



Easingwold Golf Club

Members Communication – Handicaps & Competitions

This is the 4th in a series of communications ahead of the new season.

There are changes being made to the handicap system driven on a worldwide scale. In turn these changes have led to decisions made within our own Handicaps and Competitions committee regarding competition entry and trophy winning restrictions.

The bottom line is that on 1st January 2020, the entire golf world will convert to a single handicap system, as announced by the USGA and R&A recently. There are many technical aspects to the management of handicaps which you could find on-line if you wished but, more immediately, you should know that CONGU have anticipated a new handicap ceiling of 54 for both men and women and this will apply for the 2018 season.

There are a very small number of adult golfers at Easingwold who, based on competition performance in 2017, have been given the opportunity to raise their handicaps by 1 shot above the previous limits of 36 (ladies) and 28 (gentlemen). So, on the first day of the new handicap year, not much will have changed in that regard.

Subsequently, any lady playing off 36 will go up 0.1 if they are outside their buffer zone until they reach the magic 36.5 and then play off 37. Similarly men playing outside their buffer zones could gradually increase to 28.5 and a handicap of 29. It is, of course possible that someone applying for a new handicap for the first time will be awarded a substantially higher handicap up to the 54 limit on the basis of cards submitted.

These changes are part of a plan to make golf genuinely more accessible to a wider range of people and to address the worldwide decline in golfer numbers. In that spirit your committee has had to decide how to respond. Clearly adopting the new handicap limits is a must but competition entry and trophy winning criteria are down to the Club. Having said that all the advice we have received strongly suggests we are as open and inclusive as we possibly can be.

Currently many men's competitions, for example, have been open to players up to 28 handicap but with a restriction of 18 for trophy winning purposes. This means that if, for example, I play off 22 in a medal and come in with a net 68 it will count as a 72 for the purpose of deciding if I could win the trophy.

Why has there been an 18 limit for trophy purposes? It is thought likely that the principle of a limit of 18 was imposed as a protection at the time of a previous increase in maximum handicap from 18. We have looked back at records and found that amongst those who have entered medal and stableford competitions, very few trophies would have changed hands if the restriction had not applied. It seems important in this new era that all golfers feel that they are being given a fair chance. Feedback we have is that many players with higher handicaps are not entering club competitions because of this perceived inequity. So, in the spirit of openness and inclusiveness, as a general principle, your committee has decided to remove any handicap limit for entry into competitions – all you need is an active handicap which could be up to 54.

For the winning of trophies, the ladies have already announced their policy and the rules relating to each Ladies competition are displayed at the time the competition is advertised on the Notice Board in the Ladies Section.

For the men's and mixed trophies the limit for the winning of a trophy will be generally 30 and kept under annual review. The reason for imposing what might appear to be an arbitrary limit for trophy purposes is that whilst one or two of our existing members could be playing off that figure before the years end it is unlikely that any will go higher. A limit of 30 would be seen to be fair to our existing membership, whilst protecting the integrity of competition against a new or newly handicapped member being given an unrealistically high handicap and sweeping up trophies before the incorrect handicap is recognised.



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We have used the term “as a general principle” regarding these changes and that is deliberate because we also recognise that there are some trophies which, by their nature, require restriction, such as the Club Championship for lower handicap golfers, certain of the match-play competitions and trophies for higher handicap (rabbit) golfers. As ever, qualification details will be posted on the competition bookings page of the web-site.

For 2018 the weekend entry fee for the men’s competitions is usually £5 with £2.75 going to the club to pay for trophy and honours boards engraving and towards glass-ware for winners and runners up plus prize vouchers of £25 for winners and £15 for runners up, which all comes out of this. This accumulates to nearly £1600 presented as vouchers at prize giving evening. A further £1.25 goes towards the “sweep” to award the best divisional performances. The divisions will be unaltered with the exception that division 3 will now be extended up to 54 handicaps. Finally an optional £1 is for entry into the two’s competition.

For the men’s and mixed competitions, the clubs web-site booking system is usually opened on the Friday two weekends before the competition. An exception is the midweek stableford which is much more informal and requires booking through the pro-shop on the day. If you are unsure how to enter the web-site please contact the office who will endeavour to help you.

Also, please look out for e-mails and newsletters giving details of how to enter the match-play competitions.