

A. CONGU CHANGES

1. Changes/Clarification to the UHS

General Play Clause 23.b

This Clause permits the adjustment of a player's handicap in 'Exceptional Circumstances' which is now clarified by the following FAQ.

Q. Clause 23.7 of the CONGU UHS states that 'In exceptional circumstances the Handicap Committee may adjust the handicap of a player in the period between Annual Reviews if there is compelling evidence that his Exact Handicap does not reflect his current playing ability'.

What are 'exceptional circumstances'?

A. Circumstances that may be regarded as 'exceptional' include:

- a. Impaired golfing ability resulting from extended illness or injury.
- b. The need to correct a handicap that was allocated at an inappropriate level.
- c. The return of a series of good scores in Qualifying Competitions within a short timeframe by a hitherto infrequent competitor.
- d. A number of, probably three or more, good playing performances in Non-Qualifying competitions such as Mixed Foursomes, Four-Ball Better Ball events, Corporate or Society days by a player who otherwise may not participate with any regularity in Qualifying Competitions.

For information. Clause 23.b 'exceptional circumstances' are guidelines only. They are to help handicap secretaries. Corporate and Society events are not always played over a measured course, the EGU will not be recommending they are used when reviewing a handicap.

2. Alternate Day/Practice on the Competition Course

Alternative Day Arrangements for Club Competitions

Rule 7-1b of the Rules of Golf prohibits practice on the competition course prior to play on any day of a stroke play competition unless a condition of competition permitting practice has been introduced by the Committee in terms of the Note to that Rule.

Alternative Day arrangements exist when a single competition is played over two days (the main and the alternate day) which may or may not be consecutive, and in which a player is permitted to compete only one of the two days.

Unless the Committee has introduced a condition of competition permitting practice/play, any player ineligible to play on the first of the two days but intending to play on the second competitive day would be in breach of Rule 7-1b (the penalty for

which is disqualification) by playing on the competition course at any time during the whole of the first day of the competition e.g. if the alternate day is a Saturday and the main day the following Tuesday any of the Tuesday players would be in breach by playing in a match or in general non-competition play on the Saturday. This breach would occur regardless of the length of time between the two competition days.

When club competitions involve alternative day arrangements Committees are encouraged to permit those players not competing on the first day to be able to play on the course, subject to available tee times and club rules, without such play being deemed as practice for the day during which they intend to compete in the competition. A suggested wording (*which can be tailored to suit club rules*) for a condition of competition permitting practice/play is:

Main Day and Alternative Day Competitions

When players have a choice between main day or alternative day participation for a single stroke play competition, in terms of Rule 7-1b of the Rules of Golf, any player who elects to play on the second day of the competition is permitted to play on the competition course on the first day of the said competition (*except.....*)

The R&A has confirmed that if the suggested wording (Main Day and Alternative Day Competition) is included within the conditions of competition it complies with the Rules.

3. CONGU Statistics Committee

Much feedback on the system has been received over the years and the Statistics Committee do consider the feedback. At present the Committee are looking at the following areas:

- i. CSS calculation for stroke play competitions
- ii. CSS calculation for small fields and reduction only competitions
- iii. The relationship of CSS to course difficulty and other factors
- iv. The inclusion of Category 5 players into the CSS calculations
- v. The effectiveness of the Annual Review algorithm
- vi. Four Ball Better Ball scores, the justification for $\frac{3}{4}$ handicap allowance and the use of scores for handicap purposes
- vii. Slope for Women

The areas above are to be considered before publication of the 2012 CONGU manual.

EWGA are looking for a representative to sit on the CONGU Statistics Committee and we have been asked to enquire if there is anyone who would be interested in sitting on this Committee.

B. QUERIES

1. Handicap Appeal Procedure
The procedure for dealing with handicap appeals is set out in the EWGA handbook. Where possible appeals should be contained within the club unless further assistance is necessary in which case they should refer to the CAA, not the EWGA Handicap Committee.

2. Overseas Handicaps
The decision as to whether players with overseas handicaps are eligible to play in Open competitions etc is the responsibility of the organising competition committee. If overseas handicaps are allowed then this should be stated in the competition conditions and the scores should be used in the CSS calculation.

Players with handicaps from both at home and overseas, Handicap Secretaries should refer to Dec 2(e) on page 85 of the CONGU manual to convert EGA handicaps.

3. Preferred Lies – Clause 15. The period for preferred lies is 1st October to 30th April however if necessary permission can be obtained from the CAA to extend this period. If permission is granted then this permission relates to all sections of the club. CAA's to make contact with their EGU County Secretaries.

The use of fairway mats is permissible in qualifying competitions but teeing-up on fairways is not allowed.

4. CONGU Licensees – some faults have been found. In future CONGU will advise of any faults found and will post these on their website.
5. Mail on Sunday have now agreed to conform to CONGU requirements on handicap allowances in the Mail on Sunday competition.
6. Away-days – These should be run as 'fun days' unless a club specifically wishes to run the competition as a qualifying competition in which case this should be by arrangement with the host club.

C. EWGA Medals

EWGA medals commenced on 1st February 2009. Clubs may run a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 24 medals from 1st January to 31st December each year. One qualifier from each club will be eligible to enter the Regional Finals with a total of 100 players in each of the Regional Final. The top 10 players from each Regional final will go on to play in the Grand Medal Final.

Following review, the use of buggies in EWGA medals will be permitted but distance measuring devices will not be allowed but will be reviewed at the end of 2009. following feedback from the EGU. If a club has a local rule in place, DMD's may be used in club competitions. If the men's section has a local rule in place allowing the use of DMD's and the ladies section do not – a lady playing alongside a main in her own club medal cannot ask for distance advice – see Decision 8-1/2.

Only players with an Active handicap may participate but players may use supplementary scores and 9 hole competitions to ensure that enough qualifying scores are submitted during 2009 to enable handicaps to remain Active.

Computer software will cope with all aspects of EWGA medals which are run in conjunction with club competitions.

D. Active/Inactive Handicaps

After consultation it appears that most were not in favour of introducing lapsing of handicaps. A handicap will become Inactive for players who do not submit at least three qualifying cards during the year. For players belonging to more than one golf club, qualifying scores from both home and away clubs will go towards keeping a handicap Active. Supplementary scores and 9 hole competition cards will count towards the Active handicap. InActive handicaps will be indicated by an 'i' alongside their exact handicap.

Organising Committees of Opens and Trophy competitions may impose a restriction that players with InActive handicaps will not be allowed to enter, the restriction should be included in the conditions of Competition. An InActive handicap may be permitted for some club competitions, holiday and social golf.

Following review in 2010 it is thought that the amount of qualifying scores to be submitted to retain an Active handicap will be increased – probably 6 and this procedure may replace the current Clause 25 in the next CONGU manual.

E. Feedback

- a. 9 Hole Qualifying Competitions (Clause 22)
830 clubs have applied and received 9 hole SSS. These competitions have been met with a mixed response even though the facility was aimed at those people who have difficulty playing 18 holes for whatever reason. The interest shown in 9 hole competitions may change with the introduction of Active/Inactive handicap.

b. **Supplementary Scores**

Clubs were requested to trial this procedure over a two year period but was made mandatory from the start of 2008. Feedback suggests that there is not a good take-up in clubs of supplementary scores and it does not appear to be promoted well within ladies' sections. However, it is hoped that with the introduction of Active/InActive handicaps next year will see a rise in players submitting supplementary scores.

F. Any Other Business

Annual Review – Handicap Committees in clubs are still having difficulty understanding the implementation of handicap changes following the Annual Review and the matter continues to be the source of most queries to CAA's. The Annual Review is based on performance against target, based on scores against a statistical equivalent for each category which will show if a player is below this statistical equivalent (decrease) or above (increase). Handicap records and other supporting evidence should be considered in conjunction with the Annual review report as different factors may give justification for a change to handicap (ie reduction only competitions). Performance against targets is against CSS not SSS.