

Memo

To: Clubs & State Associations
c.c.: GA Board, GA Handicap Committee, *GOLF Link*
From: Simon Magdulski
Date: 19 August 2010
Subject: Details of Second Package of Changes to Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System

Dear All,

This memo provides a working summary of the Second Package of Changes to the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System for the use of club administrators. (GA will provide details of the Third Package of Changes within the next few months.)

For those officials seeking the comprehensive finer details of the Second Package of Changes, please refer to the updated version of the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System (the new regulations are all clearly marked). The new version of this system will be available on the following page of the GA website from **Thursday 26 August** – <http://admin.golfaustralia.org.au/site/content/document/00007884-source.pdf>. (For those to have viewed previous versions of the system on their computer, please check the date listed under the main heading on page 1; if it is not displayed as "*Version – 19 August 2010*", you should hit the **REFRESH** button on your screen.)

ITEMS INCLUDED IN THE SECOND PACKAGE

1. Complete overhaul of existing four-ball handicapping regulations.
2. Requirement for each affiliated club to have a Handicap Committee.
3. Start to allow widespread use of non-competition scores.
4. Simplification of 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.)
5. Requirement to process for HANDICAP PURPOSES those eligible scores played at any non-Australian course with a USGA Course Rating.
6. Clarification of which scores are eligible for Handicap Purposes.

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE FOR ALL REGULATIONS INCLUDED IN SECOND PACKAGE

Golf Australia recognises that some clubs may find it difficult to implement the various changes as quickly as others. As a result, clubs will have a window within which the changes must be effected. Details of this window are as follows:

- Clubs should implement each component of the Second Package of Changes as soon as they are reasonably able (effective immediately).
- All changes must be implemented by no later than 1 January 2011.
- Clubs do not need to implement all items included in the Second Package on the same date.
- Clubs must ensure they make a reasonable effort to advise all members as to the date on which each regulation will come into effect at their club.

1. Complete Overhaul of Existing Four-Ball Handicapping Regulations

- ALL FOUR-BALL ROUNDS 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 NEW REGULATION DOES NOT MEAN COMMITTEES NEED TO START REQUIRING ALL PLAYERS TO HOLE OUT IN FOUR-BALL COMPETITIONS. THE NEW REGULATION ALLOWS FOR PLAYERS TO PLAY FOUR-BALL EVENTS JUST AS THEY ALWAYS HAVE DONE.
- The new 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**.
- 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).
- **Most likely score example 1:** A player is on the green 15 feet from the hole after having played 3 shots. They pick up because they can’t better their partner’s score. Their *most likely score* is 5.
- **Most likely score example 2:** A player is in a shallow greenside bunker after having played 2 shots. They pick up because they can’t better their partner’s score. Their *most likely score* is 5.
- **Each time a player competes in a four-ball event, the strong probability is that the “most likely score” concept will see them being attributed a score more representative of their performance than is achieved by the existing regulation.**
- 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.
- Note: 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.

2. Requirement for Each Affiliated Club to have a Handicap Committee.

- 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.
- 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; club employees may serve on the Handicap Committee, but an employee may not serve as chairperson.
- It should be remembered that GOLF *Link* is a tool that calculates handicaps purely on the basis of the scores entered into it. If the scores entered are inaccurate or incomplete, GOLF *Link* will calculate inaccurate handicaps.
- The evidence of the past few months indicates that a large majority of incomplete rounds that should have been entered into GOLF *Link* as either ‘*No Score – Approved*’, ‘*OK*’, or ‘*Disqualified* [accompanied by a score]’, are being entered as ‘*No Score – Not Approved*’. This is leading to a widespread incidence of distorted handicaps (more information reinforcing correct procedures will be provided in the scheduled 26 August GA email communication). Club Handicap Committees will be responsible for ensuring proper compliance with these regulations.
- 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.

3. Start to Allow Widespread Use of Non-Competition Scores

- When the new handicap system is fully operational (ie in 2012), it will require the use of ALL eligible non-competition cards. However GA will introduce this change in two phases so as to allow players adequate time to get used to it. This two-phased strategy will also allow time for clubs to make the necessary changes to their score return processes. **(Note: Effective immediately, each club HAS THE OPTION to require its members to submit ALL of their non-competition scores.)**
- In the initial phase of this Second Package of Changes, it is recommended that clubs allow any eligible non-competition round to count so long as the player has nominated prior to commencing their round that they will be submitting their score for handicapping. (Alternatively club Handicap Committees may choose to accept any eligible non-competition score without pre-nomination if they believe this approach better suits their circumstances.)
- It is for each club Handicap Committee to determine how it will require players to pre-nominate their round for handicapping. GA's suggestions 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.
- Non-competition scores **MUST be submitted on a club score card** as Stableford scores even if they have been played as Stroke or Par.
- In order to enter non-competition scores 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 non-competition scores 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 their members' away scores if necessary.)**

4. Simplification of 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 a "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. (More information regarding the correct procedures for the treatment of scores of less than 9 holes will be provided in the scheduled 26 August GA email communication.)

- 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 Item 1).

5. Requirement to Process for HANDICAP PURPOSES those Eligible Scores Played at any Non-Australian Course with a USGA Course Rating

- Where an affiliated Australian club member plays in an overseas competition, the score should be processed by their Australian club through GOLF *Link* PROVIDED the course has a USGA Course Rating. Non-competition scores returned in accordance with Item 3 above should also be used.
- The GOLF *Link* club code to cover ANY overseas course is 89999. Such scores must be entered through the Ad-Hoc function. (Tier 3 users unable to access the 89999 GOLF *Link* course option should contact their software provider's Help Desk.)

6. Clarification of What Scores are Eligible for Handicap Purposes and What Aren't

Scores TO BE USED for Handicap Purposes Effective 19 August 2010 (must be returned either in Australia or overseas on a course with an official GA or USGA Course Rating):

- Single Stroke, Stableford, and Par competitions.
- Four-ball Stroke, Stableford, and Par competitions.
- Team Stroke, Stableford, and Par events where each player plays ONLY their own ball as it lies (except to account for preferred lies). (Note: For team events of this type, the same handicap procedures apply as is described for four-balls under Item 1.)
- Eligible non-competition rounds as per Item 3.
- Incomplete rounds (as per the above bullet points) where the player has played 9-17 holes. (See Section 9 of the Australian Men's & Women's Handicap System for further related information.)
- Complete rounds (as per the above bullet points) where the player has been disqualified for a technical Rules breach (eg failure to sign score card).

The Following Scores ARE NOT TO BE USED for Handicap Purposes:

- 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.
- Rounds in which the player has started (or supplied an actual or *most likely score* for) less than 9 holes.
- When the player has not played in accordance with the principles of the Rules of Golf (except for use of the *most likely score* concept).
- 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.

Please contact me if you have any queries in relation to the above or if you would like any further details.

Kind regards,

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