



30 May 2011

To all Australian Golf Clubs,

I am writing to introduce myself to Australian golf clubs and golfers as the new Chairman of Golf Australia and to provide an update on progress to implement changes to the new Golf Australia Handicap System.

It has been apparent to the Board of Golf Australia since late last year that the wholesale adoption of the USGA Handicap System in its entirety would not be in the best interests of Australian golf. Accordingly, we commissioned a very experienced statistician to analyse the impact of the changes to the handicap system made in April last year. This analysis showed that the new system had overcorrected the previous heavy bias in favour of low markers to a significant bias in favour of the higher marker.

In February of this year the Board adopted a draft set of first principles (subsequently endorsed with some slight modifications by each Member Association) that should govern a handicap system. During March, a series of discussion groups and forums was held with Clubs and Member Associations. This was done in conjunction with a visit from a senior USGA official to provide background for us and him to understand the Australian golf club and competition culture. At the conclusion of the visit it was conceded that the complete USGA system was not adequate to deal with large field net events.

It was then agreed to analyse every competition over the past 3 years from 15 different and diverse clubs across the country by trialling a range of different variations to the current 10 out of 20 sample method, with the aim of finding a method which would satisfy an overriding principle of affording each player in a competition field a reasonable expectation of winning or placing well if that player plays reasonably better than their handicap. After an exhaustive analysis, we believe we have now arrived at an appropriate method for adoption. We have subsequently tested that method at a number of other clubs and the proposed changes stood up.

The Board believes that the proposed changes will please the Australian golf community and we will soon start to see a handicap system more closely aligned to the way we play our golf.

I can now announce the following four priority amendments to the Golf Australia Handicap System:

1. Alter ~~Best 10 of 20~~ to ~~Best 8 of 20~~
2. Change the Bonus for Excellence multiplier from 0.96 to 0.93.
3. Introduce an Anchor which will prevent a player's handicap from increasing any more than 4 strokes beyond their best exact handicap from the previous 12-month rolling period.
4. Golf Link will cap the score that goes into a player's handicap record at no more than the following amount over the course rating:
  - 50-women
  - 40-men

These four priority amendments will come into effect on Wednesday 21 September 2011. This will involve the GOLF *Link* system being down from 1.00pm on Monday 19 September until Wednesday 21 September. Related assistance for club administrators will be provided in the lead up to 19 September, this will include tailored advice on gaining access to GOLF *Link* when the system is back on-line on 21 September.

Included at Appendix A is a summary of the Implementation Plan for the new Golf Australia Handicap System. This covers off each item to be included in the new system.

I can also confirm that the following will NOT be a part of the new system:

- ~~Most Likely Score~~
- Required handicapping of novelty competitions.
- Handicapping of ALL non-competition scores.
- Handicapping of match play scores.
- Handicapping of a score returned by a player who plays alone.

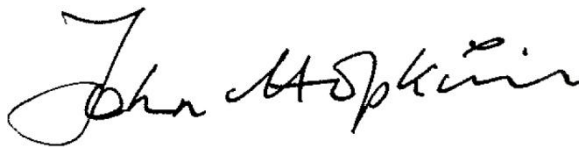
More detailed information and regular updates are provided on the GA website: [www.golfaustralia.org.au](http://www.golfaustralia.org.au).

In the meantime we continue to re-rate all of our courses. This invaluable task is being performed by many volunteers across the country and will be completed by the end of this year. Many clubs already have their upgraded scratch ratings in place. This process is also readying us for the final introduction of Slope Indexing. Later this year we will provide details of the final additions to the handicap system.

The Board is committed to ensuring we have a handicap system that is suited to our golf culture and I am committed to ensuring we achieve that.

I look forward to working with the Board and staff to do what we can to improve the experience of all Australian golfers.

Yours sincerely



John Hopkins  
Chairman  
Golf Australia