

## From Tee to Green and all Between: **PSYCHOLOGICAL**

Over the past year we have discussed the different Obstacle Factors and how they affect Course Rating.

This month's topic is **Psychological**.

Definition: **Psychological** is an evaluation of the cumulative effect of other obstacles on a player's score. The location of many punitive obstacles close to a target area creates uneasiness in the mind of the player and thus affects their score.



**PSYCHOLOGICAL** rating is not calculated by the Course Rating team. It is calculated using the numbers calculated by ALL of the other Obstacles: Topography, Fairway, Green Target, Bunkers, Recoverability & Rough, OB Extreme Rough, Water Trees and Green Surface.

All of the Obstacle Factors are calculated on a scale of 0 (Does not Exist) to 10 (Extreme Significance). Obstacles with less difficult to below average factors of 1-4 would not affect the **Psychological** rating. Once you get to above average (5 or above) significance, that is when the **Psychological** kicks in.

Even with that, there must be at least 3 factors of 5 of above, for either the Scratch or the Bogey player, for the calculation to kick in. The more factors above a 5, the more the hole is considered to "get into the head" of the golfer. Once you get to the highest factor of 10 even just one time in Obstacles, there would be an automatic assignment of 5 to Psychological, with 2 or more the factor starts at a 9.

Here are some examples:

- A slightly long pond to carry may not affect the **Psych** rating.
- A 120 yard pond, with Out of Bounds close to the landing zone probably will affect **Psych**. Add in some deep bunkers, a long shot to the green and you have even more **Psychological** factors.
- A long pond that the player has to hit a full, perfectly straight shot, giving a Water factor of 10 would start at with a **Psych** factor of 5.

In addition to the above calculations, the USGA Course Rating System also adds an extra **Psychological** factor for the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> hole of every golf course.

Dean Knuth, The Pope of Slope, has this to say about the inclusion of the **Psychological** factor:

*"Our research found that the average player will score higher on the first and 18th holes compared with the other holes on the interior of a golf course. Psychologically, the golfer always wants to start well on No. 1, and make up for all his bad holes on No. 18."* <http://www.popeofslope.com/courserating/whatsthis.html>

So the next time you are playing a course and wonder if the Course Rating Team thought about how intimidating a golf hole is, please know that we do. Luckily we let the computer do the calculating.

If you have any questions, please contact Gretchen Yoder, Manager of Handicapping and Course Rating  
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