



DELEGATES MEETING SEPTEMBER 2023

January 2024 will be the fourth anniversary of the introduction of the World Handicap System. In line with the usual four-year cycle the R&A use for their Rules revisions, we will see some changes to WHS to encourage a more globally uniform calculation of handicaps.

*The first of these will be the use of 'CR-Par' in the calculation of course handicaps, as in America and other Countries.

*There will also be a slight change to the calculation of playing handicaps (not to the % applied).

* also an alteration to the calculation of the 'unplayed' 9 holes which go toward the calculation of an 18 hole score differential for the handicap record.

*Four ball better ball competition scores will be introduced as a mandatory format for handicapping.

*Remember – a club must use all competition scores for handicapping. What is a competition? A group of players playing in a regular or organised event for prizes (not necessarily over 18 holes).

*Whilst the above may seem a bit vague, the January changes will not be introduced until next April to give clubs time to learn about the new rules, and to make sure the local software is ready for use. A full training programme will be carried out later in the year throughout the Country, with the Regional Handicap Advisors going 'on tour'. The R&A will be providing a full set of slides for us to use; so, hopefully, it will be crystal clear. We will also be covering regular topics of query, with the chance to ask questions. Please make sure your handicap secretary knows about this; and check that all clubs have provided me with the up-to-date contact details for their handicap secretary – or they might miss the necessary updates and information. If your handicap secretary has not heard from me for a while, check spam! If I'm not in there, just email the name of your club in capitals (and as the subject), name of contact, email address, and phone number they would want me to use, if necessary.

Which brings me to the complaints I have had about 'certain teams' winning more than a usual number of prizes in open events. I cannot help with this normally – although if handicapping infringements are involved, I will assist a club in dealing with the players correctly. But if you send the 1st/2nd place cards back to the clubs, they will then have a chance to assess the situation, apply any sanction, and seek advice if they need it. And if you

do sanction a player, please do **not** resign them from your club WHS platform, even if you resign them from the club. Once you have done that, or you are no longer the home club, you cannot reduce a player's handicap, or withdraw or freeze a HI: and any handicapping sanction can be altered by the new home club if they become a home member elsewhere. Put a note on the player record in the notes section in vague terms: such as, 'handicap reduced and withdrawn by Freda Bloggs, Handicap Secretary, Sunny Meadow golf Club. Contact on email or phone if detail required'.

Just a word about E.D & I. This is not achieved by having the yellow and white tees rated for ladies to play. The rating of any tee set should only be done to facilitate the return of scores for handicapping from that set of tees by whichever gender. In any case, we do not generally give a rating for tee sets for ladies if they measure more than 6,200 yds. This is because the length of a Championship course for an International or National event would be roughly 6,000; and it would normally be a composite course of yellow and red tees, not just yellow. County events are played from normal red tees. You would need to have an elite golfer (HI of 2 or less) for any benefit to be seen from the use of long tee sets; and even they might not benefit from a handicapping perspective from scores returned from tees with such a high course rating, with it having an adverse effect on their HI (because it would probably increase the HI, and they need to be as low as they can to maintain eligibility for elite events and teams). There is no reason that a woman should not play from a set of tees without a rating for their gender, provided it is not submitted for handicapping (should they wish to test their skills). If a rating is given for any set of tees, it is checked regularly to ensure that the set of tees is being used. There is a thought amongst some Committees either it will make the men feel better if the ladies are competing from the same tees as they are using (which it won't, because the ladies will get so many extra strokes), or that they will be being seen to be inclusive (which they are not, because the majority of ladies would never wish to put themselves through the slog of playing such a long course). The equality and inclusivity would be better achieved through allowing ladies to play alongside the men, in the same competition, but off their own tees; possibly within the 'prime' tee times at the weekend. They can even give some extra courtesy shots if they want us to feel very included!

EG volunteers forum on Facebook:

This is not an official EG forum, and much of the advice is opinion, speculation or complete misinformation. The aim of the page is for clubs to swap information on initiatives, such as attracting women into club membership, or safeguarding, or attracting/retaining a Handicap Committee. Please use the correct channels for getting handicap advice: either your YLPGA County Handicap Advisors (Ruth or Terry-Ann), or YUGC Handicap Advisors (through Jonathan Plaxton, Union Secretary). They can then contact me as the Regional Handicap

Advisor for England Golf for advice, if required.

Finally, please try to persuade your ladies that the more scores on a record, the more accurate a HI will be. There is little point hanging onto a HI which reflects last year's ability! A good score which is included in the calculation only uses 1/8 of the score; and a bad score will likely never count at all. Returning acceptable scores through the winter would also put the player in a position of current ability when next year's competitions commence.

iGolf report

Over 52,000 members joined to date

26,000 sign ups this year

Only 4% are female: steps to be taken to engage with female golfers (Suggestions welcome, but must be GDPR compliant)

Average age: 41

6,100 have moved into cub membership

8% have been club members in the past

88% of iGolfers have a HI: average HI of 19.3 for men and 30.0 for women

230,000 scores returned since January 2023, average return 3 per month

There is a simple process available through the iGolf channels for clubs to promote any offers, events or opportunities to iGolfers, using the online form which targets golfers by area.

Ruth Goodwin,

RHA