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Memo

To: Member States & Clubs
c.c.: GA Board, GA Handicapping & Course Rating Committee, GOLF Link, Tier 3 Providers
From: Simon Magdulski
Date: Thursday 15 July 2010
Subject: Statistics Comparing Handicap Distribution Prior to 9 April 2010 (*ie under the OLD handicap calculation method*) with Handicap Distribution after 9 April (*ie under the NEW handicap calculation method*)

Dear All,

The accompanying sheet provides statistics comparing handicap distribution prior to 9 April 2010 (ie under the OLD handicap calculation method) with handicap distribution after 9 April (ie under the NEW handicap calculation method).

These statistics should serve a number of purposes for clubs, including to assist competition committees in the setting of competition handicap grades. Note that GA does not make any specific recommendations regarding competition handicap grades. We feel it is best left to each club to determine how it wishes to handle this issue after taking account of each of its own local characteristics. (Please contact GA for guidance as to which characteristics to consider.)

Interesting points to note arising from these statistics include:

- For both females & males, low single figure handicap players are likely to have had their handicap decrease slightly under the new system. Players with handicaps higher than this, are likely to have experienced an increase under the new system (and the higher the old handicap, the greater the increase).
- The average female handicap is about 10 strokes higher than the average male handicap (the 50 percentile handicap for women is also about 10 strokes higher than it is for males). This is the case under the old calculation method AND the new calculation method.
- Under the old handicap calculation method, the higher a player's handicap, the greater the downward increase resulting from a 'good' score, whereas the new method does not discriminate. Hence, with female handicaps being generally 10 strokes higher than male handicaps, the new method should have produced a greater increase in female handicaps than it did in male handicaps. This occurred – the average male handicap rose by about 1 stroke, whilst the average female handicap rose by about 2 strokes.
- For all handicap ranges, the move to the new calculation method produced a reasonable amount of movement (both upward and downward) in handicaps. The vast majority of this movement was within the range of plus or minus 4 strokes.

(Upward increases of greater than 4 strokes are largely restricted to high handicap players. This goes to addressing GA's concern that previously in Australia (where an outward increase would essentially only occur in increments of 0.1) it would take 30 consecutive bad rounds for a player's handicap to reflect an outward correction of 3 strokes. This was patently unfair on a player who had one (or a very small number) of uncharacteristically 'good' rounds or who experienced a demonstrable trend of changed form (an occurrence which is more prevalent in the higher handicap golfer).)

We hope this information is of assistance. Please contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

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