



**CHAMPIONSHIPS COMMITTEE
MEETING – MONDAY 16 AUGUST 2010
GOLF AUSTRALIA OFFICE**

SUMMARY

Present: David Cherry, (Chair and GA), Les Browne (Golf NSW), Don Cameron (Golf TAS), Sue Fabian (Golf NSW), Brian Lasky (VGA), Marguerite Moors (WGWA), Tony Rollins (Golf Qld), and Gordon Scott (Golf SA)

In attendance: Anne Lenagan (Chairman - GA), Matt Cutler, Brad James, Emily Miller, Therese Ritter

The meeting summary of 17 February 2010 was approved.

1. BUSINESS ARISING:

1.1 Federal Open Amateur – Australian Ranking Status:

The Chairman summarised the circumstances leading up to the removal of the Federal Open Amateur's Australian Ranking Status. It was disappointing that a date suitable to both parties could not be found, and the Committee reaffirmed its position of the removal of its Ranking status.

1.2 R&A World Ranking Systems:

Therese Ritter confirmed she had spoken with Andy McDonald, Manager of the WAGR re the Australian Amateur Championship and its weighting on the WAGR. The field composition of the Australian Stroke Play and Amateur Championship was clarified, and moving forward, the field for the Amateur will be based on those players who enter the Stroke Play. It was also noted that at this time it is not likely a National Championship will be granted "special" weighting over other WAGR events.

The Women's WAGR will be available in the coming months.

1.3 Trans Tasman Trophy – Format

A revised format for the Trans Tasman Trophy was considered, specifically with respect to disbanding the open-age trophies and playing the junior Tasman trophies leading up to the Australian Junior Championships. This proposal was based on player schedules, calendars and costs. It was agreed in principle to retain the current format. Brad James will liaise with NZ Golf to determine a resolution suitable to both GA and NZ Golf.

1.4 National Championships and Ranking Events Calendar Review:

A paper and revised schedule for 2012 was tabled by Brian Lasky and Les Browne based on the following principles:

The role of the Australian Championship Roster

- Australian Amateur should be positioned as a leading world event
- Our golf calendar should play a major role in the elite golfer pathway
- Improve the R&A world ranking of Australian golfers and Australian golf events
- Ensure our high ranked players support our leading events. It is acknowledged there are 39 Australian events recognized by the R&A in their world ranking making it impossible for all players to compete in all events.
- Induce the high ranking international players to play in our events
- Be attractive to sponsors and media

International Considerations

- Events should be grouped to take advantage of the northern hemisphere off season, including the US college winter break.
- Events should be grouped to assist players traveling to our area of the world, including co-ordination with Asia Pacific regional events
- Structure a long term plan to encourage high ranked international players to compete in our leading events. This may include reciprocating with other national bodies, including team events in programs or multi event orders of merit.

Administration Issues

- The program calendar should be driven by what is best for golf; staffing levels and rosters should seek to accommodate the customers.
- GA has just held its first Advanced State Level Rules and Competitions Course. Enrolling the assistance of those graduates will provide for ongoing development of their skills and provide administrative support.
- GA can make more use of the hosting States resources.

What do GA's members (the states and ultimately clubs) want / understand

- The States have expressed the desire that pinnacle events (Australian Amateur and Interstate Teams Matches) are rostered around the states
- Demands upon individual states or clubs need to be balanced and reasonable
- There are 91 Australian ranking events listed in GA's annual calendar (version iv 18-2-2010). It is inevitable there will be clashes and sub-optimal outcomes for some stakeholders.
- Just as GA should be accommodating of the world golf professional and amateur calendar, State Associations and Golf Clubs need to accommodate national requirements. However, given that Golf Clubs provide their golf courses for tournaments, provide player development pathways and provide the major source of GA funding, a balance between competing requirements should be sought.

Men's, Women's, Junior, and Senior Considerations

- The calendar should not make one group appear subservient or lesser than another
- Men's and women's events should be coordinated as best as possible. Opportunities to play the same men's and women's events at the same or nearby venues should be taken. Even if the logistics of qualifying rounds / events prohibit this, match play finals can sometimes be combined.
- Golf should not compete with the education of juniors. Pinnacle junior events such as the Australian Junior Championship and Junior Interstate Teams Matches to be played during school holidays common to all states.
- Senior events have greatest flexibility in scheduling

It is desirable that our major events be played on our best golf courses when they are at their best

With this in mind, it was agreed, for 2012 onwards:

1. The Australian Amateur Championships be played in mid January, following the Master of the Amateurs (Men) and Women's Lake Macquarie. GA to work with Golf NSW and ALPG to ensure the Women's NSW Open does not coincide with the Australian Amateur.
2. The Interstate Teams Matches be played in the last week of April. GA to liaise with NZ Golf re its NZ Amateur Championship played at a similar time.¹
3. The Australian Junior and Interstate Teams Matches be played leading up to the July school holidays (the Interstate to be played in the first week of the school holidays).²

The Committee is mindful of the potential for heat being a concern in January with respect to the Australian Amateur, and as such GA will have in place its heat policy. Additionally, drinks, cold towels, etc will be readily available if required, and with more daylight hours at that time the possibility of starting early or finishing late could also be considered.

The Chairman advised the possibility of the introduction of a "Lady Bonallack Trophy". If this came to fruition, the team members in this event could use the Australian Amateur Championship as a preparatory event.

^{1.} *Circular Resolution by e-mail on 30 August that the Interstate Teams Matches be moved one week later to avoid the NZ Amateur Championship. Accordingly, the Australian Men's Senior Amateur will be moved to the first week in September (from 2012 onwards).*

^{2.} *Circular Resolution by e-mail on 30 August that the Junior Championship and Junior Interstate Teams Matches retain the custom April date due to lack of daylight and poorer course condition in July.*

2. NEW BUSINESS:

2.1 2011 Australian Championships – Determination of Handicap Limits:

The following revised handicap limits will apply for 2011:

- Australian Men's Amateur (Vic) – 2.0
- Australian Boys' Amateur (NSW) – 4.4
- Australian Men's Senior Amateur (SA) – 8.4

2.2 Dress Standards:

Following deteriorating dress standards at the Australian Boys' Interstate Teams Matches' Ceremonies, the Committee discussed what dress is expected of Teams at these Ceremonies. As National Championships, the integrity and tradition of these events should be maintained, and must show to the host club and host state that GA considers these events as pinnacle and prestigious championships.

It was agreed Teams must wear FULL dress uniform at both the Opening AND Closing Ceremonies, and as a minimum, full dress uniform is trousers, a dress shirt and tie (blazers/jackets are optional). The equivalent dress is expected for women's and girls' teams. If Teams do not comply, they will not be permitted to attend the Ceremonies.

Similar dress standards will also apply to Nominated Players attending Australian Ranking Events. The following note will be included in the Australian Ranking Events Guidelines:

National and AIS Squad Members and other Nominated Players must wear appropriate dress when travelling to and from Nominated Ranking Events and when at the Presentation. The dress expected is playing uniform or dress shirt and/or blazer. (Examples of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable will also be noted).

2.3 2012 Australian Amateur Championship:

Correspondence had been received from Royal Hobart Golf Club advising it was not in a position to host the Championship. As Kingston Beach Golf Club was also not in a position to host, it was agreed the event could not be held in Tasmania in 2012.

Correspondence from Golf Tasmania was also tabled requesting some compensation for hosting the Amateur should it be held in Tasmania. Given the host club's positions, this compensation was not required.

2.4 Australian Junior Championships - Caddies:

Golf Queensland proposed GA consider not permitting caddies for the Australian Junior Championships. This will speed up play, and promote greater independency in junior players making decisions. The Committee agreed to adopt this policy for the Australian Junior Championships only; caddies at the Australian Junior Interstate Teams Matches will remain at the discretion of the Team Manager.

2.5 Team Composition - Girls' Interstate Teams Matches:

Golf Tasmania requested GA consider allowing states who have 'spare' players to compete for teams should a state not be able to field a full team. The Committee sympathised with Tasmania's situation in being able to only field four players in the 2010 Championship, however felt this was not in the best interests of the competition.

2.6 Australian Colts Interstate Teams Matches - Subsidy:

The Committee's thoughts were sought on the purpose of the Colts Teams Matches, and States' participation without the GA subsidy. The 75% subsidy can be up to \$45,000 depending on where the event is held. With the exception of Golf SA, and possibly WAGA, the States believed the event was invaluable as a "feeder"/development program for their state teams.

The Chairman of GA advised a reduction of the subsidy is likely for 2011 (this will be discussed further with the states), and Brad James will review the Colts Interstate Teams Matches and subsidy in line with a review of a development program for colts players, not solely based around the Colts Interstate Teams Matches.

2.7 Australian Amateur Championship - Format:

With Tasmania not in a position to host the event in 2012, it was agreed to schedule the event in Melbourne following on from its hosting in 2011. In order to build the profile of the event, increase the opportunity of sponsorship, and have a club take 'ownership' of the event it was further agreed to host the event in Melbourne for a three year period (i.e. 2011-2013).

It was also agreed to reduce the men's field size to 234 for 2012 onwards. This will negate the need for three courses, and will ensure a higher quality field. It was agreed Qualifying events will be held in each state to further promote the event, and allow more players the chance to compete. Management will determine exemption categories and qualifying conditions, and determine strategies to build the profile of the event (i.e. international players, a Championship launch, etc).³

2.8 Asia-Pacific Senior Amateur Championship:

David Cherry advised the Asia-Pacific Senior Amateur Championship will be held from 24-26 November in Bangkok. It was agreed in principle that Australia will support a six-man team to contest the event by way of \$2,000 to each player, however closer to the date of selection a final decision will be made in consideration of player safety given the current political situation in Thailand.

2.9 Inclusion of Interstate Teams Event in conjunction with Australian Mid Amateur Championships

It was agreed to include a State Teams Event in conjunction with the Men's and Women's Mid Amateur Championships. Teams will comprise 2 males and 1 female, with all three scores to count over the three rounds.

2.10 2011 Calendar:

Venues were confirmed for 2011 with the exception of the Australian Interstate Teams Matches in WA. Regional WA is not a possibility due to two out of the three clubs not in a position to host. GA will liaise with WA Golf to determine three venues in Perth.

³ Circular Resolution by e-mail on 30 August that the Australian Amateur Championship (Qualifying Rounds) be reduced from 72-holes to 36-holes, for the following reasons:

- *Players are currently required at the event for 9 days (2 practice rounds and potentially 7 days of competition). This is a significant amount of golf for players given they may have played in one event the week prior, and may have another event the week after.*
- *36-holes qualifying means the event concludes on Sunday - this may result in greater atmosphere for the final day.*
- *It results in a schedule more reflective of Tour events (i.e. Monday-Sunday), other major international events, and would better suit players for the event after the Australian Amateur - players could go to the following event on Monday. Retaining the current format means the Finalists would not arrive at these events until Tuesday night or Wednesday (and may not get the opportunity for a practice round).*
- *The time required at the host clubs is minimised.*

This will result in there being no Australian Stroke Play Championships in their own right, with the leading qualifiers still awarded trophies in the form of the Medallist (as happened prior to 2008). NB. Reducing the event from 72-holes to 36-holes has no impact of the event's R&A World Ranking rating.

2.11 2011 Australian Ranking Systems – Recommendations:

The following recommendations were agreed to for the 2011 Australian Ranking Systems:

- Condition 1.2 be amended to include the State and Territory Code of Conducts.
- Points Tables
 - To avoid the situation where players receive points essentially by participating in an event, the awarding of points is capped at 20 points. For clarification, a weighting 1 event is capped at position 24, a weighting 3 event is capped at position 38, etc. Players positioned in place 20 onwards points as if they missed the cut.
 - Players who miss the cut do not receive any points
 - The Points Tables be amended so that there is a difference of 30 points between each of the weighting tables (i.e. weighting 1 starts at 70, weighting 2 at 100, weighting 3 at 130, weighting 4 at 160, etc). Weighting 8 will remain at 350.
- Where an event has more than one Grade/Division (e.g. A Grade, B Grade, etc) only scores from the A Grade players are to count for Ranking purposes
- The Handa Junior Masters be included as a Boys' and Girls' Ranking Event
- The minimum divisor for the Men's Senior Ranking System be decreased to 8; and the Girls' Ranking System be increased to 5 – these are more in line with the principle that the minimum divisor is approximately 40-50% of the total number of available events
- Various event weightings were revised based on the following:
 - the number of participating players in the top 20 and top 100 in 2010
 - Note:
 - Australian Championships are weighted 6 (with the exception of the Australian Men's Senior Match Play Championship - the Australian Men's Senior Amateur Championship is considered of greater importance than the Australian Men's Senior Match Play Championship)
 - For the Junior and Senior Ranking Systems only, the State Amateurs are weighted a minimum of 4, with the other events weighted based on the number of players in the top 10 or top 100
 - For the open age Ranking Events, the Nominated Ranking Events are weighted a minimum of 4, with the other events weighted based on the number of players in the top 10 or top 100

Golf Tasmania and WGNSW expressed concern that the same players attended each event as the Nominated Player, and that National Squad players should be aligned to Golf Australia squad representation, rather than State representation – this would allow a greater number of individuals to experience representative competition.

It was suggested that each State be permitted to choose which player(s) is its Nominated Player, however this may result in National Squad Members not attending the events should they not pay for themselves, or their state not pay. It was agreed to retain the current policy whereby the *“Nominated Player(s) must be members of the National Squad, and if there are no National Squad members who are resident in a particular state, other high-quality players will be nominated in their place”*.

Sue Fabian queried that given the Federal Open Amateur was no longer a Ranking Event, could NSW nominate another Event in its place. It was clarified that the number of Ranking Events needed to remain small to retain their prestige, and essentially, NSW/ACT had had a “bonus” event with the Federal Amateur previously included.

3. GENERAL BUSINESS:

3.1 Course Compensation Fees:

Les Browne noted that it is becoming increasingly difficult in NSW to obtain courses to host events without compensation. It was noted this was also the case in Queensland, however other states do not have this same issue. Golf Australia will continue to monitor this concern, however increasing National Championship entry fees to cover the required compensation is not possible.

3.2 National Coach in Each State:

Brad James sought the Committee's opinion on the introduction of a National Coach in each State. This would allow each Coach to share ideas and feedback, with an aim of integration between the states. The Committee agreed this was a worthwhile and pro-active initiative.

3.3 Interstate Teams Matches – Eligibility Condition:

Gordon Scott queried the need for a player to serve a waiting period of 12 months before they could represent their new state if they moved from one state to another – a period of 6-months may be sufficient. The Committee agreed the 12-months is a suitable waiting period.

3.4 NT Amateur and Arafura Games – GA Support:

The Chairman believed GA should continue to support players to attend the NT Amateur Championship. The Arafura Games will be held in conjunction with the event in 2011, and it was agreed GA would send a team to the Games.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

February 2011.