STROKES IN A MATCH

How do you know how many strokes to give or take when you play in a match? And on what holes do you actually receive or give these handicap strokes?

In a singles match, the lower-handicap player plays at scratch and the other player receives the full difference between their Course Handicaps. To illustrate, suppose that Uncle Snoopy and Woodstock play a match. From the middle tees, Uncle Snoopy has a Course Handicap of 13, while Woodstock's is 20. Uncle Snoopy plays at scratch; Woodstock receives seven strokes from Uncle Snoopy (20-13 = 7). In a nine holes match Woodstock would receive ½ the difference in the handicaps (I.E. 3 ½ strokes)

Handicap strokes generally are doled out on holes where they most likely will be needed by players to produce a half in a match. Check your scorecard to find out where you'll get or give strokes.

Each hole has a stroke allocation number. The hole with the number 1 is the hole where you most likely will need a stroke to obtain a half. It's logical, then, that a hole with the stroke allocation number 18 is the hole where you are least likely to need a stroke.

Let's look at Uncle Snoopy and Woodstock's scorecard. Woodstock will receive his strokes on the seven lowest-numbered stroke holes-the holes with the handicap numbers 1 through 7. You will notice that Woodstock receives a stroke on each of the holes identified on the front nine as strokes, 1, 3, 5, and 7. On the back nine, he receives a stroke on holes marked 2, 4, and 6. <u>In a nine hole match on the front nine Woodstock would receive 1 stroke on holes marked as 1/3/5 and ½ a stroke on 7. On the back nine in a nine hole match Woodstock would receive 1 stroke on holes marked as 2/4/6 and ½ a stroke on 8.</u>

Looking at a sample scorecard like this one gives you a good idea of how the handicap strokes are actually allocated. If the difference in Course Handicaps is greater than 18, say 20, then the higher-handicap player receives two strokes on the number 1 and 2 stroke holes, and one stroke on each of the other 16.

As you can see, strokes are given out according to the relative difficulty of a hole in a way that provides a boost just when you need it the most. If you're like most golfers, you won't mind a helping hand that makes your match more fair-and more fun.