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GOLF AUSTRALIA
HANDICAPPING & COURSE RATING COMMITTEE
MEETING – TUESDAY 1 DECEMBER 2009
AT THE NEW SOUTH WALES GOLF ASSOCIATION OFFICE

SUMMARY

Present from the Committee: Ian Read (Chairman), David Allen, Don Cameron, Murray Cropley, Robert Crosby, Abby Driver, Di Monk, Lynne Ritchie

In Attendance: Simon Magdulski (Manager – Rules & Handicapping), Therese Ritter (Manager – Championships), Adam Power (National Course Rating & Championships Co-ordinator)

1. Welcome and Determination of Positions on Committee

The Chairman welcomed everyone, particularly David Allen, Don Cameron, and Robert Crosby, who were all attending their first meeting, and then updated the Committee as to the various Board decisions which have impacted upon Committee membership.

Firstly, Murray Cropley (two-year term), Abby Driver (two-year term), and Lynne Ritchie (one-year term) have all been reappointed.

Secondly, the Board has taken the view that at this time of significant change there will likely be considerable benefits to result from the Committee containing at least one member from each state. This is particularly with a view to achieving calibrated roll-out in Australia of the USGA Course Rating System. Further to this, Don Cameron (Tasmania) and Robert Crosby (South Australia) were invited to serve as additional Board-appointed members of this Committee on single-year terms. Messrs Cameron and Crosby both accepted these invitations.

Thirdly, the Chairman advised of the Board's separate objective of enhancing the long-term structure of the Committee by appointing someone able to at least in part contribute a strong golf club professional management perspective to Committee business. With a view to achieving this objective, the Board invited David Allen to join the Committee on a single-year term (following Mr Allen's endorsement for this position by GMA). Mr Allen has accepted this position.

Before moving forward, the Chairman noted that Sue Fabian had retired from the Committee, and acknowledged the outstanding contribution she had made to Committee business during her time as a member.

2. Previous Meeting Summary

This was agreed (following an amendment to Item 10.2).

3. Upcoming Communications to Member States

Simon Magdulski updated the Committee on the progress of discussions with GOLF Link relating to the timeline for the roll-out of the First Package of Changes to the Australian Men's Handicapping System and Australian Women's Handicapping System. *[Note: Following dialogue between GA and GOLF Link subsequent to the 1 December 2009 Committee meeting, a communication was distributed to all clubs on 11 December 2009 outlining the outcome of these discussions. This communication*

*is posted on the following page of the GA website -
http://admin.golfaustralia.org.au/site/_content/document/00007756-source.pdf]*

4. Eligibility to Hold Men's Australian Handicap or Women's Australian Handicap – Transgender Persons

Therese Ritter outlined for the Committee the new GA Gender Policy with respect to participation in all GA National Championships and the issuing of Australian Handicaps. This new policy sets out the circumstances in which transgender players:

1. may participate in events conducted by GA; and
2. are eligible to hold an Australian Men's Handicap or an Australian Women's Handicap.

This new policy is posted on the following page of the GA website -
http://admin.golfaustralia.org.au/site/_content/document/00007954-source.pdf

5. Audits Geared at Identifying Players Who Hold Multiple Australian Handicaps

It was determined that GA will conduct an audit of players who hold multiple Australian Handicaps. It was further determined to investigate the formulation of operating procedures geared at minimising the instance of such occurrences moving forward.

6. National Audit & Calibration Exercise

The Committee discussed the experience to date of the National Audit & Calibration Exercise. *[Note reflecting proceedings subsequent to Committee meeting: The first National Audit & Calibration Exercise was conducted in Sydney from 30 November to 2 December 2009. The second of these Exercises will be held in Melbourne from 15-16 June 2010.]*

7. Parameters Impacting the Ongoing Development of the Board's Strategy Regarding the Phased Implementation of the USGA Handicap System

The Chairman and Simon Magdulski outlined the various considerations which feed into the ongoing development of the Board-managed phased implementation strategy that GA is employing in order to roll-out the USGA Handicap System.

The reasons for employing a phased implementation strategy are as follows:

- The changes will likely be more palatable and easy to understand than if they are introduced in a single launch. Such an approach mitigates to an extent against saturating the industry with 'too much' information.
- Phased implementation fits within the parameters placed on GA by the inability to introduce the Slope component of the new system until all courses have been re-rated – this is scheduled to have taken place by the start of 2012.

In relation to the composition of each Package of Changes, it is not simply a matter of focussing on regulations and placing each one neatly within a given best-fit grouping (although this is of course desirable). Software considerations are highly significant as they directly impact upon the broader objective of managing the roll-out in a manner that minimises cost and the logistical impost on clubs as well as GA, GOLF Link, and Tier 3 providers.

The software considerations can be summarised as follows:

- *The complexity or otherwise of the software changes required to effect each and every specific regulatory change.* What appears on the surface as quite simple may in fact be very complex in many cases. This may be because making a change to one thing which is linked to a whole host of others may incidentally and unavoidably affect a range of outcomes that need to remain unchanged. It may also be because a simple regulatory change would require the capture of additional data in a way that the existing software structure is not able to readily support.

- *But a more significant software consideration is the added layer of complexity created when regulatory changes require amendments to the Tier 3 interface. When a Tier 3 provider needs to make a change to the way its system communicates with GOLF Link, an additional layer of logistical complexity is added. This is because software changes will not only be limited to the GOLF Link end, they will also need to be made to every Tier 3 system (and then rolled-out independently to all clubs using such systems). Additionally, these changes all need to be tested. [Note reflecting proceedings subsequent to Committee meeting: The First Package of Changes to the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System avoided Tier 3 interface changes – necessary software changes required to effect this Package were all at the GOLF Link end with the clubs not being required to do anything to their computer systems. Achieving this outcome necessitated a significant amount of compromise and massage (arising from numerous discussions and correspondence) regarding the regulations to be included and their structure. This was not only on a micro level but also on a macro level.]*

Additionally, the overarching strategy is intended to have worked into it the experience of the roll-out of the First Package of Changes, and the post-implementation review conducted to consider the strategy employed to achieve this roll-out.

The overarching strategy must also take account of the desire to achieve long-term efficient administration of services related to handicap provision in Australia, and not be unnecessarily constrained by any short-term considerations that are likely to ultimately prove detrimental to interested parties – particularly clubs, but also GA, GOLF Link, and Tier 3 providers.

All of this makes for a complex and lengthy design process that extends well beyond considering regulatory matters in isolation.

8. Update – GA Negotiations with USGA regarding USGA Handicap System Licence

The Chairman updated the Committee on the state of GA's negotiations with the USGA regarding the USGA Handicap System Licence. Whilst significant advancement has taken place, these negotiations remain ongoing.

OTHER BUSINESS

9. Discussion Regarding Committee Role in Reaching the Current Point in the Review of the Australian Handicapping & Course Rating Systems

A general discussion took place reviewing the Committee's role in recommending adoption of the USGA Handicap System (as well as the system amendments to be sought from the USGA) and USGA Course Rating System.

10. GA Guidance Regarding the Positioning of Permanent Plates on Tee Blocks when a Hole Features Multiple Tee Blocks or Small Tee Blocks

The Committee determined to expand the existing GA guidance regarding the positioning of permanent plates on tee blocks when a hole features multiple tee blocks or small tee blocks. Further consideration is to be given by individual Committee members with a view to identifying further items which may require additional clarification.

11. Next Meeting

To be advised. *[Note reflecting proceedings subsequent to Committee meeting: The next Committee meeting is to be held on 15 June 2010 at Peninsula Country Golf Club in Frankston, Victoria.]*