



3 August 2016

To – All Australian Clubs

Dear All,

Subject: Update on Review & Monitoring of GA Handicap System

I am writing to update you on the work Golf Australia has been performing to monitor and review the performance of the GA Handicap System. This work incorporates two major components. Firstly, an extensive statistical analysis. And secondly, the handicapping survey of all Australian clubs that was conducted earlier this year.

Statistical Analysis

GA's statistical consultant, Statistical Solutions (www.StatisticalSolutions.com.au), has analysed all rounds submitted to GOLF Link from January 2013 through to December 2015. This period includes the full year prior to the introduction in Australia of Slope, DSR, and Stableford handicapping of Stroke rounds, and also the two full years after their introduction.

The five key findings of this analysis are:

- Since the introduction in January 2014 of Slope, DSR, and Stableford handicapping of Stroke rounds, there has not been any significant change to 'equity in competition results patterns'. 'Equity in competition results patterns' means the balance of players at each handicap level who are winning competitions, and also who are finishing as placegetters in competitions.
- Overall across Australia, players of all handicap levels are winning close to their fair share of competitions, and players of all handicap levels are achieving close to their fair share of prizes in competitions. The profile of competition winners and prize winners does shift from season to season, from state to state, and even from club to club. There is a very small number of clubs that exhibit competition results patterns that are notably different to the national patterns – such outcomes can be the result for example of the unusual nature of a course, or of the profile of the membership (such clubs are always welcome to contact their state association to discuss potential solutions).
- Over the course of a year for women the current GA Handicap System produces a slight bias towards players with single-figure handicaps. This is the case when equity is measured by the chance of a golfer to finish as a placegetter in a competition, and also when equity is measured by the chance of a golfer to win the competition.
- Over the course of a year for men the current GA Handicap System produces a slight bias towards players with single-figure handicaps when equity is measured by the chance of a golfer to finish as a placegetter in a competition. The reverse is true when equity is measured by the chance of a golfer to win the competition – in this case the bias is slightly towards players with high handicaps. (Note: If GA was to fine-tune the handicap system to further enhance the chances of male single-figure players winning competitions, a direct side effect would be to create a severe bias towards the chance a single-figure player to finish as a placegetter in a competition.)



- The competitiveness of players with single figure handicaps improves in winter whereas the competitiveness of players with high handicaps improves in summer. This effect is more notable in the southern states.

The detailed data tables can be accessed via the following webpage – www.golf.org.au/2016-stat-review.

2016 Survey of All Australian Clubs on the GA Handicap System

Golf Business Advisory Services (GBAS) is a specialist independent advisory company providing dedicated, professional advice around the business of golf within the Asia Pacific region. GA commissioned GBAS in March and April this year to conduct a survey of all clubs on the GA Handicap System. Responses were submitted by 577 of Australia's 1591 clubs. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this process – GA is sincerely grateful for your time and feedback.

A report on the survey has been published and is available from the following page of the GA website – www.golf.org.au/ga-handicap-survey.

Next Steps

The survey report (together with the various comments provided by survey respondents) and the statistical analysis is currently being considered by GA and is being worked through our committee process. GA will also seek comment from key industry bodies including State Associations and GMA. Additionally we are investigating the viability and timelines associated with adding functionality to our GOLF Link system which will address some feedback.

The GA Board is committed to ensuring that the handicap system in use in Australia provides the best possible service for our clubs and golfers. To this end we are mindful of the clear industry feedback we have received encouraging discussion of some marginal issues whilst maintaining the core elements of the system for the foreseeable future.

In the next few months we look forward to publishing GA's response to the statistical work and the survey.

Should you have any queries on either of the above items, please contact GA's Rules & Handicapping Director, Simon Magdulski (simonm@golf.org.au).

Yours sincerely,

John Hopkins OAM
Chairman – Golf Australia