

ABA HANDICAP SYSTEM

The American Boccelism Association uses a simple handicap system as an aid in seeding players in large open tournaments and to create fair matchups between members of the various chapters during the National Invitational Tournament. Lower handicap numbers indicate stronger players, and the handicaps of very good players will be negative numbers.

To calculate a handicap, take the two highest scores from the player's four most recent cases. Qualifying cases must be full-length, eight dalrymple cases played as part of a chapter's regular season or during any tournament event. Average the two high scores and subtract that average from the current ABA Victor Value, then multiply the result by 0.9 (this reduces handicap volatility). The Victor Value is the average winning score from every regular season case in the ABA database; as of May 14th, 2010, the Victor Value is set at 31.4, so the handicap formula would be:

$$(31.4 - (\text{High Score Average})) \times 0.9 = \text{Handicap}$$

If a player has less than four cases recorded then the High Score Average would be based on the best two out of three recorded scores or both recorded scores if only two cases have been played. If a player has only one recorded score then that score is averaged with the current Marker Score. The Marker Score is an integer based on the average score of every first-time player in the ABA database; as of May 14th, 2010, the Marker Score is set at 20. First-time players carry the Novice's Default Handicap, which is calculated using the Marker Score in the place of the High Score Average; as of May 14th, 2010, the Novice's Default Handicap is set at 10.3.

By using a small number of the most recent scores, the system allows new players to improve their handicap quickly as they gain experience and develop their skills; this does leave the system vulnerable to "sandbagging" by established players, but the ABA depends on the integrity of its membership and the desire of every player to compete at the highest level possible. Because of this vulnerability, however, the NIT Tournament Commission will generally look at players' complete statistics when putting together the Tournament Schedule, and if there is a notable discrepancy between the current handicap and a player's overall numbers they may make inquiries to discover if there is an injury or some other medical or personal issues to take into consideration.

One other important note is that the handicaps are intended to be used to create seedings and matchups, not as predictors or indicators of an expected point differential in a specific case. A player who loses a case outright does not win or get any credit if they "beat the spread," though of course they might be able to collect on wagers based on that result.

The ABA periodically updates the Victor Value and the Marker Score, but these changes are usually quite small, so handicaps submitted to the organizers of ABA sanctioned events using older values will be accepted in good faith absent other suspicious documentation and behavior. To check on updates to the values or get answers to any other questions about handicaps and the handicap system just contact your nearest ABA official, or you can always drop a line to the Friendly Folks at ABA Headquarters. We're here to help.