



AUSTRALIAN MEN'S & WOMEN'S HANDICAP SYSTEM (Copyright)

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1. General

(A) Introduction

- (i) This Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System is the official Golf Australia regulatory code governing women's handicapping in Australia AND men's handicapping in Australia. Whilst it provides a single methodology for both women's handicapping and men's handicapping, it does not provide for single-gender handicaps. The Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System requires that Australian Women's Handicaps be determined in accordance with women's scores and standards, and that Australian Men's Handicaps be determined in accordance with men's scores and standards.
- (ii) The purpose of the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System is to achieve the following objectives:
 - ~ Provide a system that may be administered and applied uniformly and efficiently throughout Australia.
 - ~ Encourage participation in social and competitive golf amongst males and females of all ages, and foster golf as a game for life.
 - ~ Enable as many golfers as possible (males and females, amateurs and professionals, club members and non-club members) throughout Australia to obtain and maintain a fair handicap.
 - ~ Make the game of golf more inclusive and enjoyable by enabling golfers of all abilities to compete against each other on as equitable a basis as possible.
 - ~ Produce fair handicaps which reflect golfers' ability based on better performances and which may be applied validly and reliably from course to course and from different sets of tees on the same course.
- (iii) The System is based on the assumption that every player will endeavour to make the best score they can at each hole in every round they play and that they will report every required Eligible Score (in accordance with Section 1D) for handicap purposes, regardless of where the round was played. Players who fail to meet these requirements are considered to be operating outside the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System.
- (iv) Golf Australia delegates to its Member States the power to administer on its behalf the handicapping of all players who are members of Clubs affiliated with such States. **Any disputes shall be referred to Golf Australia whose decision shall be final.**
- (v) Any handicap administered by an affiliated Australian golf Club, and calculated in accordance with this system, is owned by Golf Australia.
- (vi) Whilst a professional golfer, or a player awaiting reinstatement to Amateur Status, may hold an Australian Handicap if they meet the various eligibility criteria, a committee is permitted to have a condition restricting entry to any (or all) event(s) it controls to Amateurs only (or to Professionals only). (Exception: Players awaiting reinstatement to Amateur Status (or players who are not Amateur Golfers) after having lost their Amateur Status by virtue of accepting a prize of excessive value in violation of Amateur Status Rule 3-2, or who played for prize money in a handicap competition in violation of Amateur Status Rule 3-1, are not eligible to hold an Australian Handicap.)
- (vii) Essential points of the System are that:
 - ~ All handicaps shall be calculated in accordance with the System as outlined below.
 - ~ All handicaps referred to in this System are stroke handicaps.
 - ~ Regular and accurate records of all eligible course performances be kept.
 - ~ There be uniform determination of the course rating of golf courses in Australia.
 - ~ The Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System be properly applied.

(B) Types of Australian Handicap

There are two types of Australian Handicap; an Australian Women's Handicap which is only available to female players, and an Australian Men's Handicap which is only available to male players. Where the term Australian Handicap is used within the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System, it is deemed to mean either Australian Women's Handicap or Australian Men's Handicap or both, as the appropriate context determines.

(C) Definitions

- (i) A **"Bona-fide Body"** is a formally constituted Club, association or group formed primarily for the purpose of conducting ongoing golf events, played in accordance with the Rules of Golf and appropriate local rules, or otherwise to administer golf for a defined area or group of golfers.
- (ii) The **"Home Club"** is the body which has primary responsibility for ensuring the proper administration of a player's handicap.
- (iii) The **"Marker"** is a female or male member of any golf club or golf association recognised by Golf Australia, or a person otherwise approved by the ~~club committee~~ Handicap Committee. The Marker must be able to verify to the Handicap Committee (if needed) that the player conformed with the Golf Australia regulations, the Rules of Golf, and the Club's Local Rules and By-Laws and that they played from the correct tees.
- (iv) **"Stipulated Round"** – The number of holes in a stipulated round is 18 unless a smaller number is authorised by the committee. (Rules of Golf – refer to definitions.)
- (v) A **"Competition Round"** is defined as one conducted by a recognised golf Club, its professional or agent, or other bona-fide body, for which trophies or prizes are awarded for golfing performance, or for which an official list of results is posted. (See also Section 1C(vii) and Section 1D(i).)
- (vi) ~~An "Extra-Day Score" is any completed stroke round not in competition and may be returned on any day of the week. A "Non-Competition Round" is a round which is not a Competition Round. (See also Section 1C(vii) and Section 1D(iii).)~~

(vii) [Section 1D establishes which scores are to be used for handicap purposes. Section 1D and other Sections refer to the term "Eligible Scores". An Eligible Score may only be used for handicap purposes if it meets the requirements of Section 1D.] Scores are "Eligible Scores" when returned either in Australia or overseas on a course with an official GA or USGA Course Rating and when they are:

- Scores made in Single Stroke, Stableford, and Par Competition Rounds or Non-Competition Rounds; or
- Scores made in Four-ball Stroke, Stableford, and Par Competition Rounds or Non-Competition Rounds; or
- Scores made in Team Stroke, Stableford, and Par events where each player plays ONLY their own ball as it lies (except to account for 'preferred lies' or 'tee up'). (Note: For team events of this type, the same handicap procedures apply as is described for four-balls in Section 1D(v).)

Note i: It is important to refer to Section 1D(iii) for further details regarding Scores made in Non-Competition Rounds.

Note ii: See Section 1D(vi), Section 9-1(ii), and Section 9-2(ii) for details of how to extend scores for handicap purposes from incomplete or complete Stipulated Rounds (as per the above bullet points) where the player has played 9-17 holes.

Note iii: See Section 9-1(i) and Section 9-2(i) for details of how to treat scores where the player has played less than 9 holes.

Note iv: Scores made in incomplete or complete Stipulated Rounds (as per the above bullet points) are Eligible Scores where the player has been disqualified for a technical Rules breach (eg failure to sign score card) and where the player has returned actual scores or Most Likely Scores for at least 9 holes.

Note v: The GOLF Link club code to cover ANY overseas course is 89999; such scores must be entered through the Ad-Hoc function.

The following are NOT Eligible Scores:

- Scores are not acceptable for handicap purposes when, as a condition of competition, the maximum number of clubs allowed is less than 14, or types of clubs are limited as, for example, in a competition that allows only iron clubs. Note: This does not apply to situations where the player, by choice, carries fewer than 14 clubs.
- Scores made in rounds where the player has started (or supplied an actual or Most Likely Score for) less than 9 holes.
- Scores made where the player has not played in accordance with the principles of the Rules of Golf (except for use of the Most Likely Score concept).
- Scores made where the player has played in an event which requires them to play a ball other than their own ball as it lies (eg ambrose, foursomes), except to account for 'preferred lies' or 'tee up'.

- Scores where the Requirement to Maintain the Overall Distance of a Rated Course has not been adhered with (see Section 1D(iv)).

(viii) A “Most Likely Score” is the score a player must post for handicap purposes if a hole is started but not completed. The Most Likely Score consists of the number of strokes already taken plus, in THE PLAYER’s best judgment, the number of strokes they would take to complete the hole from that position more than half the time. This number of strokes must not exceed two over net par for that hole (ie 0 Stableford points) even if the number of strokes already taken is more than two over net par.

- The listing of a Most Likely Score should be preceded by an “X” (for example X-5).
- There is NO limit to the number of unfinished holes for which a player must apply the Most Likely Score concept.
- Where a player returns a score card with an individual score missing, they should ideally be contacted for this information. If this is not realistic, the player should be deemed to have had net par for that hole (eg two Stableford points). Players should be educated to ensure returned score cards feature either actual scores or Most Likely Scores. THERE IS A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN A HOLE ON A SCORE CARD WITH A MOST LIKELY SCORE, AND HOLE THAT HAS BEEN LEFT COMPLETELY BLANK.
- In the unlikely event of a marker (or accompanying player) disputing the player’s assessment to the extent that the person disputing the score believes it is flagrantly inaccurate, the matter must be referred to the Handicap Committee for decision. If they feel the player is trying to manipulate then they can take further action. (Note: The Handicap Committee should also consider instances where a player is felt to be typically understating or overstating their Most Likely Score.)

(D) Scores for Handicap Purposes

(i) Competition Rounds

All Eligible Scores (see Section 1C(vii)) established in 18-hole ~~singles stroke (includes Par and Stableford)~~ Competition Rounds ~~played under the Rules of Golf at courses with either an ACR or a USGA Course Rating~~ shall be used for handicap purposes when the player is accompanied throughout their round by a Marker. However scores returned from corporate/trade days or the like, not played in a competition round but played in accordance with the Rules of Golf, may be used only if they will result in a handicap reduction. If there is only one player in a competition, the competition must still be processed for handicap purposes.

(ii) “Ball Competitions”

It is important that handicap golf be made as accessible as possible and as a result Golf Australia strongly encourages all clubs to conduct “Ball Competitions” on all days on which a course is open for general play. A “Ball Competition” is considered to be a competition in which players do not need to play within a formally-structured field, or conform with formally-structured tee times, in order to participate. The “Ball Competition” must be played in accordance with the Rules of Golf. To compete in a “Ball Competition” a player must register their name on the “Ball Competition” Entry List before starting their round.

- (iii) ~~When a competition limits the number of clubs that may be used to fewer than 14, only a score that will result in a handicap reduction shall be used.~~

Non-Competition Rounds

Eligible Scores (see Section 1C(vii)) made in Non-Competition Rounds are to be used for handicapping so long as the player has nominated prior to commencing their round that they will be submitting their score for handicapping, and provided they have been accompanied throughout their round by a Marker.

Note i: Each club Handicap Committee may choose to accept the scores from any eligible Non-Competition Round without pre-nomination if they believe this approach better suits their circumstances.

Note ii: Each club Handicap Committee HAS THE OPTION to require its members to submit scores from ALL of their Non-Competition Rounds.

If clubs decide to adopt the pre-nomination recommendation, it is for each club Handicap Committee to determine how it will require players to pre-nominate their round for handicapping. GA’s suggested options include:

- By having the player write their name in a Non-Competition Round Register/Book.
- By having the player write their name on a Non-Competition Round sheet (GA is aware that some large clubs already have such a sheet positioned on the pro shop counter).
- Via email or text message of the name and date to a designated official.
- By having the player place a piece of paper or the like (noting their name) in a box near the first tee (similar to the arrangement some clubs will operate for the lodgement of green fees).
- Such other effective means as determined by the club.

The following further points relate to Non-Competition Rounds:

- Non-competition scores MUST be submitted on a club score card as Stableford scores even if they have been played as Stroke or Par. (For players who play overseas, it is not necessary to return actual score cards, except where the Handicap Committee specifically requests of a player that actual score cards be returned.)
 - In order to enter required Eligible Scores from Non-Competition Rounds into GOLF Link, clubs should still use the 'competition' score entry function. This will enable the scores of multiple players to be entered in 'one hit'. Clubs may choose to title such rounds in such a way that clearly indicates the scores are from Non-Competition Rounds. If clubs wish, they may choose to process scores from Non-Competition Rounds with scores returned from a Stableford competition. (A club may choose to enter a score of one of its Home Club members into GOLF Link via the Ad-Hoc function.)
 - It is recommended that scores be processed through GOLF Link by the club at which the round was played. (Note: A player's Home Club may enter its members' away scores if necessary.)
- (iv) ~~When a player is disqualified, their actual score may be used for handicapping purposes, at the discretion of the Handicap Manager or Handicap Committee. Scores should be used when actual scores are known, but a Rules breach has caused disqualification, eg card not signed or handicap not recorded. (Note: See Section 9 for further related guidance.)~~

Requirement to Maintain the Overall Distance of a Rated Course

Once a club has had its USGA Course Ratings confirmed to it by its State Association, the following regulations will take effect:

- (a) Scores must not be handicapped when the length of the course played varies from the actual measured length of the rated course by more than 100 metres for an 18-hole round. Note: For a round of less than 18 holes, a pro rata length must be calculated; eg for a 9-hole round, the distance is 50 metres.
- (b) In order to maintain the playing characteristics of the course, and subject to the provisions of clause (a), the movable tee markers used to designate the Teeing Ground should not be placed more than 20 metres in front or 20 metres behind the relevant set of Permanent Plates.
- (c) Scores must not be used for handicap purposes when the tee markers, under normal circumstances, are placed outside the above area on more than three holes for rounds of 14-18 holes, or on more than two holes for rounds of 9-13 holes. (An exception applies for courses with permanent cyclical plate placements which have been approved by a State Association.)

(v) **Four-ball Scores**

~~(including mixed events) MUST be used for handicapping an individual player but only if the following requirements are met:~~

- ~~—The pair has a score of at least 42 Stableford points (6 up in Par or net 6 under in Stroke events).~~
- ~~—The individual player's score appears at least 9 times on the four-ball score card.~~
- ~~—The adjusted score (after the below method has been followed to create an individual score card) produces a handicap differential which is equal to or better than the individual player's handicap.~~

~~(GOLF Link Clubs will enter these scores as ad-hoc scores.)~~

~~Note i: WHERE AN INDIVIDUAL PLAYER'S SCORE IS TO BE HANDICAPPED (irrespective of whether the competition is played as Par, Stroke, or Stableford), IT MUST BE PROCESSED AS A STABLEFORD SCORE in accordance with the procedures contained within this regulation.~~

~~Note ii: If two identical net scores are recorded by partners on a hole, both scores are eligible to be used on an adjusted individual score card. However, if the first player to hole-out can be readily identified, the second player is deemed to have not recorded a score for that hole.~~

~~PROCEDURE FOR CREATING INDIVIDUAL SCORE CARD FROM FOUR-BALL SCORE CARD FOR HANDICAPPING PURPOSES:~~

- ~~—When a player has no handicap stroke on a hole and their score is not recorded on the four-ball card, they are given 1 Stableford point.~~
- ~~—On holes where a player receives 1, 2, or 3 handicap strokes and their score is not recorded on the four-ball card, they are given 1½ Stableford points.~~
- ~~—When a player's score counts on the four-ball card for a hole, they are given the appropriate number of Stableford points for that hole.~~
- ~~—When all the gaps in the card have been filled in, the points are totalled, and where a half appears in the total, the points total is rounded to the next lower whole number.~~

- All four-ball rounds (including mixed events) must be handicapped.

- All players will return an individual score for handicap purposes – not just those players who play well (scores for both partners should be listed on the same card). Note: This regulation does NOT require all players to hole out in four-ball competitions. This regulation allows for players to play four-ball events just as they always have done.
- This method requires all players to record an individual score on each hole. It does NOT necessarily require a player to hole out on each hole.
- For holes started but not completed, the new regulation requires the use of the Most Likely Score (see Definitions). The listing of a Most Likely Score should be preceded by an “X” (for example X-5).

The score obtained is recorded in the player's handicap record and treated in the same way as all singles scores for handicap purposes.

- (vi) Any stipulated round of 9-17 holes inclusive may be used for handicap purposes.—~~(Note: A Q&A document describing procedures for competitions of 9-17 holes has been published to provide assistance to committees conducting competitions of this type. It is posted on www.golfaustralia.org.au/)~~

Please note it is a committee decision as to whether a 9-hole **event Eligible Score** (or an **event Eligible Score** of between 10-17 holes) is to be **a competition round and** handicapped.—~~The score shall be converted to an 18-hole score by the following method:~~

- ~~a) When the score is worse than net par for a stipulated round of less than 18 holes, the score is extended to 18 holes on a pro-rata basis, eg:
Stableford round over 12 holes – score of 20 points is extended to 30 points.
Par competition over 9 holes – score of -3 is extended to -6.
Stroke competition over 9 holes – score of 4 over par is extended to 8 over par.~~
- ~~b) When the score is equal to or better than net par for a round less than 18 holes, the score is extended to 18 holes by completing the card with net par figures, eg:
Stableford round over 12 holes – score of 26 points is extended to 38 points (26 plus 12).
Par competition over 9 holes – score of +3 is extended to +3 (+3 plus Square).
Stroke competition over 9 holes – score of net 33 (par 36) is extended by adding the par of other 9 (say 35) = net 68.
The extended scores are then utilised as in a normal 18-hole competition.~~

Method for Extending Score for Round of 9-17 Holes Into 18-Hole Score (Note: This Method is Also to be Used by Handicap Committees where a Player was Meant to Have Played 18 Holes, but Stops Play FOR ANY REASON After Having Played at Least 9 Holes)

- If a player does not play a hole, or plays it other than under the Rules of Golf, the score recorded for that hole for HANDICAP PURPOSES must be net par (eg two Stableford points). This hole score when recorded on the card should be preceded by an “X”; eg X-5).
 - Example: A player with a handicap of 18 does not play the 16th (a par 3), the 17th (a par 4), and 18th (a par 5), due to rain or darkness. For HANDICAP PURPOSES, they should be considered to have had the following scores for these holes; 16th 4, 17th 5, 18th 6.
 - This same method applies when a committee is extending scores from a 9-hole competition (or any competition of 9-17 holes) into 18-hole scores for lodgement into GOLF Link.
 - Where the player has played LESS than 9 holes, the score must not be extended for handicapping via use of this method. (See Section 9-1(i) and Section 9-2(i).)
 - Where a Handicap Committee feels a player has failed to complete a round for the purposes of manipulating either their score or their handicap, a penalty score should be entered (see Section 9-2(i)).
 - Note: This procedure applies to holes NOT ACTUALLY PLAYED. It does NOT apply to holes started but not completed for whatever reason. The Most Likely Score concept applies to holes started but not completed (see Most Likely Score in the Definitions).
- (vii) When a person plays within a competition field, but does not actually enter the competition, their score, if attested by a female or male member of any golf Club or golf association recognised by Golf Australia (or a person otherwise approved by the Club committee), should be used for handicap purposes.
- (viii) A score returned by a player in a competition declared null and void should be used for handicap purposes provided course or weather conditions have not materially compromised the proper playing of the game for that player.
- (ix) Scores returned in Open or Professional competitions by players with Australian Handicaps will be used for handicap purposes.
- (x) ~~All Extra Day Scores must be returned on the course of an affiliated Club and marked by a female or male member of any golf Club or golf association recognised by Golf Australia, or a person otherwise approved by the Club committee. (Committees are encouraged to introduce a condition requiring players to nominate prior to playing that their round is to count as an Extra Day Score.)
Extra Day Scores will be accepted only for the purpose of obtaining an initial Australian Handicap (see Section 3).~~

~~The marker must be responsible for ensuring the player conforms with the Golf Australia regulations, the Rules of Golf, and the Club's Local Rules and By-Laws and that they play from the correct tees.~~

Where a player, without reasonable justification, fails to complete a round or fails to return a score for handicapping – see Section 9.

- (xi) Scores returned in novelty events such as Bisque Par, Three-Ball, and Aggregate Teams Events ~~may~~ must be used for handicapping ~~at the discretion of the committee but only after conversion to a regular stroke, par, or Stableford format, and only if the Rules of singles stroke play have been adhered to (note: the committee should make and announce its determination prior to the commencement of the round).~~ (Note: For events of this type, the same handicap procedures apply as is described for four-balls in Section 1D(v).)
- (xii) Eligible Scores returned in Pro-Am events or corporate/trade days or the like (not played in a Competition Round) ~~should may, at the discretion of the committee,~~ be used for handicapping ~~provided one of the following requirements is met:~~
 - ~~(i) The Rules of singles stroke play are adhered to and each player's hole-by-hole scores are recorded on the submitted score card.~~
 - ~~(ii) The Rules of four-ball stroke play are adhered to.~~

(E) The Player

- (i) A player shall have one Australian Handicap only and this shall be allotted by their Home Club.
- (ii) If a player is, or becomes, a member of more than one Club, they shall select one Club as their Home Club (for handicap purposes only) and shall report to this Club their decision and the names of their other Club or Clubs. They shall also report to their other Clubs the name of their Home Club, their handicap there, and any alterations that may be made to their handicap from time to time (unless all their Clubs are on GOLF Link). If a player ceases to be a member of another Club, they shall report the fact to their Home Club so that it at all times has a record of all Clubs of which they are a member.
- (iii) A player shall report in writing or by returning the card to their Home Club all ~~competition round scores returned~~ required Eligible Scores (see Section 1D) made by them at other Clubs whether or not these are at Clubs of which the player is also a member. (This is not necessary if the visited and Home Clubs are both on GOLF Link.) With such reported scores the player shall also give the ACR and the par of that course. (For players who play overseas, it is not necessary to return actual score cards, except where the Handicap Committee specifically requests of a player that actual score cards be returned.)
- (iv) It is desirable that the player, when playing at a visited Club, carries their GOLF Link card, or an introductory card that lists their current exact Australian Handicap.
- (v) A player is responsible for using their correct handicap at all times (see also Section 4H).

(F) The Home Club

Note: The Club Committee may determine which of its membership categories are eligible to hold Australian Handicaps. Such handicaps shall only be available to golfers in respect of whom an annual fee is payable to the State governing body.

~~Each club must have a Handicap Manager or Handicap Committee, responsible to the State Handicap Manager.~~

~~In some States, Handicap Managers shall be responsible to the District Association Handicap Managers, who in turn are responsible to the State Handicap Manager.~~

~~The Handicap Manager or Handicap Committee of the Home Club shall:~~

- ~~(i) Maintain a satisfactory method of recording players' scores and handicaps.~~
- ~~(ii) Ensure that players' scores are regularly and faithfully recorded and adjustments made as soon as possible to handicaps as required by this system.~~
- ~~(iii) Apply this system in terms of its letter and spirit.~~
- ~~(iv) As far as possible, insist that all cards are returned by competitors.~~
- ~~(v) When a player, without reasonable justification, fails to complete a round or fails to return a score for handicapping, adjust their handicap records, in accordance with this System, such adjustment being based on their actual, estimated or potential score. (See Section 9.)~~

HANDICAP COMMITTEE

- (i) An essential element of the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System is the Handicap Committee. Each golf club utilising the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System must appoint a Handicap Committee to ensure the integrity of each Australian Handicap it issues.
- (ii) A Handicap Committee is the committee of a golf club that ensures compliance with the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System. A majority of the Handicap Committee, including the chairperson, must be members of the club.
- (iii) Club employees may serve on the Handicap Committee, but an employee may not serve as chairperson. (Note: It is the USGA's view that most club employees are in a position where pleasing club members is a key responsibility. This makes it difficult for such a person to play an impartial role. These "employees" are not eligible to chair the Handicap Committee of a golf club where they are "employed".)

(iv) Whilst it is GA's recommendation that each club convene a new group of people to take on the role of Handicap Committee, it is acceptable for a club to designate an existing committee to also perform in full a club's Handicap Committee obligations. Such committees will be fully responsible for ensuring compliance with the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System.

The model structure for a Handicap Committee as recommended by GA is as follows:

- A single Handicap Committee to cater for both males and females.
- The Handicap Committee should not be chaired by the club captain. This should avoid club captains taking on too great a workload.
- The Handicap Committee should have male and female representatives.
- The Handicap Committee should have a minimum of three members.

(v) Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of the club Handicap Committee are as follows:

- (a) Responsible for ensuring compliance within the golf club for all aspects of the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System, including the computation of each member's Australian Handicap.
- (b) Responsible for ensuring the club is complying with Section 1D(iv) – Requirement to Maintain the Overall Distance of a Rated Course.
- (c) Responsible for verifying that all required Eligible Scores (see Section 1D) are reported for handicap purposes.
- (d) Has the authority to make the determination if course conditions are so poor that score posting should be suspended. If score posting is suspended for an extended period, the golf club must obtain approval from its State Association.
- (e) It is advisable for a notice to members on behalf of the Handicap Committee to be sent out at the start of each year to outline the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System, to stress the importance of reporting all required Eligible Scores (see Section 1D) and to report the Handicap Committee's policies. The members may be advised of such matters as the following:
- How and where scores are returned.
 - How away scores are returned.
 - Handicap adjustment responsibilities of the Handicap Committee.
 - Penalties for players failing to return required Eligible Scores (see Section 1D).
 - Such other relevant matters as GA will outline in future announcements.
- (f) Responsible for ensuring the course rating from each set of tee markers is posted in a prominent place at the club (it is advisable for course ratings to be printed on the club score card).
- (g) The Handicap Committee should compare each Course Rating from its club with those of other courses. A separate Course Rating must be made from each set of tee markers as practical for each gender. A club must accept and use the Course Rating that has been issued by its State Association. If a club disagrees with its ratings, it may request its State Association to review the ratings in accordance with the relevant GA policy.
- (h) The Handicap Committee should examine results of competitions. If net scores of any players appear exceptional, the Handicap Committee should take appropriate action under the procedures in Section 8.
- (i) Responsible for ensuring the maintenance of players' handicap records. It is preferable for only one committee member to be responsible for players' records and keeping the handicap of each member up-to-date. The Handicap Committee has the responsibility of reviewing the data entered into GOLF Link and received from GOLF Link and applying all other procedures of the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System.
- (j) Responsible for ensuring any existing handicap record of a new member is appropriately transferred as required by Section 3C or Section 5B. If a handicap record is unavailable, the direction stipulated in Section 3C must be followed. (Note: The handicap record of a member who resigns will be preserved automatically by GOLF Link.)
- (k) Responsible for reviewing the accuracy of handicap records. If errors exist, the committee must move to have them corrected as soon as possible. A golf club may wish to consult its State Association or GOLF Link for assistance.
- (l) The Handicap Committee may check periodically and consult with other club committees, including, but not limited to:
- The allocation of handicap-stroke holes on the course.
 - The determination of course set-up and par.
 - The determination if course conditions are too poor, that score posting should be suspended.
 - The maintenance of playing difficulty of the course.
 - Invocation of any Local Rule on preferred lies.

In working with other committees, the Handicap Committee has the responsibility to provide handicap information in a timely manner.

(m) Responsible for ensuring the proper application of Section 8 – Re-Assessment of Handicaps & Special Competition Handicaps.

(vi) Generally, a required Eligible Score (see Section 1D) should be accepted by a club irrespective of when it is returned. This is to ensure the accuracy of the handicap. However scores should be returned by players as soon as is practicable. If a Handicap Committee feels it is experiencing an unacceptable level of delay in score card return, it would be proper for it to set a reasonable time limit within which scores may be returned (whilst taking into account any individual cases of extenuating circumstances).

(G) The Visited Club

- (i) Whilst it is the responsibility of the individual player to ensure all *required Eligible Scores (see Section 1D)* are returned to the player's Home Club, in addition, visited Clubs shall return *all required Eligible Scores (see Section 1D)* to a visitor's Home Club (unless they are both on GOLF *Link*).
- (ii) When a player plays a substantial amount of golf (36 holes or more) over a relatively short period of time at a Club (for this purpose called the Visited Club) which is not their Home Club and in circumstances which preclude the proper administration of their handicap record and handicap, the Visited Club may use the player's scores to alter their handicap temporarily, in accordance with this System to the extent possible.
- (iii) When a player comes to Australia with a current handicap certified by the governing body of another country, this handicap should be accepted for competition at any Club in Australia.

2. Australian Course Rating (ACR)

- (A) There are two types of Australian Course Rating (ACR); an Australian Women's Course Rating (AWCR) which is the evaluation of the playing difficulty of a course for a player with an Australian Women's Handicap of zero, and an Australian Men's Course Rating (AMCR) which is the evaluation of the playing difficulty of a course for a player with an Australian Men's Handicap of zero. Where the term ACR is used within the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System, it is deemed to mean either AWCR or AMCR as the appropriate context determines.
- (B) When determining handicap differentials for use in the calculation of an Australian Women's Handicap, the appropriate AWCR must be used. When determining handicap differentials for use in the calculation of an Australian Men's Handicap, the appropriate AMCR must be used.
- (C) The ACR is expressed as strokes taken to one decimal place, and is based on distance and other obstacles to the extent they effect the scoring ability of the player with a handicap of zero. The ACR must be an 18-hole figure.
- (D) For the purpose of calculating handicap differentials, the ACR is considered to be the rounded whole number. (Note: .5 rounds up.)
- (E) Except where explicitly stated otherwise, the ACR is to be used to calculate all handicap differentials.
- (F) For the purposes of the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System, a formally-assessed USGA Course Rating is deemed to be an ACR.
- (G) When Tee Up "through the green" applies, the ACR is reduced by 2 strokes.

Note i: "Through the Green" is a defined term in the Rules of Golf. It means: "The whole area of the course except; (a) the teeing ground and putting green of the hole being played, and (b) all hazards [ie bunkers, lateral water hazards, and water hazards] on the course." So, "Through the Green" includes fairways AND rough.

Note ii: For GOLF *Link* Clubs, this reduction will be performed automatically if the appropriate GOLF *Link* box is 'ticked'.

Note iii: When Preferred Lies "through the green" is in effect, the unaltered 18-hole ACR applies (ie NO change to ACR).

3. Allotment of Australian Handicap

(A) Allocation of Australian Handicap to Player Who Has NOT Previously Held an Australian Handicap or Recognised Overseas Equivalent

In order for a player who has NOT previously held an Australian Handicap or recognised overseas equivalent to obtain an Australian Handicap, the following process must be followed:

- (i) Have the player clarify in writing that they have not previously held an Australian Handicap or recognised overseas equivalent.
- (ii) The player must submit three Competition Round or Non-Competition Round Eligible Scores (which are acceptable under Section 1D). These scores must be in a Stableford format. Stipulated Rounds of anywhere from 9 to 18 holes are acceptable for this purpose.

(iii) When returning an initial score for the purpose of attaining an Australian Handicap, a male player is provisionally granted a handicap of 36 and a female player is provisionally granted a handicap of 45. (Note: These provisional handicaps apply solely for handicap calculation purposes and have no standing for the purposes of calculating any competition results. These

provisional handicaps shall not be altered until the player has returned three scores. Once the player has returned three scores, the provisional handicaps shall be completely disregarded.)

The Handicap Differentials for the initial three cards must be calculated as follows:

- Course Par + Provisional Handicap [ie 36 or 45] – (Stableford Points Total – 36) = A
- A – ACR = B
- B = Handicap Differential

~~which will be adjusted by the Handicap Manager or Handicap Committee by treating any score by a male of more than 3 over par at any holes as 3 over par, and treating any score by a female of more than 4 over par at any holes as 4 over par. Any stipulated Extra Day or competition round of between 9 and 18 holes inclusive returned on ANY course with an ACR will be acceptable for this purpose (subject to the normal additional conditions a Club may place on Extra Day Scores).~~

~~Note: This adjustment is only made to the initial three cards.~~

~~(iii) After the adjustments have been made, the difference between the amended score and the ACR of each card is ascertained (note: Gross Score – ACR = Handicap Differential). Once three scores have been returned, the resultant three handicap differentials are compared, with the two worst handicap differentials being disregarded.~~

(iv) Once three scores have been returned, the resultant three handicap differentials are compared, and the two worst handicap differentials are disregarded. The details of the player's best handicap differential are recorded in the player's handicap record as the player's first official score (these same details are then added to the player's handicap record a further two times such that the player's handicap record will contain three official scores all with the exact same details). **GOLF Link CLUBS MUST REFER TO SECTION 3B FOR INSTRUCTIONS AS TO HOW THIS PROCESS IS TO BE EFFECTED IN GOLF Link.**

Note i: Section 4 details the procedure by which these and other scores are utilised to calculate an Australian Handicap.

Note ii: The Handicap Committee should immediately effect a handicap adjustment (see Section 4F) if it has good reason (other than that provided by any previously-held handicap (see Section 3C if the player has previously held an official handicap)) to consider that a lower or higher handicap is more appropriate to the player's ability than that which results from this process. In such a case, the Club is not required to act in accordance with Section 8.

Note iii: Any previously-held Australian Handicap and handicap record must be reinitiated in accordance with Section 3C.

(B) GOLF Link Procedure for Initiating the Creation of an Initial Australian Handicap

The Tier 1 system and all Tier 3 systems contain a function which allows a Club to send a player's exact initial handicap to GOLF Link. To initiate a handicap, the Club's GOLF Link administrator must enter the player's best initial-card handicap differential into this data box (eg 17.0 or 28.0). The administrator sends this to GOLF Link, and GOLF Link will perform all of the further required calculations. (Exception: Some Tier 3 systems alternatively require the entry into the system of all three initial scores by the Club administrator. Those Clubs operating such a Tier 3 system will need to enter the best handicap differential three times.)

(C) Reinitiating Handicap for Player Who Has Previously-Held an Australian Handicap or Recognised Overseas Equivalent

(i) When a player (who has previously been a member of an affiliated Club) joins a Club after a period away from handicap golf, the Handicap Committee of the 'new' Club must reinitiate the status of the player's last-recorded handicap (using the player's archived GOLF Link handicap record if applicable) even if there is good reason to consider that a lower or higher handicap is more appropriate to the player's current ability. If the player's handicap record is not available, the player's handicap must be reinitiated in accordance with the process described in Section 3B.

(ii) **Where both the previous Home Club and the 'new' Home Club are on GOLF Link, the 'new' Home Club MUST perform a 'Home Club Transfer'.** (Queries regarding this process should be directed to the GOLF Link Customer Service Centre on 1300 650 750.) A new handicap record must not be created.

(iii) If the Handicap Committee of the 'new' Club quickly considers there is good reason for the player to hold an Exact Australian Handicap that is higher than their last recorded handicap, a handicap adjustment should be effected. In such a case, the Club is not required to act in accordance with Section 8. However, the State handicap manager must be consulted if the determined figure would fall into any of the following categories:

- ~ More than two strokes higher than the most recent previous figure for players whose last recorded handicap was 4.4 or less.
- ~ More than 3 strokes higher than the previous handicap for players whose last recorded handicap was 4.5-10.4.
- ~ More than 4 strokes higher than any previous handicap for players whose last recorded handicap was greater than 10.4.

(iv) If the Handicap Committee of the 'new' Club considers there is good reason for the player to hold an Exact Australian Handicap that is lower than their last recorded handicap, a handicap adjustment should

be given due consideration. Any ensuing handicap adjustment must be effected in accordance with Section 8.

(v) The procedure detailed in Section 4F is to be used to effect handicap adjustments.

Note: 'Last recorded handicap' may include, at the discretion of the State Association, an official handicap issued by a recognised overseas handicapping authority.

4. Calculation of Handicaps

(A) Handicap Differential

Handicap Differential = Gross Score – ACR (note: this is the value which is featured in the 'Played to' column on golflink.com.au).

(B) Formula for Calculation of Exact Australian Handicap

An Exact Australian Handicap is calculated from a rolling sample of the player's most recent 20 scores. If a player's handicap record contains a lesser number than 20 scores, the number of scores used to calculate the player's handicap is as listed in the table below.

Once a player's handicap record contains 20 scores, the next score they return will result in the oldest of the existing 20 scores being removed (to be replaced by the new score). Hence, the handicap record is considered to be a 'rolling sample' of the player's scores.

The procedure for calculating an Australian Handicap is as follows:

STEP 1 – Use the table below to determine the number of Handicap Differentials to be included in the handicap calculation:

Number of Scores in Player's Scoring Record	Handicap Differentials to be Used in the Calculation
3 to 6	Lowest 1
7 or 8	Lowest 2
9 or 10	Lowest 3
11 or 12	Lowest 4
13 or 14	Lowest 5
15 or 16	Lowest 6
17	Lowest 7
18	Lowest 8
19	Lowest 9
20	Lowest 10

STEP 2 – Average the Handicap Differentials being used (as determined by the above table).

STEP 3 – Multiply the average by 0.96. (Note: This is the 'bonus for excellence' factor. Bonus for excellence is the incentive for players to improve their golf game. As a player's handicap improves (gets lower), the player has a slightly better chance of placing high or winning a handicap event.)

STEP 4 – After applying STEP 3, delete all numbers after the tenths' digit. Do NOT round to the nearest tenth. (For example 23.6983 becomes 23.6.)

STEP 5 – In the example provided in STEP 4, the exact Australian Handicap is therefore 23.6.

Note i: The ACR is to be used to calculate all handicap differentials used in the calculation of an Australian Handicap, not any Calculated Course Rating which may have been determined at the time a round was played. Hence, all 'Played to' values stored and displayed in each player's GOLF *Link* handicap record from prior to 9 April 2010 have been recalculated according to the rule in effect as at 9 April 2010.

Note ii: There is no requirement for a player's most recent 20 scores to have been returned within a specific timeframe. For example, the most recent 20 scores may span a period of three years or they may span a period of three months.

(C) Maximum Handicaps

- (i) The maximum value for an Exact Australian Women's Handicap is 45.4.
- (ii) The maximum value for an Exact Australian Men's Handicap is 36.4.
- (iii) There is no maximum value for a handicap differential.

(D) Playing Handicap

The playing handicap is determined by rounding off the exact handicap. (For this calculation, .5 or more IS rounded up, so in the example listed in Section 4B the player with an exact handicap of 23.6 will play off 24.)

Note i: 0.5 rounds to 1, 10.5 rounds to 11, 20.5 rounds to 21, etc.

Note ii: If a player has an exact Australian Handicap of +0.6 or better, their playing Australian Handicap is the rounded figure (note: +0.5 rounds to Scratch, +1.5 rounds to +1, +2.5 rounds to +2, etc).

(E) Player Fails to Return Score Card

If a player fails (for a reason which is not approved by the committee in charge of the competition) to post a required score (as per Section 1D) as soon as practicable after completion of their round, [refer to Section 9 for operational instructions](#).

~~*the following process should be followed:*~~

~~*The round is to be recorded in GOLF Link with the status of 'No Score – Not Approved'.*~~

~~*However, if the committee considers the player is most likely to have had a 'good' score, it should NOT use the 'No Score – Not Approved' option. Instead it should enter a score for the player for that round equivalent to the best handicap differential of the player's most recent (before the penalty score is added) 19 handicap differentials AND select the GOLF Link 'Disqualified' score status option. Note: A committee has complete discretion to make such a determination – to avoid such action moving forward, the player only needs to return their score card at the completion of every round.*~~

Where a committee records a penalty score (or estimated score) for a player's round, but then subsequently becomes aware of the score the player actually had, it SHOULD replace the 'penalty' entry with the actual score.

For 'repeat offenders' only, Clubs ARE PERMITTED to record the correct score IN ADDITION to retaining the penalty score (eg '**Disqualified**' (accompanied by the listing of a score)). The correct procedure for this is to enter the correct score in GOLF Link as an 'Ad Hoc' score.

Note: See Section 4I for operational notes and handicapping implications of the '**Disqualified**' score status.

(F) Handicap Adjustments**Operational Notes:**

When a Club's GOLF *Link* administrator uses the 'Adjust Handicap' function in GOLF *Link*, GOLF *Link* will automatically add a series of artificial scores to the player's handicap record. It is these artificial scores that will result in the player's handicap adjusting to the desired figure. Relevant points regarding this process are as follows:

- ~ If the required new handicap is a lower figure than the existing exact handicap, GOLF *Link* will populate the respective player's handicap record with ten identical artificial scores.
- ~ If the required new handicap is a higher figure than the existing exact handicap, GOLF *Link* will populate the respective player's handicap record with twenty identical artificial scores.
- ~ If the Club's GOLF *Link* administrator enters a required new figure of for example 17.3, GOLF *Link* will round this figure to the nearest whole number (in this case it would be 17). The artificially generated scores in this case will all have a handicap differential of 17. (Note: The average of the handicap differentials in the player's handicap record will be multiplied by 0.96 (see Section 4B). As a result, the figure entered into GOLF *Link* will not become the player's Exact Australian Handicap. Where a specific handicap figure is desired by a Club, it should allow for this consideration by slightly inflating the value it enters into GOLF *Link*, and also take account of 'good' scores in the player's handicap record.

Note: Non-GOLF *Link* Clubs will need to ensure their calculation processes replicate those performed by GOLF *Link*.

(G) Recalculation of Handicap after New Score Processed

Required Eligible Scores (see Section 1D) are to be processed through GOLF *Link* as soon as practicable after their lodgement. GOLF *Link* will re-calculate a player's Exact Australian Handicap immediately upon the receipt of a new score for that player. Note: Non-GOLF *Link* Clubs will need to ensure their calculation processes replicate those performed by GOLF *Link*.

(H) Player Competes in Competition Round before a Previous Handicap-Altering Score is Processed

In a situation where a player competes in a competition round before a previous handicap-altering score is processed, their correct Exact Australian Handicap will be that displayed by either GOLF *Link* or (for Clubs not operating within the GOLF *Link* system) such other display item as designated by their Home Club (even if they are aware of what their new handicap will be).

(Note: The handicapping system provisions which enable a Visited Club to temporarily amend a player's handicap (ie Section 1G) will govern in the event of a conflict between those provisions and this Note.)

Additionally, the committee in charge of a competition may require a player to play off the figure their new handicap will be, even if their handicap is yet to be officially adjusted.

A committee may also adjust a player's handicap and net score after the player has submitted their score card in a stroke play competition. In such an instance, the listing of the incorrect handicap is considered to be a committee error and consequently the player is not penalised.

In a match play competition, a player's handicap may not be altered after their round has commenced. Any queries regarding a player's handicap must be raised with the Handicap Committee prior to the commencement of the player's round.

(I) GOLF Link Score Status Options – Operational Notes & Handicap Implications

The various GOLF Link score status options and their associated handicap implications are as follows:

(i) “Okay”

~ This is an actual score which is to be considered when determining a player’s most recent 20 scores.

(ii) “No Score – Not Approved”

~ The player’s handicap differential for that round will be deemed to be the equivalent of the worst handicap differential of the player’s most recent (before the penalty score is added) 19 handicap differentials. (Note: If the player’s handicap record contains less than 19 entries of actual or artificially generated score values, the player’s handicap differential for that round will be deemed to be the equivalent of the worst handicap differential of all scores contained in the player’s handicap record.)

~ This is an actual score which is to be considered when determining a player’s most recent 20 scores.

(iii) “No Score – Approved”

~ The entry appears in the player’s handicap record however the player is not considered to have returned a score.

~ This is NOT an actual score and is to be discounted when determining a player’s most recent 20 scores.

(iv) “Disqualified” (accompanied by the listing of a score)

~ For handicap purposes, the score is treated in exactly the same fashion as if the player had not been disqualified.

~ This is an actual score which is to be considered when determining a player’s most recent 20 scores.

(v) “Disqualified” (NOT accompanied by the listing of a score)

~ The entry appears in the player’s handicap record however the player is not considered to have returned a score.

~ This is NOT an actual score and is to be discounted when determining a player’s most recent 20 scores.

Note: Non-GOLF *Link* Clubs will need to ensure their calculation processes replicate those performed by GOLF *Link*.

5. Life of Scores & Lapsed Handicaps

- (A) A score is a ‘live’ score if it is one of the player’s most recent 20 eligible actual scores in the player’s handicap record. There is no requirement for a player’s most recent 20 scores to have been returned within a specific timeframe.
- (B) When a player changes from one Home Club to another, a copy of their handicap record shall be given to the new Home Club so that administration of their Australian Handicap can be taken up by the new Home Club. **Where both the previous Home Club and the ‘new’ Home Club are on GOLF *Link*, the ‘new’ Home Club MUST perform a ‘Home Club Transfer’.** (Queries regarding this process should be directed to the GOLF *Link* Customer Service Centre on 1300 650 750.) **A new handicap record must not be created.**
- (C) If a player has no current membership of an affiliated body, their most recent 20 scores remain live, however their Australian Handicap will be considered to be Lapsed and will have no official status.

6. Par or Stableford

The number of strokes awarded in all of these competitions should be the player’s full Australian Handicap.

The amount by which the par of the course differs from the ACR shall be added to or deducted from the player’s score to obtain the correct handicap differential against the rating.

For example, a player who is 4 up on par 68 when the ACR is 65 is only 1 up on the rating of 65 (for the purposes of calculating the handicap differential). If the ACR exceeds the par, the difference shall be added to the player’s score.

7. Club Handicaps

- (A) Calculation of Australian Women’s Handicaps beyond 45.4 is not permitted. Calculation of Australian Men’s Handicaps beyond 36.4 is not permitted. Official “Club Handicaps” are not permitted and will not be recognised by Golf Australia.
- (B) Should a committee consider it appropriate, it may allocate selected members with internal “Club Handicaps”. “Club Handicaps” must be recorded separately to Australian Handicaps (ie there must be separate record sheets). It will be solely for the respective committee to determine how it calculates the “Club Handicaps” of its members.

8. Re-Assessment of Handicaps & Special Competition Handicaps

RE-ASSESSMENT OF AUSTRALIAN HANDICAP

- (A) Handicaps are intended to enable players to compete in handicap events on even terms. When a player is showing better form *in Competition Rounds* 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 Committee of any Club of which the player is a member that the player is over-handicapped, their handicap may be reduced and/or frozen. The objective of such action must not be to achieve a punitive outcome, it must be solely to provide uniformity in handicapping among all who play handicap golf. Such alterations may be effected at any time as the circumstances which give rise to such action may be such that fairly prompt action is required in order to achieve fairness for all concerned.
- (B) Decision to Freeze a Player's Australian Handicap
- B.i A freeze may be effected for a stipulated period of either one month, two months, or three months only.
- B.ii Upon the expiration of the initial freeze period, and given reasonable justification has not expired, there will be nothing to stop the body that took an initial decision to freeze a handicap from extending the freeze period.
- B.iii The figure at which the handicap is frozen may not necessarily reflect the figure the normal calculation method would produce.
- B.iv Where a player's Australian Handicap is frozen at an exact figure (for example 12.4), their "Exact Handicap" listing in the "Your Handicap" area of golfink.com.au will read: "Exact Handicap: 12.4 (FROZEN)".
- B.v A frozen handicap may still be used by a player in exactly the same fashion as a non-frozen handicap.
- (C) 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 as the circumstances which give rise to such action may be such that fairly prompt action is required in order to achieve fairness for all concerned.
- (D) 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), any Club of which the player is a member is empowered to investigate the player's performances and, if considered warranted, temporarily decrease and/or freeze, or suspend their Australian Handicap.
- (E) A decision to decrease and/or freeze, or increase, or suspend a player's handicap under this Section must be ratified by the General Committee (Board of Directors) of the Club which is taking such action.
- (F) F.i Notification of a decision to decrease and/or freeze, or increase, or suspend a player's handicap under this Section must be forwarded by the Club taking such action to the relevant State Association (and, if the Club taking such action is not the player's Home Club, the Club taking such action must also immediately notify the player's Home Club). Such notification must include copies of the accumulated information on which the decision was based.
- F.ii In all cases of decisions to increase, decrease, or suspend a player's Australian Handicap, it is the Home Club that is responsible for making the adjustment to GOLF *Link* (or other handicap record system maintained by the Home Club).
- F.iii In the event that it is not the Home Club that has made the decision to increase, decrease, or suspend a player's Australian Handicap, the Home Club will be obligated to immediately adjust the player's handicap record in accordance with the direction of the Club that has made the decision. The Home Club may appeal the decision to the State Association, however any such appeal must not delay the amendment of the player's handicap record to have it reflect the determination of the other Club. Once such advice has been forwarded to the Home Club, any competition committee should consider the figure contained in this advice to be the player's current Australian Handicap.
- F.iv Only Golf Australia will have the physical access to the GOLF *Link* freezing functionality (note: this does not alter the power of a Club or State Association to take a decision to freeze a player's handicap). The process to follow in order to effect the freezing of a handicap on GOLF *Link* is for the Club to notify its State Association of the decision to freeze (note: such notice must include stipulation of the figure at which the handicap is to be frozen); the State Association will then notify Golf Australia. Golf Australia will only effect the decision of a Club to freeze a player's Australian Handicap upon the written request of a State Association. Any competition committee must consider an Australian Handicap to be frozen upon the earlier of either; it becoming aware that notification of the determining Club's decision has been received by the State Association, or the player's GOLF *Link* handicap display being accordingly amended.
- (G) Should the State Association or Golf Australia, on inquiry, be satisfied that a player's Australian Handicap has not been determined in accordance with the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System or that 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 Handicap.
- (H) The State Association or Golf Australia, on inquiry, may amend or re-instate a player's Australian Handicap. A decision of the Golf Australia Handicap Committee will be final.

- (l) 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:
- I.i The General Committee (Board of Directors) must accumulate data, cards, scores, competition results, that would indicate it is necessary to decrease and/or freeze, or increase, or suspend the player's Australian Handicap in order to maintain uniformity in handicapping among all who play handicap golf.
 - I.ii The General Committee (Board of Directors) must as a body, make a decision to decrease and/or freeze, or increase, or suspend a member's handicap as indicated by this Section of the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System.
 - I.iii No one person or group of persons, other than the General Committee (Board of Directors) has the power to decrease and/or freeze, or increase, or suspend a member's handicap when exercising a Club's authority under this Section.
 - I.iv 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.

ALLOCATION OF SPECIAL COMPETITION HANDICAP IN EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

A committee in charge of a competition is authorised to allocate to a competitor (or group of competitors) a Special Competition Handicap if the following requirements are met:

- (A) The State Association must first have been consulted to determine whether a general adjustment or otherwise of the player's Australian Handicap is warranted. (Note: That the State Association may have decided a general adjustment or otherwise of the player's Australian Handicap is unwarranted does not prevent a committee in charge of a competition from allocating a Special Competition Handicap. A committee in charge of a competition will be eligible to allocate a Special Competition Handicap as soon as it has lodged in writing with the State Association a submission or notice regarding re-assessment or otherwise of the player's Australian Handicap.)
- (B) The committee in charge of the competition must accumulate a body of evidence (eg data, cards, scores, competition results) that would indicate the application of a Special Competition Handicap is necessary. The body of evidence need not be extensive but it must be compelling. (Note: It will be for the committee in charge of the competition to determine whether or not this requirement has been met.)
- (C) The Special Competition Handicap must reflect the accumulated body of evidence. (Note: It will be for the committee in charge of the competition to determine whether or not this requirement has been met.)

Note i: Any committee in charge of a competition which allocates a Special Competition Handicap will be solely responsible for all associated outcomes.

Note ii: Neither Golf Australia, nor any State Association, will be obliged to assist with any outcomes associated with the allocation of a specific Special Competition Handicap.

Note iii: When entering a score into a player's handicap record (or when processing a competition for handicap purposes), it is the player's Australian Handicap that must be used to calculate a net score, NOT any Special Competition Handicap that may have been used for the purposes of determining; competition placings, allocation of prizes, or event/match winners or results.

Note iv: It is for the committee allocating a Special Competition Handicap to determine in which competitions the Special Competition Handicap will apply. A committee is not permitted to allocate to a player a Special Competition Handicap for a competition of which it does not have charge.

9. Common Handicapping Scenarios – Procedures for Pro Shops & Handicap Committees

(Note: Non-GOLF *Link* clubs should refer to Section 4.I for full details of the required GOLF *Link* score status options stipulated in the Handicapping Action column.)

SCENARIO	COMPETITION ACTION	HANDICAPPING ACTION / GOLF <i>Link</i> SCORE STATUS
<p>1. Withdrawal after player commences round due to any of the following being considered (by the Handicap Committee) to be of reasonable significance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Illness ▫ Injury ▫ Emergency ▫ Bad weather (<i>Note: In this context, 'bad weather' does NOT generally need to be bad enough to force a suspension or cancellation of play. If some players are willing to continue does not mean it is necessarily unreasonable in this context for others to stop. Handicap Committees should be reasonably understanding in determining when weather is considered 'bad'. It should be remembered that club golfers play the game as a recreation.</i>) ▫ Other reason for stopping which is considered valid by the Handicap Committee. <p>(i) PLAYER HAS COMPLETED LESS THAN 9 HOLES.</p> <p>(ii) PLAYER HAS COMPLETED 9 HOLES OR MORE.</p>	<p>(i) & (ii) The player's result in the competition should be recorded as "Withdrawn".</p>	<p>(i) Not used for handicapping. <u>GOLF <i>Link</i> Score Status – "No Score – Approved"</u>.</p> <p>(ii) (A) If the player's incomplete score is identified, the committee should extend the player's score to an 18-hole score <u>by awarding them net par (eq 2 Stableford points) for each unplayed hole.</u> The 18-hole score is used for handicapping. <u>GOLF <i>Link</i> Score Status – "Okay"</u>. (B) If the committee does not, or can not, create an 18-hole score, the card is not used for handicapping. <u>GOLF <i>Link</i> Score Status – "No Score – Approved"</u>.</p>
<p><u>2. When NOT APPROVED by the Handicap Committee:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <u>Withdrawal after player commences round, or;</u> ◆ <u>Card not returned.</u> <p><u>(i) PLAYER HAS COMPLETED LESS THAN 9 HOLES.</u></p> <p><u>(ii) PLAYER HAS COMPLETED 9 HOLES OR MORE.</u></p>	<p><u>Disqualified from the competition.</u></p>	<p><u>(i) A penalty score should be entered. GA recommends a score of 10 better than the player's handicap, however the Handicap Committee may determine a different value.)</u> <u>The penalty score value is entered into GOLF <i>Link</i> with a Score Status of: "Disqualified".</u></p> <p><u>(ii) (A) If an incomplete score is identified, the committee should extend it to an 18-hole score by awarding the player net par (eq 2 Stableford points) for each unplayed hole. If a complete 18-hole score is identified, it is used for handicapping as played. The 18-hole score is entered into GOLF <i>Link</i> with a Score Status of: "Disqualified".</u> <u>(B) If the committee does not, or can not, create an 18-hole score; a penalty score (see 2(i) above) should be entered. The penalty score value is entered into GOLF <i>Link</i> with a Score Status of: "Disqualified".</u></p> <p><u>GENERAL NOTE: Where a Handicap Committee feels a player has failed to complete a round for the purposes of manipulating either their score or their handicap, a penalty score should be entered (see 2(i) above).</u></p>

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3. No handicap on card. (i) STROKE (RULE 6-2b). (ii) PAR & STABLEFORD (RULE 6-2b & 32-2a)	(i) Disqualified from net event. (ii) As above. Note: If scratch event is held, card accepted for scratch.	(i) & (ii) Apply correct handicap and use for handicapping. <u>The total score is entered into GOLF Link with a Score Status of: “Disqualified”.</u>
4. Card not signed (Rule 6-6b).	Disqualified from the competition.	Use for handicapping as returned. <u>The score is entered into GOLF Link with a Score Status of: “Disqualified”.</u>
5. Higher handicap on card which affects the number of strokes received (i) STROKE (RULE 6-2b). (ii) PAR & STABLEFORD (RULE 6-2b & 32-2a)	(i) Disqualified from net event. (ii) As above. Note: If scratch event is held, card accepted for scratch.	(i) & (ii) Apply correct handicap and use for handicapping. <u>The total score is entered into GOLF Link with a Score Status of: “Disqualified”.</u>
6. Lower handicap on card in Stroke, Par or Stableford (Rule 6-2b & 32-2a).	Card accepted for competition as returned.	Apply correct handicap and use for handicapping. <u>GOLF Link Score Status – “Okay”.</u>
<u>Z.</u> <u>(i) PLAYER PICKS UP ON HOLE/S IN STROKE BUT RETURNS SCORES FOR ALL OTHER HOLES.</u> <u>(ii) SCORE NOT LISTED ON SCORE CARD IN STROKE FOR HOLE OR HOLES WHICH HAVE BEEN COMPLETED.</u>	<u>(i) & (ii) Disqualified from the competition.</u>	<u>(i) The player is deemed to have a stroke score for any holes on which they picked up of 2 over net par (ie 0 Stableford points). The total score is then entered into GOLF Link with a Score Status of: “Disqualified”.</u> <u>(ii) (A) If correct score/s can be readily identified (to a reasonable degree of certainty), adjust and use for handicapping. The total score is entered into GOLF Link with a Score Status of: “Disqualified”.</u> <u>(B) If correct score/s cannot be identified, the player is awarded net par (eg 2 Stableford points) for each missing score. The total score is then entered into GOLF Link with a Score Status of: “Disqualified”.</u>
8. Score for hole omitted in Par & Stableford. (i) HOLE PLAYED BUT SCORE NOT RECORDED. (ii) HOLE NOT PLAYED.	Card accepted as returned. (No obligation under the Rules of Golf to record a score for every hole in Par or Stableford.)	(i) If correct score/s can be readily identified (to a reasonable degree of certainty), adjust and use for handicapping. If correct score/s cannot be identified, <u>the player is awarded net par (eg 2 Stableford points) for each missing score.</u> (ii) The committee should extend the player’s score to an 18-hole score <u>by awarding them net par (eg 2 Stableford points) for each unplayed hole.</u> The extended score is used for handicapping. <u>GOLF Link Score Status – “Okay”.</u>
9. Higher score than actually taken recorded in Stroke, Par and Stableford (Rules 6-6d & 32-2a).	Card accepted as returned.	For handicapping, use the score the player actually had. <u>GOLF Link Score Status – “Okay”.</u>
10. Lower score than actually taken on a hole recorded in Stroke (Rule 6-6d).	Disqualified from the competition.	For handicapping, use the score the player actually had. <u>The total score is entered into GOLF Link with a Score Status of: “Disqualified”.</u>

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11. Lower score than actually taken recorded in Par and Stableford. (Please refer to Rule 32-2a and relevant Rules of Golf Decisions.)	<p>(i) If result of hole affected – Disqualified from the competition.</p> <p>(ii) If result of hole not affected, no penalty applies and card accepted for the competition.</p>	<p>(i) Use correct score for handicapping. <u>The total score is entered into GOLF <i>Link</i> with a Score Status of: “Disqualified”.</u></p> <p>(ii) Use for handicapping as returned. <u>GOLF <i>Link</i> Score Status – “Okay”.</u></p>
12. Card handed in after competition has closed.	Disqualified from the competition.	Use for handicapping. <u>The total score is entered into GOLF <i>Link</i> with a Score Status of: “Disqualified”.</u>

10. Handicap Information Disclosure

No affiliated Club, association or other affiliated or non-affiliated body may make handicaps or records of handicaps calculated under this System available outside the environs of its course, clubhouse or office. This prohibits the unauthorised display of handicap information on the Internet and other forms of public media. For the purpose of viewing members’ handicap information outside the Club environs, the Club, association or other body may, **with the express written consent of Golf Australia**, link its Internet site to the approved Golf Australia GOLF *Link* Internet site, and/or other GOLF *Link* media facilities as advised from time to time.