# **Handicaps & Classifications**

The archery calendar is separated into overlapping indoor and outdoor seasons. The indoor season runs from 1st July to 30th June, and the outdoor from 1st January to 31st December. Handicaps and classifications are maintained separately for each season, but the rules are similar for both.

## New Archers

New archers will not receive a classification or handicap until they have submitted at least three separate ‘scored rounds’ to the club’s records officer.

## So, what is a ‘scored round’?

You’ve probably heard other archers talking about shooting an ‘Albion’ or a ‘National’ for example. The official list of available rounds can be found in the ArcheryGB Rules of Shooting. You will also find the rounds listed on the score boards at the field. Each round consists of shooting a number of arrows at several distances. For example, a ‘National’ involves shooting 4 dozen arrows at 60 yards followed by 2 dozen at 50 yards. The table of rounds details which distances and number of arrows are required in each case. The basic idea is simply to record the score you achieve during the round and submit them to the records officer who will use them to update your personal record. There are a few extra rules that you need to follow when shooting a scored round:

1. The round must be shot starting with the longest distance. So, for a National, the 48 arrows at 60 yards are shot first, then 24 at 50 yards.
2. You are only allowed 6 arrows as ‘sighters’ at the longest distance before you shoot.
3. Sighters cannot be scored. I’ve seen a number of people shoot their 6 sighter arrows and say ‘I like those, I’ll start scoring with my sighters’. Sorry, the rules explicitly disallow this.
4. Shoot a round with someone else and have them mark your score while you mark theirs. If you want to claim club records, the round must be shot under competition conditions, you must have shot with someone else, and you must submit the score on paper, in blue or black ink, signed by your target companion for verification.

## How do I score?

Hopefully you were shown how to score during your beginner’s course. If you’re unsure, just ask a more experienced archer at the field. They will be happy to show you. You can buy score books from archery suppliers or print your own, and you can usually find some in the shed

## What should I do when I’ve shot and scored the round?

You should submit your score to the club’s records officer. Claims must be made with the original score sheet, duly countersigned by your target companion.

## Do I have to shoot rounds and submit scores?

Not if you don’t want to, it’s not a requirement. However, shooting scored rounds is a really good way to track your progress as you improve. You will move up through the classifications and get lower handicaps as you get better. You will also be able to participate in any handicapped tournaments that the club runs. The handicap system is designed to ‘level the playing field’, so beginners can compete on equal terms with Grand Master Bowmen. A high beginner’s handicap means you effectively get a large allowance added to your score which the experienced archers won’t get. The allowances are designed such that every archer, no matter what gender, bow style, round shot or classification will score 1440 if they shoot exactly to handicap. The winner is the person that shoots better than they normally do on the day. It’s also worth noting, even for the experienced archers amongst us, that it is your responsibility to send any scores you wish to be recorded to the records officer. It is not the record officer’s job to track down your scores or chase you for them. If you do not send in your scores they will not be recorded and your handicap or classification may suffer as a result.

## How is the handicap calculated?

There are tables which contain all of the rounds and possible scores. The handicap for each round is looked up in those tables. Lower handicap numbers mean you are shooting better. Your first three round’s handicaps are averaged and rounded up to a whole number. This is your initial handicap. Each subsequent round you shoot can potentially lower your handicap further, but can’t make it higher. Let’s use an example: • Your first 3 round handicaps are 65, 63 & 60, giving an initial handicap of 63 (62.66 rounded up). • Your next round scores a handicap of 64. This is higher than 63 so no adjustment is made. • Your next round has a handicap of 56 – well done! This 56 is averaged with your current handicap of 63 and rounded up. This gives a new handicap of 60 (59.5 rounded up). The process now continues for each new round you shoot. Remember, your handicap can only improve during the year If this all sounds a bit complicated, don’t worry about it. The Records officer will be doing all the calculations; you just need to send in your scores.

## So, can my handicap ever go down?

At the start of each season (January 1st for outdoor, July 1st for indoor) your handicap is re-assessed. Your best three handicap rounds of the previous year are averaged to produce your starting handicap for the next season. So, if you have a year where none of your scores improve, your handicap may go up at the start of the next season, but that’s not going to happen to you, is it?

## What about this ‘classification’ system then?

The ArcheryGB classification scheme gives you progressive goals to aim for. Each level of the scheme you reach entitles you to a new achievement badge. In addition to monitoring your handicaps, the records officer also monitors your classification achievements. The classifications have different names for indoor and outdoor shooting.

**Outdoor classifications:** Archer, 3rd Class, 2nd Class, 1st Class, Bowman, Master Bowman and Grand Master Bowman.

**Indoor Classifications:** H, G, F, E, D, C, B and A.

Each score you achieve for a given round determines the classification you receive. Again, there are tables for each round, bow style and gender with the scores required to achieve each classification. Copies of the classification tables are available on the Shooting Administrative Procedures. Generally, the higher classifications can only be achieved when shooting rounds which have longer distances. You can’t achieve 1st class unless you shoot 80 yards or 70m for example (60 yards / 60m for ladies). For example,

A gentleman shooting a National round with a recurve bow scores 457. The table shows that 436 and above are 2nd class scores, so this is a 2nd class round.

You must shoot three qualifying rounds in a season to attain the classification. If you shoot two 2nd class rounds and a whole bunch of 3rd class rounds, your overall classification will be 3rd class. One more 2nd class score would have made you a 2nd class archer. Ooh, so close! Your classification will change immediately once you have shot three improved classes. At the end of the season, your best classification during that season will carry to the start of the following year.

Classification awards, in the form of badges, are given at club competitions so everyone can see how well you are doing. However, once you have achieved a classification (in any bow style, and at any point in the past) you cannot receive another badge at that level. For example, if you have ever been a 1st class recurve archer, but are now shooting longbow at 2nd class, you will not be awarded another badge if you become a 1st class longbow archer.

Classifications up to Bowman are handled by the club records officer. Master Bowman and Grand Master Bowman classifications are handled by ArcheryGB directly and can only be achieved during UK record status shoots or higher.

## Can my classification ever get worse?

Yes. Let’s pretend you’re lucky enough to be classified as Bowman as the start of the season. If you only shoot two Bowman class scores during the season and a few 1st Class scores you will be reclassified as 1st Class at the start of the next season.