

HANDICAPPING IN GNAS TARGET ARCHERY

The Grand National Archery Society issues and controls a Handicapping System to be used by Members..

The person in the club responsible for Handicapping is the Records Officer, who will help with any queries.

The purpose of **Handicapping**, as in all sports that have handicap schemes, is to enable competition between people of different ability, or using different classes of equipment, equalised on the basis of how well they perform when compared to their best performances. An incidental side effect is that it also allows each archer to see how well they are performing when they shoot different Rounds that are not directly comparable with one another.

Handicapping involves two stages.

First, each archer has to establish the value of their handicap, which is done by shooting several Rounds - at least three is required. Each Round must be shot on a club 'Target Day' or at a Tournament, and the shoot must be properly organised in accordance with the rules of Shooting, which also requires at least two people to be shooting. The Handicap is calculated by referring to the GNAS Handicap Tables - the rules explain how to do this, but many people simply give their score sheets to the Club Records Officer, who will do the calculation.

Secondly, the Handicap values of the individual archers are used to produce 'Adjusted Results' in Handicap Shoots, and once again the GNAS Handicap Tables are used to find the correct adjustments, which are different for each of the different Archery Rounds. This calculation will be performed by the shoot organiser. The shoot will be won by the archer who shoots best when compared with their peak performances.

So...

- **Shoot** Lots of Rounds
- **Shoot** the Rounds that can give you a First Class rating - that's ones which start with the longest distance you are required to shoot for your gender and age group
- **Record** the scores properly, meaning someone else must write down your score for you, and the score must be signed for by yourself and by a witness
- **Give** your score records to the Records Officer

In addition to the Handicap System, archers can also take part in the Classification Scheme.

The GNAS Classification Scheme is a scale of progressive gradings that requires archers to achieve different levels of scores, which depend on gender, age-group and bow-style. For each gender / age / bowstyle grouping, the higher the grading, the further you have to shoot. And the more technically sophisticated your bow-style, the bigger the score you need to get to achieve the grading. You can achieve the lower and intermediate grades at quite short distances for your gender or age, but as you get better the bar is set higher and you can only achieve the higher grades at maximum distance for your gender / age group. And if you get really spectacularly good, you can only achieve the two top gradings at major tournaments.

The Grades, from low to high, are...

Unclassified - Third Class - Second Class - First Class - Bowman - Master Bowman - Grand Master Bowman.

Classifications and Handicaps are kept separately for Outdoor and Indoor archery. Both are based on the best three scores achieved in a Season, and both can be revised upwards during the course of the season if the archer improves on previous scores. Classifications and Handicaps are only valid for one year; at the end of each year the best scores should be reviewed, and a final Handicap and Classification worked out - which then stands for the next twelve months, unless the archer manages to improve during the next year's season. If at the end of the following year's season the best scores are less than they were in the previous year, the Handicap and Classification is adjusted downwards when the final values are calculated.

The Classification Scheme Table is published by GNAS and is available to download freely from the GNAS website <http://www.gnas.org.uk> as part of the Administrative procedures of the Rules of Shooting (at the time of writing these notes, the place to look is on the Documents page of the GNAS website, and find the **Amendments to Rules of Shooting and SAPs 2008**). The Handicap Tables on the other hand are the copyright of the person who devised the Handicap scheme, and can only be obtained by buying them in printed form, either from the GNAS Office, or an archery shop.

Both Handicap and Classification give a reliable framework to help each archer gauge whether they are improving, and compare how well they are doing against other archers, irrespective of whether they are the same or different gender, or different age, or are using a different type of bow.



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