



20 January 2017

To – All Australian Clubs

Dear All,

Subject: Completion of 2016 Review & Monitoring of GA Handicap System

- **LOWER LIMIT OF D.S.R. TO BE CHANGED TO 1 BELOW THE SCRATCH RATING (from the current limit of 3 below) – TO TAKE EFFECT AT 5.00AM ON MONDAY 30 JANUARY 2017**

The change – LOWER LIMIT OF D.S.R. TO BE CHANGED TO 1 BELOW THE SCRATCH RATING

- From 5.00am on Monday 30 January 2017 the lower limit of the DSR will be one (1) below the Scratch Rating. The upper limit will remain unchanged at four (4) above the Scratch Rating. (Currently a DSR can be calculated by GOLF Link within a range of three (3) below the Scratch Rating and four (4) above the Scratch Rating.)
- This change will be 100% enacted through GOLF Link. There will be no requirement for any change by Tier 3 providers or clubs.
- The change will increase the likelihood of a player's handicap reducing by a more appropriate amount as a result of a very good score. This is because the lower the DSR is permitted to go, the less the player's handicap reduces as a result of a good score – and this change will further restrict downward DSR movement.
- As we move into the heart of the period of the year where many Australian golf courses are typically at their easiest, this change will apply some downward pressure to handicaps and consequently to Stableford scores. Whilst this change is not designed to lead to a major adjustment to net scoring patterns, it is intended to better meet the preferences of our constituents.

Background

Golf Australia conducted a body of work in 2016 to review the GA Handicap System. This review was conducted as a health-check on the handicap system following the introduction in January 2014 of Slope, DSR, and Stableford handicapping of Stroke rounds.

The review work included two major analytical pieces:

1. An extensive statistical analysis.
2. A handicapping survey of all Australian clubs.

A summary of the findings of these analytical pieces is available via the 3 August 2016 story on the following GA webpage – www.golf.org.au/newsandcommunication

Primary considerations for GA in assessing all of the review findings

In deciding whether to make any refinements to Australia's handicapping procedures, GA has given priority to the following key considerations to emerge from the review:

- That whilst some marginal issues were discussed by the industry, it desired that GA maintain the core elements of the system for the foreseeable future.
- That several themes of clear feedback to arise from the review work all fed into the following single concern – when a player returns a very good score during the 'easier scoring months' their handicap has not been adjusting downwards to an appropriate extent. This effect is more notable in the southern states. The various factors feeding into this concern are:
 1. A clear frustration with the scores required to win many large-field net events during the 'good scoring months'.
 2. Statistical analysis clearly demonstrates that the competitiveness of players with single-figure handicaps decreases during the 'easier scoring months'.
 3. A clear frustration within some clubs that an effect of permitting the DSR to range as low as 3 strokes below the Scratch Rating helps to prevent very good scores from leading to appropriate handicap reductions.
- Any changes to the handicap system should seek to keep disruption to clubs and golfers to an absolute minimum.
- **Note:** Via the survey, GA received a significant amount of feedback requesting that we try to find a way to use real score data in GOLF Link to aid the process of determining Scratch Ratings and Slope Ratings. Further to this feedback we directed our statisticians to develop some formulae that would achieve this objective. State Associations will soon have access to new GOLF Link functionality for this purpose.

Future steps

Golf Australia will continue to monitor the GA Handicap System and will periodically survey Australian clubs over the coming years with a view to having the handicap system align as closely as possible to the preferences of our constituents.

We also continue to pay close attention to developments regarding the World Handicap System that is being jointly constructed by the R&A and the United States Golf Association.

Please contact Simon Magdulski in the GA office if you have any questions (simonm@golf.org.au).

Yours sincerely,



John Hopkins OAM
Chairman – Golf Australia