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GOLF AUSTRALIA
HANDICAPPING & COURSE RATING COMMITTEE
MEETING – THURSDAY 17 APRIL 2008
AT GRANGE GOLF CLUB, ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

SUMMARY

Present from the Committee: Ian Read (Chairman), John Buckley, Joan Coles, Murray Cropley, Lynne Ritchie, Barry Shepherd

In Attendance: Anne Lenagan (Chairman of the Board), Nick Green (Director – Game and Industry Development), Simon Magdulski (Manager – Rules & Handicapping), Therese Ritter (Manager – Championships)

1. Previous Meeting Summary

This was agreed.

2. Increase of Maximum Australian Men's Handicap and Plus Handicaps

The Committee recommended to the Board that the following two previously-deferred decisions be approved for implementation:

- ◆ To increase the maximum Australian Men's Handicap from 27.4 to 36.4.
- ◆ To remove the lower limit on Australian Women's and Men's Handicaps. If a player has an exact Australian Handicap of +0.6 or greater, their respective playing Australian Men's or Women's Handicap would be the rounded figure. (NB This playing handicap would be automatic – there would not be a process of state or national approval.)

3. Evaluation and Review of Slope-like Systems

Further to a request from the Board, the Handicapping & Course Rating Committee will establish two review groups with a view to working through the following:

1. Prepare a detailed evaluation of the various course rating systems which underpin US 'Slope' and 'Slope'-like handicap systems.
2. Prepare a detailed evaluation of US 'Slope' and 'Slope'-like handicap systems for comparison with the Australian Handicapping Systems.
3. Consider the logistics of implementation with a view to properly assessing feasibility.

(NB One review group will focus on course rating and the other on handicapping.)

It is envisaged that the review group draft findings will be completed by late October and presented to the November Board meeting of Golf Australia. A final report to be presented to the 2009 National Handicapping & Course Rating Forum.

4. Letter Received from New South Wales Golf Association dated 20/2/2008.

The Committee noted NSWGA's updated thoughts re the development of the Australian handicapping & course rating systems.

5. Consideration of Comments & Reports Received from New Zealand Golf re USGA Course Rating System

After considering the data and comments received from New Zealand Golf re the Committee's investigation of the USGA Scratch Course Rating System, it was decided to roll this investigation into the broader investigation outlined in item 3 above.

6. Player Competes in Competition Round Before Previous Handicap-Altering Score is Processed

After considering an array of queries and comments received regarding the new regulation governing situations where a player competes in a competition round before a previous-handicap altering score is processed, the Committee adopted a 'Q&A' document to assist clubs in administering this type of situation. This resource document is now posted at www.golfaustralia.org.au.

7. Guidelines for Administering Competitions of Between 9-17 Holes

Whilst it is not a new concept to handicap competitions of 9-17 holes, the recent widespread promotion of 9-hole golf by Golf Australia has led to a number of queries being raised which had not previously been contemplated. To assist clubs in administering competitions of this type, the Committee adopted a 'Q&A' resource document which provides new Decisions and guidance and is now posted at www.golfaustralia.org.au.

8. 'Manual' Re-assessment of a Player's Handicap

With a view to not only provide greater and tighter guidance for all users, as well as to enhance transparency and more closely align the women's and men's handicapping systems, the Committee considered the regulations governing 'manual' re-assessment of a player's handicap. As a result, the following regulations were adopted and will take effect at a date which is still to be confirmed (NOTE – this replaces "Re-Assessment" under Section 6 of the current Australian Women's Handicapping System, and Section 9 of the current Australian Men's Handicapping System):

GENERALLY – Re-Assessment of Handicaps

- (A) *Handicaps are intended to enable players to compete in handicap events on even terms. When a player is showing better form than their handicap or is showing an increased interest in playing better golf but is not returning cards which lead to an automatic reduction in handicap and the improvement, current ability, or some other justifiable circumstances make it apparent to the Handicap Manager/Committee that the player is over-handicapped, their handicap may be reduced. This should not be a penalty for lack of scores but solely to provide uniformity in handicapping among all who play handicap golf.*
- (B) *A player's handicap may also be increased for players who may be recovering from injuries, illness or other justifiable reason. Such alterations may be effected at any time because the circumstances which give rise to this unusual step may be such as to require fairly prompt action in fairness to all concerned.*
- (C) *When a player's returns give rise to suspicion they may be attempting to "manipulate a handicap", or are in serious breach of this System or the Rules of Golf or Etiquette (as contained in the Rules of Golf booklet), the Home Club is empowered to investigate the player's performances and, if considered warranted, temporarily suspend their Australian and/or Club Handicap.*
- (D) *A decision to increase, decrease or suspend a player's handicap under this Section must be ratified by the General Committee (Board of Directors) of the player's Home Club.*
- (E) *Notification of a decision to increase, decrease or suspend a player's handicap under this Section must be forwarded by the player's Home Club to the relevant State Association. Such notification must include copies of the accumulated information on which the decision was based. The Home Club is responsible for making the adjustment to Golf Link (or other handicap record system maintained by the Home Club).*
- (F) *Should the State Association or Golf Australia, on inquiry, be satisfied that a player's Australian Women's or Men's Handicap has not been determined in accordance with the Golf Australia Handicapping System or the player has acted in serious breach of this System or the Rules of Golf or*

otherwise detrimentally to the best interests of the game, it may withdraw that player's Australian Women's or Men's Handicap.

- (G) *The State Association or Golf Australia, on inquiry, may amend or reinstate a player's Australian Women's or Men's Handicap. A decision of the Golf Australia Handicapping & Course Rating Committee will be final.*
- (H) *Implementation Conditions: The following conditions are to assist clubs in implementing this Section and to provide uniformity in handicapping among all who play handicap golf:*
 - H.i *The General Committee (Board of Directors) must accumulate data, cards, scores, competition results, that would indicate handicap adjustments are necessary.*
 - H.ii *The General Committee (Board of Directors) must as a body, make a decision to increase or decrease a member's handicap as indicated by this Section of the Golf Australia Handicapping System.*
 - H.iii *No one person or group of persons, other than the General Committee (Board of Directors) has the power to increase or decrease a member's handicap when exercising a Club's authority under this Section.*
 - H.iv *At no time can the General Committee (Board of Directors) ever "freeze" a member's handicap that is being calculated in accordance with the Golf Australia Handicapping System, at a particular figure.*
 - H.v *Appropriate letters for use by clubs are available from State Associations wishing to implement this Section. The first letter advises the member that their handicap is to be reviewed due to better than reflected, or otherwise, performances. The second letter advises of the newly approved handicap.*

9. Analysis of Women's Handicapping & Course Rating Data

Murray Cropley updated the Committee on his progress to date on the commissioned project of analysing women's handicapping & course rating data. The Committee was positive about the development of the project, looked forward to continuing the work in this area, but needed time to take the detailed material away for proper consideration.

10. Next Meeting

Scheduled to take place during the Australian Interstate Series in Sydney in September.