

GAM/USGA Course Rating Process



What to expect from a GAM Course Rating Team

1

Scheduling

GAM retains a master expiration list to notify clubs of due course ratings and will reach out to your facility to schedule a time that is mutually available for the club and GAM's course rating teams. Once scheduled, ratings are assigned to volunteer captain(s) who lead and oversee the days of fieldwork. Prior to the first day of fieldwork, the captain may contact you to confirm details and inquire about things such as changes made since the last rating, common course data, and maintenance practices.

2

Length Verification (Measurement)

GAM's standard measuring team consists of four raters. For a standard 18-hole routing, the team will measure all holes sequentially as one team starting at the designated time (generally around 8:30 a.m.). It is highly preferred that the club provide a 30-minute block to tee times behind this designated starting time to minimize impacts to your golfers. The measuring team moves around the golf course at or ahead of the pace of play and require three carts for maximum efficiency.

On measuring day it is extremely important that the tee markers for each tee are placed on the teeing pad where they are for standard, normal play. The length measurement of the golf course is completed with precise techniques and it is the most impactful factor towards the final Course Ratings and Slope Ratings issued. The captain(s) will also briefly meet with a club administrator or the superintendent on site at each fieldwork visit to confirm some observations and details.

GAM asks that the club provide the rating team lunch following the completion of fieldwork. Following lunch, it is asked that the club provide a tee time for the team. During this playthrough, the team takes note of any missed observations and adjusts as necessary.

3

Course Rating

On rating day, each team of raters completes a formal evaluation of 9 holes of the golf course, starting on each nine at the designated starting time (generally about 8:30 a.m.). A team consists of one rater for each rated tee for each gender. For example, most 18-hole golf courses require 12-16 raters to complete all required evaluations. Rating teams move approximately at the pace of play while on the course, completing nine holes in 90 to 150 minutes depending on complexity. Each rater requires their own golf cart to gather data throughout the assigned holes. Again, on rating day, it is highly preferred that the club provide a 30-minute block to tee times behind the designated starting time to minimize impacts to your golfers while on the course.

When raters return from the course, they calculate the individual obstacle ratings from the data collected and complete their paperwork. They also perform checks over their sheets to validate accuracy, before handing them over to the captain for processing.

GAM asks that the club provide the rating team with lunch following the completion of fieldwork. After lunch, it is asked that club provide tee times for the team to play the golf course. The post-rating playthrough is an important part of the Course Rating System. The team takes note of any missed observations from the morning from the vantage point of a player and as needed makes modifications to their observations.

4

Processing and Publishing

Following the completion of the on-course fieldwork, the captain agglomerates the data from the individual rating sheets. They also provide thorough review for accuracy in data and calculations. The final documents are then forwarded to the GAM Staff for processing. GAM staff again perform review of the data collected, and then enter it into the USGA's course rating data portal. Each yardage, effective playing length correction, and obstacle value from each rater's Form 1 are entered for the system to calculate Course and Slope Ratings for each tee and gender. At this point, staff run various reports to ensure there are no inconsistencies. After running these reports, the final Course and Slope Ratings are sent to the club for review. Unless a large data discrepancy is found, these ratings are issued for publishing.

The club has several options to publish their new ratings. The ratings can be made active in the current season through immediate publishing, or the ratings may be published at a scheduled date in the future. The most common and default option, however, is for the ratings to be published in the next offseason to avoid confusion in regard to score posting and printed scorecards. If GAM is not notified of a preference otherwise, new ratings will be scheduled to be activated prior to the next active season (generally in March).