after that, because of the putting distance notation.

Even though I had some good information, there were still a few holes, and there always seems to be if you are really dedicated to improve. I recently added a couple other little tidbits. In yet another box below all the others I added any shot that I gave to the field. In other words the culprits that caused any extra strokes on the hole. I use DR if it was the drive, AP if the culprit was an approach, CH if it was a chip, a / if it was a putt, and a P if it was a penalty. If I pared the hole, but missed an easy birdie putt I use (/) to indicate the miss. I didn't actually give a stroke away, but I should have made that putt. I have found this info to be helpful in analyzing my game management techniques. If I see strokes given away consistently on certain holes I play allot, or certain types of holes, or in certain types of weather, then I can see that I may need to rethink the way I play that hole, or that type of hole. Maybe I need to use a different club off the tee, play to a better distance, or position things a little better to get on the green. Maybe just play to a certain spot on the green instead of attacking the pin, so at least I am on the green

in regulation. This type of info can help you rethink some of your game strategies, and help you see where to make better game management choices.

Also, if I tee off on a par 4 or par 5 with something other than my driver, I note that club somewhere at the bottom in “()”, else the driver is assumed.

Finally I added weather info about the day by noting somewhere on the card the temperature, and wind (direction from, and velocity). Why is this important? Well why did I use a 6I to approach a hole when I normally use an 8I for that hole, oh yes, the wind was 10-15 mph from the North and I was hitting into the teeth of it, or maybe the wind was calm, and the temperature was 55 to 60 degrees during the time I played the round, so I needed more club to get there. A third scenario could be that the temp was 80 degrees, and the wind was calm, oh yes, I hit the drive L in the trees, and I see a 5IP notation... I remember, I had to punch out of the trees. As you can see, little notations like this can help you reconstruct your round, and render the info you need to properly analyze your game.

In any case hopefully this little exercise has helped you see the importance of keeping good scorecard info, and the difference it can make in revealing the areas that need the most improvement. Again this is just a method I use, but one I find helpful. It is important for you to find one that works well for you. If you will find a simple system that works, then I can assure you that by sticking with it, you will discover exactly where to focus your practice efforts. By doing this your game can't help but improve, and when your game improves, the level of fun and enjoyment is multiplied exponentially. And isn't that the reason we're out there? Fairways and Greens my friends...

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