



GOLF AUSTRALIA
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**GOLF AUSTRALIA
HANDICAPPING & COURSE RATING COMMITTEE
MEETING – THURSDAY 7 AUGUST 2008
BY PHONE**

SUMMARY

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

Apologies: Barry Shepherd

In Attendance: Simon Magdulski (Manager – Rules & Handicapping), Therese Ritter (Manager – Championships)

1. Previous Meeting Summary

This was agreed.

2. Freezing/Capping of Australian Handicaps – query from NSWGA

From 1 September 2008, the following statement will be included within the sections which deal with Re-Assessment of Handicaps in both the men's and women's Australian Handicapping Systems:

“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.”

With this clause in mind, New South Wales Golf Association has queried whether or not the system allows for a player's handicap to be capped at a certain figure.

The Committee determined that whilst there are certain differences between 'capping' and 'freezing', it is not permissible for a player's Australian Handicap to be capped at a particular figure.

It is the Committee's view that if such an allowance were to be made, it would not provide a net benefit to our handicapping systems.

3. Maximum Exact Handicaps – proposal from GSA

Golf South Australia has proposed to Golf Australia that:

“The maximum exact handicap limit for men be a much higher limit than 36.4.”

In generally discussing this proposal, it was noted that:

- ◆ If exact men's handicaps can not extend beyond 36.4, one 'good' round from a player who is 'artificially' limited to a handicap of 36 could see them reduced to a handicap they will find very difficult to play to. [Basically, the issue is whether a 'good' score should see a player's handicap reduced downwards from 36.4 or from some other higher figure (eg 40.2 if the exact handicap is able to float beyond 36.4).]
- ◆ As some clubs allow Club Handicaps beyond the maximum Australian Handicap limit, such clubs already effectively have a much higher limit than 36.4 for men.

- ◆ As some clubs allow Club Handicaps beyond the maximum Australian Handicap limit and some do not, there is an inequity in the way handicaps are handled at the higher end.

After consideration, the Committee took the following views:

- ◆ That as the maximum Australian Men's Handicap is already being increased from 27 to 36, any further allowance at the upper end would be an unwarranted step at this stage.
- ◆ A maximum handicap for women in all competitions of 45 and a maximum handicap for men in all competitions of 36 provides the appropriate balance between inclusiveness and maintenance of the integrity of handicap golf. To allow handicaps beyond these points would both provide a disincentive to improvement and be unfair to players with lower handicaps.
- ◆ The potential for inequity in the way handicaps are handled at the higher end needs to be addressed.

As a result, the following recommendations are to be put to the Board:

- ◆ That the maximum exact Australian Men's Handicap be maintained at 36.4, and the maximum exact Australian Women's Handicap be stipulated to be 45.4, and;
- ◆ That Exact Club Handicaps and Playing Club Handicaps no longer be allowed to extend beyond these points.

OTHER BUSINESS

4. Handicapping of Players Who Play both Right-Handed & Left-Handed

Following the recent receipt of a number queries relating to the handicapping options available to cater for players who wish to play golf both right-handed and left-handed, the Committee decided to review the relevant policy.

Effective immediately, the Golf Australia policy is as follows:

- ◆ A player will not be permitted to both have an Australian Handicap (for example for their stronger hand) and a Club Handicap (for example for their weaker hand). They may only have one handicap and this will be their Australian Handicap (provided they are eligible to hold an Australian Handicap).
- ◆ A player may return scores by playing from their weaker side – such scores must be used for handicapping purposes (provided these scores are otherwise eligible). A score returned as a result of both right-handed shots and left-handed shots must also be used for handicapping purposes (provided this score is otherwise eligible).
- ◆ It is recommended that previous scores returned by a player from their weaker side be added to the handicap record for their stronger side to complete one single handicap record (with this handicap being adjusted accordingly).
- ◆ Where a player decides to play from their weaker side for the purpose of increasing their handicap (ie where the player's intent is to return a poor score), the player will be considered to be manipulating their handicap and the relevant disciplinary sections of the handicapping system will apply.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 12 November 2008 in Sydney.