



## 2016 CONGU® Handicapping Changes

The changes for the 2016 golfing season are now finalised and will be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016. It was intended that these changes came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, but delays in completing the details of the changes resulted in insufficient time for the computer companies (ISVs) to complete their system changes for that month.

The following represents each of the changes and what, if any, impact they will have upon golf clubs.

### 1 The Handicap Year

This has changed to now follow the Calendar Year (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December) rather than the March-February period previously in place.

#### Practical Implications

- The Annual Review now needs complete by year end – previously it could be done up to the end of February.
- Qualifying scores to maintain a Competition Handicap now need to be completed by End of December each year.
- For this year only, the 2015 year completes on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016, allowing players to submit scores up to that date for the maintaining of a 'c' handicap status. This means that 2016 will be a 10 month year (1<sup>st</sup> March – 31<sup>st</sup> December).

### 2 Preferred Lies

This has changed to enshrine the fact that each National Body (e.g. England Golf, Scottish Golf etc.) has the discretion to adopt the period that it needs for all Counties within its jurisdiction.

#### Practical Implications

- No impact to England Golf and all Counties/Clubs within England. Period will remain as 1<sup>st</sup> October to 30<sup>th</sup> April, though clubs will still have the option of requested extension past 30<sup>th</sup> April from their County.

### 3 Competition Handicaps

All Unions/Associations are required to use the 'c' handicap status annotation.

#### Practical Implications

- No impact to England Golf as this has been in place for some time. The change is only for Ireland who up to this year had not adopted this.



## 4 Three Letter Identifiers

These have been restructured and a definitive list has been included in the UHS Manual.

### Practical Implications

- This just affects the presentation of the Players Handicap Record. As an example, the following table is contained within the Manual:

| 1 <sup>st</sup> Character |                           | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Character |                       | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Character |                    |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Code                      | Competition Type          | Code                      | Format of Play        | Code                      | Course             |
| F                         | Foursomes, Greensomes     | K                         | Match play – Knockout | A                         | Away Club          |
| N                         | Non-Qualifying            | M                         | Stroke play – Medal   | D                         | Abandoned          |
| Q                         | Qualifying                | N                         | Nine-hole stroke play | F                         | Overseas (Foreign) |
| R                         | Reduction Only            | P                         | Par/Bogey             | H                         | Home club          |
| S                         | Supplementary Score       | S                         | Stableford            | O                         | Open event         |
| T                         | Team format (e.g. Tri-Am) | 9                         | Nine-hole Stableford  |                           |                    |
| Y                         | Society                   |                           |                       |                           |                    |
| 4                         | Four-Ball Better Ball     |                           |                       |                           |                    |

Thus a Qualifying Stableford Score at your home club would be coded *QSH*, a Supplementary 9hole Stableford Score returned at your away club would be *S9A* and a Non-Qualifying Medal score at your home club would be *NMH*.

## 5 Four Ball Better Ball Handicap Allowance

This has been increased from  $\frac{3}{4}$  (75%) to 90% for both Strokeplay and Matchplay formats.

### Practical Implications

- All such competitions **must**, from 1<sup>st</sup> March, use 90% as the allowance.
- Open Competitions are included in this.
- Clubs need to amend their Conditions of Competition to reflect this change, both Mens and Ladies.
- CONGU® have stated that it is against the spirit and intent of the UHS that restricting handicap limits for competitions, but then allow those whose handicap is above the limit play with their handicap reduced to the limit. If a limit is introduced, it should be a limit on entry, not on playing – i.e. those with handicaps above the limit should not be able to enter.
- Competitions that have commenced in 2015 and will run to the end of the winter season should remain on whatever allowance they commenced with. So if the competition commenced on  $\frac{3}{4}$  then it should remain at  $\frac{3}{4}$  until the whole competition has completed. The allowance must not be changed mid competition.



- Why 90%?

Investigation into the scores submitted in these types of competition indicated that the current  $\frac{3}{4}$  allowance is too much skewed towards the better players. Analysing the Statistical Model using  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{7}{8}$  and full difference was carried out and the indication was  $\frac{3}{4}$  was too low and full handicap too high. Using the  $\frac{7}{8}$  (or as it has changed to, 90%) provided a more equitable result. In addition, a significant number of real-life scores were taken from one of the ISVs (around 15,000 rounds) and the analysis of these returns mirrored very closely the results from the Statistical model.

## 6 CSS Calculation

This has been amended for Men to now include the Category 4 players in the same way that it does already for Ladies.

### Practical Implications

- For Men this means that the calculated CSS will be reflective of the whole field, not just those of 18 handicap or less.
- The decision was taken after it was shown from the CDH data analysis that the Cat 4 scores were statistically reliable.

## 7 Initial Handicap Allotment

A new algorithm has been introduced which takes account of that utilised for the Annual Review. This will allow a club to allot a handicap up to a limit of 54, although those above the current maximum limits (28 for men, 36 for ladies) will be known as 'CONGU® Club Handicaps' and will not be eligible for the 'c' status. The new algorithm is introduced as it has been recognised that the current approach generally resulted in handicap allocations that were overly generous.

### Practical Implications

- Scores for Initial Handicap allocation will now be entered into the Handicap Software.
- The software will produce a recommended handicap allocation based on those scores and the Algorithm.
- Example
  - Old Method – Player returns 3 cards
    - (Gross Score – Double Nett Bogey Adjustment) – SSS = Gross Diff.
    - Card 1 =  $(102 - 2) - 72 = 30$
    - Card 2 =  $(99 - 1) - 72 = 26$
    - Card 3 =  $(100 - 0) - 72 = 28$
    - Handicap Allocated would be 26 – the best Gross Diff of the 3 entered cards.
  - New Method – Same 3 scores
    - Lowest Gross Differential = 26
    - Using the formula



- $(26 + (26 \times 0.13))/1.237$
  - $(26 + 3.38)/1.237$
  - $29.38/1.237$
  - 23.75
- The decimal part is then discarded, so the initial allocation will be 23 handicap.

## 8 Reactivation of Handicap

If a player leaves a club with a 'c' handicap, this status will remain valid for the year of resignation and for the full following calendar year, should a player join another club.

### Practical Implications

- When a player joins a new club, it is imperative that the CDH Number is known.
- A new player's handicap should be checked thoroughly to ensure that they have returned 3 qualifying scores in the year prior to leaving their original club.
- CDH Numbers are no longer deleted from the CDH, so a player's CDH number will remain with them whilst they are home members of a club affiliated to England Golf.
- Example
  - Player A – leaves his club in June 2015 having played 4 qualifying competitions, he rejoins a club in Feb 2016. The player will have his current handicap, CDH Number and Competition status reinstated for 2016.
  - Player B – left golf in October 2015 and re-joins a club in January 2016. The player should be asked to return 3 cards for handicap allocation as per the Initial Handicap Allocation process.

## 9 Re-instatement of Handicap Status

The reinstatement of a 'c' status handicap requires the return of 3 qualifying scores. These can be 9 or 18 hole scores and can include Supplementary Scores. The Committee need to complete the reinstatement, it no longer happens automatically, and they may elect to amend the handicap in the process should they deem the current handicap inappropriate.

### Practical Implications

- The Handicap Committee will be alerted when the 3<sup>rd</sup> qualifying score has been submitted and, as a result, review the players returns to determine whether the current handicap is appropriate. If necessary, they can amend the handicap during the reinstatement process.
- Qualifying scores may be 18 or 9 holes, competitions or Supplementary Scores. A 9-hole return represents 1 qualifying return.



## 10 Handicaps for Golfers with Disabilities

These will continue to be eligible for the 'c' status but are otherwise administered in the same manner as CONGU® Club Handicaps until the maximum handicap CONGU® handicap or lower is reached.

### Practical Implications

- This represents no change to the status quo.

## 11 Qualifying 9-hole Score Recording

Playing better than or to the buffer zone still requires 18 points to be added to achieve the 18-hole outcome. However, those players who return a score worse than their buffer zone will simply have their score doubled to arrive at the 18-hole outcome.

### Practical Implications

- 9-hole scores will now be more reflective of a players performance
- Clubs **must** ensure that they have a current 9-hole SSS used by England Golf and that it is correctly set up on their handicap software.
- Examples
  - Player A, with a handicap of 23, scores 15 points on the 9 holes played and is given an additional 18 points for the back 9, giving them 33 points which is outside the handicap buffer zone. For handicap purposes this would be adjusted to 30 points, doubling the score returned.

## 12 Exceptional Scoring Reductions

These are no longer compounded and to lessen the severity of the reduction for those players averaging two exceptional scores of -5.5 or -6, the reduction table has been modified. Also 9-hole scores are included for ESR application purposes, with 22 points being the trigger. The application of ESRs is mandatory if a Union adopts this procedure. (ESRs continue to be inapplicable in Scotland).

### Practical Implications

- The application of ESRs is now mandatory in England, with Committees having the opportunity to review the reduction after its application.
- The reductions applied have been revised to reduce the impact on the players handicap.
- A third good score will now be the start of a new sequence, not as previously where it would be the trigger for a new reduction based on the 2<sup>nd</sup> ESR (which had already triggered a reduction).



### 13 Supplementary Scores

There have been changes in this Clause within the Unified Handicapping System (UHS) which allow returns at any club a player is a member of, and can now be over 9-holes.

#### Practical Implications

- Acceptable in Scotland (only) for Category 1 players of 2.5 and above.
- Acceptable over 9-holes for Category 2 and above players
- Clubs **must** ensure that they have a 9-hole SSS assigned to allow players to return 9-hole Supplementary Scores
- Clubs must have a procedure for the submission of Supplementary Scores
- Clubs should be aware of players trying to build handicaps using Supplementary Scores.

### 14 Annual Review Report

The report format has changed slightly and now includes Category 1 golfers.

### 15 Continuous Handicap Review

A computer generated report is available which will identify any player with 7 consecutive 0.1 handicap increases. Handicap committees are recommended to run this on a monthly basis so that they can identify those players whose performance need due consideration to applying a handicap increase.

#### Practical Implications

- Handicap Committees will need to review the report every month to look at players who might require a handicap increase.
- This is not an automatic increase.
- The report will commence from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 (i.e. scores prior to this are not considered) and the processing will be ongoing over year ends (i.e. will not re-start each year).

### 16 CONGU® Club Handicaps

A CONGU® Club Handicap is one allocated and maintained by the players home club in accordance with the requirements of the UHS. Such a handicap must only be allocated to a member of an affiliated club. It is only allocated above the upper limits of 28.0 for men and 36.0 for ladies, to a maximum of 54.0

#### Practical Implications

- It is up to each club to decide if it wishes to introduce these handicaps.
- Clubs must consider whether they wish to adjust their various Conditions of Competition to allow players with Club Handicaps to participate.
- Key Points



- CONGU® Club Handicaps are in the range 28.1 [36.1] to 54.0 and cannot carry the 'c' status
- Players may only hold one handicap at any time
- A player may not be moved to a Club Handicap without their agreement and a player can hold only one handicap –e.g. a player may not hold a handicap of, say, 28 and also a Club Handicap of 32.
- Club handicaps are managed in a similar way to CONGU® handicaps.
- Returns are always measured against SSS, never CSS (regardless of if they play in a competition which results in a CSS calculation.
- A player with a Club Handicap may return as many Supplementary Scores as they wish.