

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE NEW G.A. HANDICAP SYSTEM

Already in Effect

- Best 8 of 20, multiplied by 0.93
- Cap (previously 'Anchor')
- Immediate updating of handicaps
- No lapsed handicaps

To come into effect on GOLF Link on Thursday 23 January 2014

- DSR (Daily Scratch Rating)
- Slope
- SHA (Stableford Handicapping Adjustment)
- Handicapping of Conforming Social Scores
- Handicapping of Four-ball scores (will be similar to current regulations)
- Changed 9-hole regulations (9-hole score to be automatically held in GOLF Link for combination with next 9-hole score)

1. Calculation of GA Handicap – Best 8 of 20, Multiplied by 0.93 [already in effect]*

To calculate a player's GA Handicap, GOLF Link does the following:

- Firstly it identifies their most recent 20 scores (these are displayed on www.golfink.com.au),
- It then averages the Differentials from the best 8 of them (Differential is the calculation of the player's score against the course rating; it is the value listed in the 'Played To' column on www.golfink.com.au),
- Finally it multiplies this average by 0.93. The resultant figure is the player's GA Handicap.

A Differential under the pre-23 January 2014 system is calculated as follows:

- DIFFERENTIAL (ie 'Played To' value displayed on GOLF Link) = GROSS SCORE minus SCRATCH RATING
- EXAMPLE: Gross Score of 95, Scratch Rating of 71
– Old Differential (ie 'Played To') = 24 (ie 95 - 71)

* The introduction of Slope will result in a change to the way a Differential is calculated by GOLF Link. A Differential after 23 January 2014 will be calculated as follows:

- NEW DIFFERENTIAL = OLD DIFFERENTIAL ÷ SLOPE RATING of Tees Played From x 113 (ie Neutral Slope Rating)
- EXAMPLE: Gross Score of 95, Scratch Rating of 71, Slope Rating of 131
– New Differential (ie 'Played To') = 20.7 (ie 24 ÷ 131 x 113)

2. Cap (previously 'Anchor') [already in effect]

GOLF Link will automatically prevent a player's GA Handicap from increasing by any more than 5 strokes beyond their best GA Handicap from the previous 12-month rolling period.

The Cap eliminates the capacity for extreme outward movements of GA Handicaps within short spaces of time. As a result, a loss of form does not cause a player's GA Handicap to move too far from a level which is consistent with their underlying ability. The Cap also makes the handicap system less susceptible to manipulation.

3. Immediate Updating of Handicaps [already in effect]

GOLF Link will recalculate a player's GA Handicap every time the player has a new score processed.

4. No Lapsed Handicaps [already in effect]

Players will not be required to play a minimum number of rounds each year in order to maintain their GA Handicaps.

5. DSR (Daily Scratch Rating) [to come into effect 23/1/2014]

How will the new DSR (Daily Scratch Rating) system work?

Under the new DSR system, GOLF Link will assess a current scratch rating each day for your course. This rating will be appropriate to the conditions you actually experienced.

The formulas used to assess the DSR are complex as our statisticians have advised that simple formula options are not efficient enough to produce reliable ratings – this was the problem with CCR.

Will the DSR system mean more work for clubs?

No. GOLF Link will do all of the work and the DSR value will be displayed on the club administrator's computer screen immediately after the scores are processed.

Through GOLF Link, the DSR system will establish each of the following:

- An average net score for the field.
- An average handicap for the field.
- The field size.
- The type of competition (Stableford, Par, or Stroke).
- The gender of the competitors.

Once it has established each of these factors, GOLF Link will compare the average net score it has calculated from the scores on the day, with the average net score it EXPECTS for this precise field composition. (The EXPECTED average is determined by GOLF Link from millions of prior rounds.)

GOLF Link will then determine the DSR by using the difference between what happened on the day and what was EXPECTED to happen.

Why do we need course ratings?

- In order to process a player's score for handicapping, we need to know how hard the golf course was. If we don't, the score itself is largely meaningless and is unusable. For example, 82 on a very hard golf course is a much better achievement than 82 on a very easy golf course.
- For this reason, every set of tees on every golf course has a Scratch Rating assessed for it by a group of State/Territory Association experts.

What is the benefit of changing the course rating from day to day?

- Course ratings currently stay the same day after day, ignoring all daily shifts in course and climate conditions. We all know that the difficulty of a course can vary substantially from day to day based on these conditions, with score fluctuations being the evidence of this. This means that on many days the Scratch Rating does not reflect the true course difficulty.
- In a computerised world, clubs and golfers are becoming increasingly expectant of improved service standards. Utilising technology to provide ratings more closely aligned to the difficulty of a course is an innovation that will increasingly be seen as a basic requirement.
- It is important for Australia to have a handicap system that has the flexibility to be able to reflect daily movements in course difficulty, be it driven by wind, rain, course condition, hole placements, green speed or any other conditions impacting on the daily scores returned. If we don't, we end up processing scores against inaccurate course ratings, making handicaps inaccurate.
- DSR will lead to more stable and comparable handicaps than if the vagaries of fluctuations in conditions from day to day and season to season are not taken into account.

Can the DSR strategy be summarised in one paragraph?

DSR will provide golfers with a rating that is a reflection of the conditions under which they played. The formulas will determine whether the difficulty presented at the time by playing conditions was normal, or different to normal, with scores returned for the day being the evidence of any variation to the Scratch Rating.

6. Slope [to come into effect 23/1/2014]

Under Slope, a golfer's playing handicap on any given day will be determined according to the difficulty of the tees or course to be played. Golf Australia believes that this will be fairer than our current one-handicap-fits-all-courses method.

What are the features of Slope?

- Every set of tees on every golf course around the country will have a Slope Rating which has been determined in accordance with the new course rating system. The maximum Slope Rating is 155 (most difficult) and the minimum is 55 (least difficult). The Neutral Slope Rating is 113. Every set of tees will also have a Scratch Rating.
- GOLF Link will calculate a nationally-standardised handicap index for every player and this will be called the GA Handicap.
- A GA Handicap will be calculated by using the best 8 of a player's most recent 20 scores (ie best 8 of 20, x 0.93). However, every score in every player's score history will first be standardised by GOLF Link against a Slope Rating of 113. As a result, the GA Handicap will reflect a golfer's ability on a course which has the neutral Slope Rating of 113.
- The GA Handicap is not intended for use as a playing handicap. It is to be used in conjunction with the Slope Rating of the set of tees being played to calculate a golfer's playing handicap for the day, and this will be called the Daily Handicap.
- It is the GA Handicap that will be displayed in a player's GOLF Link record on www.golfink.com.au.

How will Slope make things fairer?

Generally speaking, a high-marker finds it harder to adjust to a difficult course than a low-marker does. Slope adjustments will play a balancing role. For example, if the Black Tees are harder than the White Tees, a high-marker may play the Black Tees off a handicap of 28 and the White Tees off 24. The elite player finds it easier to adjust, so they may play the Black Tees off 4 and the White Tees off 3. Golf Australia believes this is fairer than having the difference between the elite player's handicap and the high-marker's handicap always stay the same.

Every time before playing a round, a player should check what their Daily Handicap will be for that round. How can they do this?

- Different clubs will use different methods to communicate Daily Handicaps to golfers. Examples of different methods include via the use of existing club computer systems, and via direct printing on to score cards. Some clubs will provide easy-to-use Daily Handicap look-up posters.
- The GA website and the GOLF Link website will feature Daily Handicap calculators.

A player will play off their Daily Handicap when they visit another club, but what handicap do they use at their Home Club?

- Whether at an away club or at the Home Club, the player will need to check their Daily Handicap for the tees they are playing from and play off this handicap.
- Home Club Example: A player with a GA Handicap of 22.3 when playing off the White Tees (eg Slope Rating of 119) at their Home Club will play off a Daily Handicap of 23; and when they play off the Blue Tees (eg Slope Rating of 136) will play off a Daily Handicap of 27. (Note: The same calculations would apply if the example was for an away club.)

What is the formula that GOLF Link will use to calculate a Daily Handicap?

Daily Handicap = GA Handicap x Slope Rating ÷ Neutral Slope Rating (ie 113)

Can you show me an example of how GOLF Link will calculate a Daily Handicap?

Example 1
Adam's GA Handicap is 18.4 and he plays from a set of tees with a Slope Rating of 128.

$$18.4 \times 128 \div 113 = 21.$$

Adam's Daily Handicap is 21.

Example 2
Adam's GA Handicap is 18.4 and he plays from a set of tees with a Slope Rating of 95.

$$18.4 \times 95 \div 113 = 15.$$

Adam's Daily Handicap is 15.

7. SHA (Stableford Handicapping Adjustment) [to come into effect 23/1/2014]

- For handicapping, all Stroke scores must be converted to, and processed as, Stableford scores. (Where the competition is Stroke, the Stroke score will be the Competition Score; the Stableford Score will be the Handicapping Score.)
- Any round played under the Par scoring system will be converted by GOLF Link into a Stableford score by adding 36 points to the player's final result (for example GOLF Link will convert a score of 4 down into 32 points; the score of 32 points will be the player's Handicapping Score).
- If a player is competing in a Stroke or Par competition, their Stableford score is disregarded when assessing Competition placings.
- The purpose of this regulation is to:
 - Reduce the effect of high hole scores for handicap purposes in order to make handicaps more representative of a player's potential ability.
 - Make all handicaps as equitable as possible by using a uniform score type for all handicapping.

8. Handicapping of Conforming Social Scores [to come into effect 23/1/2014]

- GA's extensive consultation program yielded strongly expressed views from some clubs that they should be permitted to handicap social rounds. Other clubs strongly expressed the view that they should not be obligated to handicap social rounds.
- It is a primary aim of GA to have a handicap system that has the flexibility to cater for those affiliated clubs who wish to offer the handicapping of social rounds to their members. GA's feedback suggests that this will lead to greater participation.
- The new handicap system will permit a social score to be used for handicapping but only if the following conditions are met. Firstly, the player's home club must have chosen to allow the use of social scores; secondly, the player must have nominated prior to starting a round that it is to count for handicap purposes; and thirdly, the score card must be signed by the player's marker and the round must be played in accordance with the Rules of Golf.

9. Handicapping of Four-ball Scores [to come into effect 23/1/2014]

The four-ball handicapping component will be very similar to the current method except for a small amount of fine-tuning. The new system will permit a club to choose not to handicap four-ball scores if they believe their circumstances do not support four-ball handicapping.

10. Changed 9-hole and Incomplete Score Regulations (GOLF Link will store a player's 9-hole score for automatic combination with their next 9-hole score) [to come into effect 23/1/2014]

In designing our new regulations, GA has been particularly mindful of two key points:

- Firstly, it is important that the GA Handicap System caters for 9-hole scores. This recognises the degree to which some groups of affiliated players have become time-poor. It also recognises those players who for various reasons have a strong preference for 9-hole golf.
- Secondly, a theme to emerge from the GA consultation program was concern with any regulation that involved the handicapping of scores that had been estimated or extended in more than a small way.

The key points of the new regulations for the handicapping of incomplete scores and scores of less than 18 holes are as follows:

- Where 16-17 holes inclusive have been played, the player will be deemed to have had net par for the remaining holes. The score will be processed as an 18-hole score.
- Scores returned over 9-15 holes will not be doubled or extended. They will be entered into GOLF Link as 9-hole scores. (Where 10-15 holes inclusive have been played, the first 9 holes played will be used and the remaining holes will be disregarded.)
- Where only 8 holes have been played, the player will be deemed to have had net par on the 9th hole. The score will be entered into GOLF Link as a 9-hole score.
- Any score of less than 8 holes will be disregarded.
- The initial 9-hole score a player returns is to be entered into GOLF Link; it will not immediately be used in the calculation of the player's GA Handicap. It will be automatically held by GOLF Link in the player's handicap record (together with the relevant 9-hole course rating) until another 9-hole score is entered. (Note: Under the new course rating system, all ratings are now stored in the database in 9-hole blocks.) The two 9-hole scores will be combined automatically by GOLF Link to create a single 18-hole score.

GENERAL NOTES

- To gain an initial GA Handicap a player will be required to submit 3 x 18-hole scores (or 6 x 9-hole scores, or a combination of the two).
- There will be no handicapping of match play scores.



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