

Memo

To: CLUBS THAT JOIN GOLF LINK EITHER:
 ▫ Within a Reasonable Period Before 9 April 2010, or;
 ▫ After 9 April 2010

c.c.: Member States, GA Board, GA Handicapping & Course Rating Committee

From: Simon Magdulski

Date: 5 March 2010

Subject: Automatic Expansion of the Electronic Handicap Records at New Golf Link Clubs

Dear All,

As you will be aware, the First Package of Changes to the Men's & Women's Australian Handicapping Systems is to become effective on 9 April 2010. (Note: Full details of these changes can be accessed from the following page of the Golf Australia website – www.golfaustralia.org.au/newsandcommunication.)

On 9 April, Golf Link will calculate a new Australian Handicap for all players by using the existing scores in each person's Golf Link handicap record. For the vast majority of handicap players, their new handicap will be the average of the best 10 of their most recent 20 score differentials, multiplied by 0.96. (Note: The 'differential' is the difference between the player's gross score and the AMCR/AWCR, and is recorded in the 'Played To' column of their Golf Link record.) Remember there is no time limit within which these most recent 20 scores need have been returned; for example they may have been returned over a period of three months or three years.

Players with their COMPLETE handicap record in Golf Link

If a person has only just started playing handicap golf, it is unlikely that on 9 April they will have as many as 20 scores in their Golf Link handicap record. This is fine. The new method caters for this (see the table contained on the following webpage – <http://admin.golfaustralia.org.au/site/content/document/00007783-source.pdf>.)

If Golf Link contains all of a player's most recent 20 scores (or their COMPLETE handicap record), GA is not concerned if their new handicap is quite different to their old handicap. In such a case, Golf Link will be making a calculation based on COMPLETE information. And after all, if we were aiming to have everyone's new handicap be very similar to their old handicap, there would be no reason for changing the handicap calculation method.

Players with an INCOMPLETE handicap record in Golf Link

In the lead-up to 9 April, and in the period following 9 April, there will be a very small proportion of clubs who (despite having been affiliated to their State Association for a lengthy period) will be relatively new to Golf Link. It is likely that many members of these clubs will have only a small number of actual handicap rounds recorded in Golf Link (ie less than ten) even though they will have returned a large number of scores over time. As a result, moving forward Golf Link would have been calculating new handicaps for these players on the basis of INCOMPLETE information if it weren't for the preventative strategies we have designed. In many cases, this would otherwise have caused their handicaps to be distorted.

If your players have INCOMPLETE Golf Link handicap records (as described under the preceding heading) you should refer to the following series of QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

There is a Question & Answer included in the following pages which describes the preventative strategy we have designed to cater for your specific situation. These strategies involve the automatic addition of artificial scores to the Golf Link records of affected players. This will make the transition to the new handicap calculation method far more seamless.

How many clubs will have members with INCOMPLETE Golf Link handicap records (as described under the above heading: *Players with an INCOMPLETE handicap record in Golf Link*)?

As the clubs of over 96% of golfers had joined Golf Link well before 9 April, this is an isolated situation and will affect only a very small proportion of clubs. Nonetheless, we have paid close attention to designing various preventative measures so as to achieve a transition to the new handicap calculation method which is as seamless as possible. These measures will address the factors associated with being a club with members with INCOMPLETE Golf Link handicap records (as described under the above heading: *Players with an Incomplete handicap record in Golf Link*).

Q&A

QUESTION 1: If GA and Golf Link didn't have preventative strategies in place, what is an example of the sort of handicap distortion that would occur if a player's Golf Link handicap record was INCOMPLETE?

If GA and Golf Link don't take preventative action, an example of the problem that would occur would be with a player whose handicap is 10 when their club joins Golf Link (not long before 9 April). The player then scores poorly in three rounds played between the time their club joins Golf Link and 9 April and returns score differentials of 21, 23, and 24. The new calculation method will never take account of a player's previous handicap (and it won't be able to consider previous scores if these scores are not entered into Golf Link). In this case, all Golf Link would have to work with (if it weren't for our preventative strategies) would be the INCOMPLETE record of three new scores. The new regulations dictate that Golf Link will select the best of these three score differentials (which is 21) and multiply it by 0.96 to get the new handicap (which will be 20.1).

However, the player's most recent 17 scores returned before their club joined Golf Link yielded differentials of 6, 8, 11, 14, 10, 9, 17, 11, 15, 8, 15, 17, 11, 14, 9, 7, and 19). If Golf Link had the COMPLETE record of the player's most recent 20 scores, it would calculate the handicap to be 8.6. Hence, an INCOMPLETE record (without the GA and Golf Link preventative strategies in place) would cause the player's handicap to be significantly distorted.

QUESTION 2: We joined Golf Link in January 2009 and we still have quite a few members who will have less than ten scores in their Golf Link handicap records. What should we do?

Every club to have joined Golf Link since 1 January 2009 will receive an email within the next week directly from Golf Link (so you will not need to take any action until you receive the email from Golf Link). The email will contain:

- A list of those of your members who have less than ten rounds in their Golf Link handicap records together with their current Australian Handicaps.
- Instructions on what actions need to be taken

You will need to review this list to ensure that all golfers will require artificial rounds created automatically by Golf Link. If entering artificial rounds for any of the members on the list will result in an inaccurate handicap, you will have to notify Golf Link which members to exclude. (For example, you should advise Golf Link if somebody listed is a new player whose Golf Link record is COMPLETE.)

If Golf Link does not hear back from you by Friday 19 March, artificial rounds will automatically be created for each of the listed players as follows:

- As many as are required for each player to have ten scores in their Golf Link handicap record (eg if John Smith has four scores in his Golf Link handicap record on 9 April, Golf Link will add another six scores).
- Each score will be identical and will have a differential (or 'Played To' value) which is equivalent to the player's current Australian Handicap as listed in the Golf Link email. For example, if the Golf Link email lists John Smith's handicap as 29.3, Golf Link will add the required number of scores to John's Golf Link handicap record, each with a differential of 29.

Note i: The Golf Link lists will not be restricted to include only players whose handicaps WILL be distorted by having INCOMPLETE handicap records. They will include any player who has less than ten rounds in their Golf Link handicap record (this covers for example any player whose Golf Link handicap record is COMPLETE but contains less than ten rounds, and any player whose Golf Link record is INCOMPLETE and contains less than ten scores but whose handicap would NOT be distorted).

Note ii: If your club joined Golf Link at the same time as it affiliated to your State Association, it will not receive the Golf Link email. This is because the Golf Link handicap records of your members will be COMPLETE and there will be no automatic need to add further scores. If you have any queries about this point please ring Simon Magdulski on (03) 9626 5023.

Note iii: If your club joined Golf Link prior to 1 January 2009 and you are particularly concerned that this problem may still affect you, please note the preventative procedure described in Question 3. If you are particularly concerned that it may affect more than fifteen of your members, you should email the Golf Link Helpdesk (help@golflink.com.au) with an estimate of the number of players you feel may be affected and the name of your club. Golf Link will either respond by sending the email described earlier in this question, or will advise of the limited number of players with less than ten scores in their Golf Link Handicap records.

QUESTION 3: We joined Golf Link before 1 January 2009. We think we still have a few members who have less than ten scores in their Golf Link handicap records. What should we do?

If you feel the handicaps of these players may be distorted as a result of having INCOMPLETE Golf Link handicap records, there is a function in your Golf Link system which will address this concern. On 9 April (or as soon as possible after this) you should apply the Golf Link 'Official Handicap Adjustment' function to each of these players' handicaps. If you would like further information on how this action should be performed, please check the Golf Link website after 9 April (Golf Link will be contacting all clubs shortly with further details on where to look for this information). The activation of this function will prompt Golf Link to automatically add multiple artificial scores to a player's handicap record (ten scores for a handicap decrease and twenty scores for a handicap increase). Each of these scores will have differentials (or 'Played To' values) equivalent to the desired handicap. The outcome will be the achievement of the handicap/s you are seeking.

QUESTION 4: If we join Golf Link on or after 9 April (or joined prior to 9 April but we haven't yet uploaded the handicaps of our members on to the Golf Link system), what will happen?

After contacting you with advice and instructions, Golf Link will construct handicap records containing ten artificial scores for each of your members. Each score will be identical and will have a differential (or 'Played To' value) which is equivalent to the player's current Australian Handicap. For example, if your current manual record of John Smith's handicap is 29.3, Golf Link will create a handicap record for John which has ten scores, each with a differential of 29.

Note: If your club joins Golf Link at the same time as it affiliates to your State Association, Golf Link will NOT construct handicap records containing ten artificial scores for each of your members. Whilst your records will be blank, they will nevertheless be COMPLETE.

QUESTION 5: We have members who have played many handicap rounds, however very few (or none) of their rounds are recorded in Golf Link. Are we able to manually enter enough of these members' old scores such that they will all have at least 20 scores in their Golf Link records?

Yes, you will need to enter an ad-hoc score through your Tier 1 or your Tier 3 system for each round each player has played. If you do this please ensure that all rounds are entered in correct chronological order. Whilst we are aware that some smaller clubs are doing this (and it is the most accurate solution), we certainly do not expect that clubs should have to do this. This is why we have designed the alternative measures described in previous Questions & Answers in this memo.

QUESTION 6: Our club joined Golf Link seven years ago but we have a few members who have only just been allocated handicaps and they have less than three scores in their Golf Link handicap records. As the new handicap calculation method is reliant on a player's handicap record containing three scores, does this mean the handicaps of these players will lapse if we don't do anything?

(Note: The procedure described in the answer to this question only applies in instances where the player is a member of a club that joined Golf Link before 1 January 2009.) No. Any player with either a lapsed or current handicap, but who has less than three scores in their Golf Link record as at 8 April, will automatically have three artificial scores added to their handicap record by Golf Link at the start of 9 April. These artificial scores will all have differentials (or 'Played To' values) equivalent to the player's rounded handicap. For example, a player with a rounded handicap of 29.3 on 8 April, but who has only one existing score in their handicap record, will have three scores added to their Golf Link record on 9 April each with a differential of 29.

QUESTION 7: Who should we contact if we have questions in relation to any of the above information?

You should contact Golf Australia.

Simon Magdulski
Manager – Rules & Handicapping

Email – simonm@golfaustralia.org.au
 Direct phone – (03) 9626 5023