

Equality or Equity?

Golf is about fairness when playing competitions against handicap. With the introduction of the World Handicapping System(WHS), there is an opportunity to enhance the playing experience for all members, more so when men and women play in the same competition. Moving to all tees rated for play for both women and men would be a positive move.

Talk of gender-free tees or gender-neutral tees is confusing when there is a lack of understanding of the WHS Course Rating Process which describes the level of difficulty of a golf course for any given set of tees for either men or women.

The USGA standard, now a world standard is based on an average player and how far that player hits the ball where the statistics show that men hit the ball further than women. These differences are confined to tee shots and fairway shots with no difference between men and women in chipping and putting. The course rating reflects this with each course being rated separately for either men or women, even if the teeing area is at the same location. This results in different Course Rating values and Slope values for each gender. At CFGC our current set up is along the more traditional lines with the forward tees (red) rated for women only and the white and yellow tees rated for men only. Players, when playing in any competition which is regulated by handicap, must play on a course rated appropriately for their gender.

When a competition is for a single prize between any players playing from differently rated tees, course/playing handicaps need to be adjusted to take account of the difference in difficulty (CR).

Example.

Women playing from the red tees with a CR of 71.1 and the men from the white tees with a CR of 68.7 the players playing off the higher CR get an upward adjustment as follows; $71.1 - 68.7 = 2.4$, rounded to 2 strokes added to the Course / Playing Handicap of the player's playing from the higher CR.

The stroke adjustment is to the player's Course/Playing Handicap for the competition only and not included in handicap calculations. If the white and yellow tees are rated for women the same would apply, as the CR and Par for women would be higher.

Note: *The above is a general principle and does not take into account of allowances for Playing Handicaps in competitions. $\text{Index v Slope} = \text{Course Handicap} - \text{Allowance} + \text{Adjustment}$.*

So, Equality is not the requirement Equity is, in other words by applying fair and equitable handicap adjustment.