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# Draft (as at 15-5-2007) – GOLF AUSTRALIA HANDICAPPING SYSTEM (Copyright)

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## 1. Purpose of the Golf Australia Handicapping System

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- To enable as many golfers as possible (males and females, amateurs and professionals) throughout Australia to obtain a handicap and be able to participate in club handicap golf competitions.
- To make the game of golf more inclusive and enjoyable by enabling players of all abilities to compete against each other on an as equitable a basis as possible.
- To encourage participation in the game of golf amongst males and females and people of all ages, and to foster golf as a game for life.
- To provide a system that is as transparent and simple and fair as possible to administer and understand.
- To provide a system that can be uniformly applied throughout all areas of Australia.

## 2. General

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- 2.1 Any handicap administered by an affiliated Australian golf club (or body authorised by Golf Australia), by itself or Golf Link, and calculated in accordance with this System, is owned by Golf Australia.
- 2.2 Every player will endeavour to make the best score they can at each hole in every round played and will report every eligible round for handicapping purposes, regardless of where the round was played.
- 2.3 Golf Australia delegates to each of its Member States the power to administer on its behalf the handicapping of all players who are members of clubs affiliated with such States. Any disputes shall be referred to Golf Australia whose decision shall be final.
- 2.4 All handicaps must be calculated in accordance with this System as outlined below and when read in conjunction with the Golf Australia Course Rating System.
- 2.5 All handicaps referred to in this System are stroke handicaps.
- 2.6 There are four categories of handicaps that may be allotted under this System – Australian Women's Handicap, Australian Men's Handicap, Women's Club Handicap, Men's Club Handicap (see definitions).
- 2.7 Regular and accurate records of all eligible performances must be kept.
- 2.8 The Golf Australia Handicapping System must be properly applied.

## 3. Definitions

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### **Affiliated Member**

An "affiliated member" is any registered member of any bona-fide body. They are an "affiliated member" for such time as they remain a financial member, or otherwise remain registered, with the bona-fide body.

### **AMCR**

Australian Men's Course Rating. See definition of Course Rating.

### **Australian Men's Handicap**

Any male golfer (*including a professional*) who is a member of a bona-fide body, and upon whom an annual fee of affiliation to the state body and Golf Australia is payable, is eligible to hold an "Australian Men's Handicap". A player who is not so qualified will not be eligible to hold an "Australian Men's Handicap".

Note i – Only scores submitted by players with "Australian Men's Handicaps" will be used to determine the Men's Course Rating for a course.

**Note ii – A Committee is permitted to have a condition (which relates to Amateur Status) restricting entry to any event it controls.**

### **Australian Women's Handicap**

Any female golfer (*including a professional*) who is a member of a bona-fide body, and upon whom an annual fee of affiliation to the state body and Golf Australia is payable, is eligible to hold an "Australian Women's Handicap". A player who is not so qualified will not be eligible to hold an "Australian Women's Handicap".

Note i – Only scores submitted by players with "Australian Women's Handicaps" will be used to determine the Women's Course Rating for a course.

**Note ii – A Committee is permitted to have a condition (which relates to Amateur Status) restricting entry to any event it controls.**

## **AWCR**

Australian Women's Course Rating. See definition of Course Rating.

## **Bona-fide Body**

A "bona-fide body" is a formally constituted club, association, or group formed primarily for the purpose of conducting golf events, played in accordance with the Rules of Golf and appropriate local rules, or otherwise to administer golf or a specific area or group of golfers.

## **Competition Round**

A "competition round" is defined as a singles stroke (includes par and Stableford) competition round conducted on a course with an official Course Rating by a recognised golf club, its professional or agent, or other bona-fide body, for which trophies or prizes are awarded for golfing performance.

## **Course Rating**

An official "Course Rating" must be determined in accordance with the Golf Australia Course Rating System. (The Women's Calculated Course Rating (WCCR) / Men's Calculated Course Rating (MCCR) is the course rating for the competition; the Australian Women's Course Rating (AWCR) / Australian Men's Course Rating (AMCR) is the permanent difficulty score rating of a course and is based on the score a golfer with a handicap of 0 would return in ideal weather conditions when playing to their handicap. The AWCR/AMCR is a factor in calculating a WCCR/MCCR.)

## **Differential**

The "differential" is the difference between a player's gross score and the WCCR (used for adjustments to a category of women's handicap) or MCCR (used for adjustments to a category of men's handicap). (When no WCCR/MCCR is available, the AWCR/AMCR must be used as the WCCR/MCCR.)

## **Extra Day Scores**

**An "Extra Day Score" is a score returned from a round played in accordance with the Rules of Golf, attested by a marker, and on a course with an official Course Rating, but not within a competition as described by clauses 4.1 and 4.2 of this System. In order to record an "Extra Day Score" a player must register their name on the "Extra Day Score" Entry List before starting their round.**

## **Home Club**

The "Home Club" is where a player's handicap is recorded. The "Home Club" may be a body affiliated to a state association or Golf Australia, or another body authorised by Golf Australia.

## **Marker**

**Any person able to attest to a score may serve as a "marker" in accordance with the definition contained in the Rules of Golf.**

## **MCCR**

Men's Calculated Course Rating. See definition of Course Rating.

## **Men's Club Handicap**

Any golfer (including a professional) may hold a "Men's Club Handicap". "Men's Club Handicaps" are available to both males **and females (GOLF Link will not maintain a Men's Club Handicap which is held by a female – a Men's Club Handicap held by a female must be maintained by an internal club system)**. An official "Men's Club Handicap" must be administered in accordance with this System.

**Note i – A Committee is permitted to have a gender-based condition restricting entry to any event it controls.**

## **State Association**

A "state association" is one of the member state associations, or an affiliate member, of Golf Australia.

## **Stipulated Round**

The number of holes in a "stipulated round" is 18 unless a smaller number is authorised by the Committee. (Rules of Golf – refer to definitions)

## **WCCR**

Women's Calculated Course Rating. See definition of Course Rating.

## **Women's Club Handicap**

Any female golfer (including a professional) may hold a "Women's Club Handicap". An official "Women's Club Handicap" must be administered in accordance with this System.

# **4. Scores for Handicapping Purposes**

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## **4.1 General**

All scores established in all 18-hole competition rounds played under the Rules of Golf at courses with an official Course Rating must be used for handicapping purposes. Score cards must be attested by a marker.

**When a player plays within a formally-structured competition field (which has used formally-structured tee-times) but does not actually enter the competition, their score may still be used by the committee for handicapping purposes if they conformed with the Rules of Golf and their score was attested by a marker (NB the committee must make its determination prior to the commencement of the round).**

(However scores returned from corporate/trade days or the like, not otherwise eligible as above but played in accordance with the Rules of Golf, may be used for handicap reductions only.)

## **4.2 "Ball Competitions"**

**It is important that handicap golf be made as accessible as possible and as a result Golf Australia strongly encourages all clubs to conduct "Ball Competitions" on all days on which a course is open for general play. A "Ball Competition" is considered to be a competition in which players do not need to play within a formally-structured field, or conform with formally-structured tee times, in order to participate. The "Ball Competition" must be played in accordance with the Rules of Golf. To compete in a "Ball Competition" a player must register their name on the "Ball Competition" Entry List before starting their round. All scores used in all 18-hole singles stroke (includes Par and Stableford) "Ball Competitions" must be used for handicapping purposes. Score cards must be attested by a marker.**

#### **4.3 Extra Day Scores**

**Extra Day Scores must be used for handicapping purposes unless the player has already returned three cards within the period of the current calendar year.**

#### **4.4 Four-Ball Scores**

**If the following conditions are met, Four-ball scores, including from mixed events, may be used for handicapping at the discretion of the committee (even if these conditions are met, cards with fewer than 42 Stableford points or worse than 6 up against par or 6 under in stroke events may still be disregarded) (NB the committee must determine prior to the commencement of the round if the competition is to be used for handicapping and if cards with fewer than 42 Stableford points or worse than 6 up against par or 6 under in stroke events are to be disregarded):**

- **If the adjusted score (as per the below procedure) will result in a handicap reduction.**
- **If the player's score appears at least 9 times on the card.**

**Procedure for completing four-ball score card – When a player has no handicap stroke on a hole and their score is not recorded, they must be given one stroke over the par of the hole. On holes where a player receives one handicap stroke but their score is not recorded, they must be given two strokes over the par of the hole. When a player receives two handicap strokes on a hole and their score is not recorded, they must be given three strokes over the par for the hole. When a player receives three handicap strokes on a hole and their score is not recorded, they must be given four strokes over the par for the hole.**

**If two identical net scores are returned by partners on a hole, the player is deemed to have not recorded a score for that hole.**

**When all the gaps in the card have been filled, the scores are added. Except in the most unusual circumstances, the score obtained in this manner will be worse than the score actually recorded by the player and in this way does not attribute the player with a score better than their play reflected.**

**The AWCR/AMCR is used as the WCCR/MCCR.**

**The score obtained is recorded in the player's handicap record sheet and treated in the same way as all singles scores for handicap purposes.**

#### **4.5 Stipulated Rounds Consisting of 9-17 Holes**

Any stipulated round of 9-17 holes may be used for handicapping purposes at the discretion of the committee (**NB the committee must make its determination prior to the commencement of the round**). The score shall be converted to an 18-hole score by the following method:

- When the score is worse than net par for a stipulated round of less than 18 holes, the score is extended to 18 holes on a pro-rata basis (NB .5 of a stroke is rounded up), eg
  - Stableford round of 12 holes – score of 20 points is extended to 30 points.
  - Par competition of 9 holes – score of -3 is extended to -6.
  - Stroke competition of 9 holes – score of 4 over par is extended to 8 over par.
- When the score is equal to or better than net par for a round less than 18 holes, the score is extended to 18 holes by completing the card with net par figures, eg
  - Stableford round of 12 holes – score of 26 points is extended to 38 points (26 plus 12).
  - Par competition of 9 holes – score of +3 is extended to +3 (+3 plus Square).
  - Stroke competition of 9 holes – score of net 33 (par 36) is extended by adding the par of other 9 (say 35) = net 68.

The extended scores are then utilised (and entered into GOLF Link if applicable) as in a normal 18-hole competition.

#### **4.6 Competition Limiting Number of Clubs**

When a competition limits the number of clubs that may be used to fewer than 14, a score that reduces a handicap must be used, but not one that increases it.

#### **4.7 Novelty Events**

**Scores returned in novelty events such as Bisque Par, Three-Ball, and Aggregate Teams Events may be used for handicapping at the discretion of the committee but only after conversion to a regular stroke, par, or Stableford format, and only if the Rules of singles play have been adhered to (NB the committee must make its determination prior to the commencement of the round).**

#### **4.8 Competition Declared Null and Void**

In competitions declared null and void, only a score that reduces a handicap will be used for handicapping purposes.

#### **4.9 Professional Golfers in the Field and Amateur Events Played in Conjunction with Professional Events**

All scores submitted in competition rounds (as defined) by players with an Australian Women's Handicap, Australian Men's Handicap, Women's Club Handicap, or Men's Club Handicap must be used for handicapping purposes.

#### **4.10 Corporate/Trade Days and Pro-Am Events**

See 4.1 and 4.7.

#### **4.11 Player Fails to Complete Round or Fails to Return Score for Handicapping (other than due to having a 'wipe' on a hole in Stableford or Par, or for picking up on a hole in Stroke – in such cases, see 4.12)**

**4.11.1 When a player fails to complete a round or fails to return a score for handicapping, the player's actual score (if the round was completed but a score card wasn't returned) or estimated/potential score (if they have completed at least 9 holes) must still be added to their handicap record.**

**4.11.2 If the player failed to complete their stipulated round, but still completed at least 9 holes, their score must be adjusted in accordance with 4.5. (NB Where a player plays a hole in Stableford or Par but has a 'wipe', they are considered to have completed that hole for the purposes of this clause.)**

**4.11.3 If, for a non-approved reason, a player fails either to return their score card (and reasonable investigation does not succeed in determining their score) or to complete at least 9 holes, 0.1 must be added to their exact handicap (NB GOLF Link will do this automatically when a player's result is designated as "No Score – Not Approved").**

**4.11.4** In the case of an approved reason in the circumstances covered by 4.11.3, see 4.12.

**4.12** Decisions – Various Disqualification Scenarios, etc.

Other than in a situation covered by 4.11, the following decisions apply:

<b>SITUATION</b>	<b>COMPETITION ACTION</b>	<b>HANDICAPPING ACTION</b>
<b>1. No handicap on card (applies for Singles &amp; Four-Ball). (i) stroke (Rule 6-2b). (ii) par &amp; Stableford (Rule 6-2b &amp; 32-2a)</b>	<b>(i) Disqualified from net event. (ii) As above. NB: If scratch event is held, card accepted for scratch.</b>	<b>(i) &amp; (ii) Apply correct handicap (ie adjust score) and use for handicapping.</b>
<b>2. Higher handicap on card (i) stroke (Rule 6-2b) (applies for Singles &amp; Four-Ball). (ii) par &amp; Stableford (Rule 6-2b &amp; 32-2a)</b>	<b>(i) Disqualified from net event. (ii) As above. NB: If scratch event is held, card accepted for scratch.</b>	<b>(i) &amp; (ii) Apply correct handicap (ie adjust score) and use for handicapping.</b>
<b>3. Lower handicap on card in stroke, par or Stableford (Rule 6-2b &amp; 32-2a) (applies for Singles &amp; Four-Ball).</b>	<b>Card accepted for competition as returned.</b>	<b>Apply correct handicap (ie adjust score) and use for handicapping.</b>
<b>4. Player picks up on hole in stroke (applies for Singles only).</b>	<b>Disqualified from the competition.</b>	<b>Add 0.1 to player's exact handicap.</b>
<b>5. Score for hole omitted in par &amp; Stableford due to 'wipe' (applies for Singles only).</b>	<b>Accepted for the competition. No obligation under the Rules to record a score for every hole.</b>	<b>Use for handicapping.</b>
<b>6. Card not signed (Rule 6-6b) (applies for Singles &amp; Four-Ball).</b>	<b>Disqualified from the competition.</b>	<b>Use for handicapping as returned.</b>
<b>7. (a) Card handed in after competition has closed. (b) No card returned. (Applies for Singles &amp; Four-Ball.)</b>	<b>(a) &amp; (b) Not accepted for the competition.</b>	<b>See condition 4.11.</b>
<b>8. Higher stroke score than actually taken recorded in stroke, par and Stableford (Rules 6-6d &amp; 32-2a) (applies for Singles &amp; Four-Ball).</b>	<b>Card accepted as returned.</b>	<b>Used for handicapping with recorded score.</b>
<b>9. Lower score than actually taken recorded in stroke (Rule 6-6d) (applies for Singles &amp; Four-Ball).</b>	<b>Disqualified from the competition.</b>	<b>(i) If correct score can be verified, adjust and use for handicapping. (ii) If score cannot be verified, add 0.1 to player's exact handicap.</b>
<b>10. Lower stroke score than actually taken recorded in par and Stableford (applies for Singles &amp; Four-Ball). (Please refer to Rule 32-2a and relevant Decisions on the Rules of Golf)</b>	<b>(i) If result of hole affected – Disqualified from the competition. (ii) If result of hole not affected, no penalty applies and card accepted for the competition.</b>	<b>(i) a. If correct score can be verified, adjust and use for handicapping. (i) b. If correct score cannot be verified, add 0.1 to player's exact handicap. (ii) Use for handicapping as returned.</b>
<b>11. Withdrawal after competition commences due to approved reason (and player fails to complete at least 9 holes) (applies for Singles only).</b>	<b>Withdrawn.</b>	<b>Not counted in field size and no adjustment to handicap (NB entered into GOLF Link as "No Score – Approved").</b>

## 5. The Player

- 5.1 A player may hold no more than one handicap in any handicap category for which they meet the eligibility criteria. An Australian Men's Handicap or an Australian Women's Handicap may only be allotted by the player's Home Club.
- 5.2 If a player is, or becomes, a member of more than one club, they must select one club as their Home Club (for handicapping purposes only) and shall report to this club their decision and the names of their other club or clubs. They shall also report to their other clubs the name of the Home Club, (and if not on GOLF Link) their handicap there, and any alterations that may be made to their handicap from time to time. If a player ceases to be a member of another club, they shall report the fact to their Home Club so that it at all times has a record of all clubs of which the player is a member.
- 5.3 A player shall report in writing or by returning the card to their Home Club all competition round scores returned by them at other clubs whether or not these are at clubs of which the player is also a member. (This is not necessary if the visited and Home clubs are both on GOLF Link.) With such reported scores the player shall also give the WCCR/MCCR of the day and the par of that course.
- 5.4 It is desirable that the player, when playing at a visited club, carries their GOLF Link card, or an introductory card that lists their current exact Australian Women's or Men's Handicap.

## 6. The Home Club

**Each club must have a Handicap Manager or Handicap Committee which will be responsible to the State Handicap Manager.** The Handicap Manager/Committee of the Home Club shall:

- 6.1 Maintain a satisfactory method of recording players' scores and handicaps.
- 6.2 Ensure that players' scores are regularly and faithfully recorded and adjustments made as soon as possible to handicaps as required by this system.
- 6.3 Maintain a record of the MCCR/WCCRs.
- 6.4 Apply this system in terms of its letter and spirit.
- 6.5 As far as possible, insist that all cards are returned by competitors.
- 6.6 When a score returned from a Visited Club does not contain the WCCR/MCCR, use the Visited Club's AWCR/AMCR for calculations if reasonable investigations fail.
- 6.7 When a player, without reasonable justification, fails to complete a round or fails to return a score for handicapping, apply 4.11.

The Club Committee may determine which categories of its members are eligible to hold each category of Australian and/or Club Handicaps (subject to the definitions contained within this System). **The Club Committee may restrict access to Australian Handicaps only to Amateurs.**

## 7. The Visited Club

Whilst it is the responsibility of the individual player to ensure that all scores returned in competitions at other clubs are returned to the player's Home Club, in addition, visited clubs shall return all competition scores to the visitors' Home Clubs with WCCRs/MCCRs provided (unless they are both on GOLF Link).

**When a player plays at a club (for this purpose called the Visited Club) which is not their Home Club and in circumstances such that the Home Club does not have time to keep the player's record and handicap up-to-date with their scores, the Visited Club may use the scores to alter the handicap temporarily, in accordance with this System, using the player's playing handicap as the base for calculations if their exact handicap is not readily available.**

## 8. Allotment of Australian Men's Handicap or Australian Women's Handicap

- 8.1 **To obtain an Australian Women's Handicap or an Australian Men's Handicap, a player shall submit five cards which shall be adjusted by the Handicap Committee as below, treating any score of more than 3 over par at any holes as 3 over par. The initial five cards may be submitted as Extra Day Scores, or in competition rounds, or as a combination of the two. Each card must indicate the WCCR/MCCR and AWCR/AMCR.**

<u>Par</u>	<u>Returned Card</u>	<u>Amended Score</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>35</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>50</u>

**Scores should be adjusted by the handicapper thus.**

**Note: This adjustment is only made to the initial five cards.**

**After these adjustments have been made, the difference between the amended score and the WCCR/MCCR of each card is ascertained. The two highest differentials are disregarded. The three lowest differentials are then added together and averaged by dividing by three. The resulting average (to one decimal place) is the player's exact handicap, which can then be rounded to the nearer whole number (.5 being rounded up) to give the playing Australian Men's Handicap or Australian Women's Handicap. As the exact handicap is the starting point for future handicapping, both figures must always be recorded.**

**The Handicap Manager/Committee in consultation with the State Handicap Manager may allot a player an initial handicap less than the average if it has good reason to consider that a lower handicap is more appropriate to the player's ability. Any previous handicap or performance should be taken into account – see Section 10 (Life of Cards).**

- 8.2 **The maximum Australian Men's Handicap is 32.4 and the maximum Australian Women's Handicap is 45.4. If an exact handicap reaches above these points, the player's Australian Men's or Women's Handicap remains at 32.4 or 45.4 respectively and a Club Handicap in excess of the Australian maximums applies if permitted by the club (see Section 12). Even if the club does not permit Club Handicaps in excess of the respective Australian Handicap maximums, the player's exact handicap will be unconstrained by any Club Handicap limit.**
- 8.3 **After 3 of the initial 5 cards have been submitted, the Handicap Manager/Committee must allocate the player a Club Handicap based on the average of the best two of these cards (after adjusting the scores as described above).**

## 9. Alterations of Handicaps

9.1 Handicaps are divided into five categories. These are:

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Handicaps</u>
<u>A</u>	<u>up to 5.4</u>
<u>B</u>	<u>5.5 – 16.4</u>
<u>C</u>	<u>16.5 – 27.4</u>
<u>D</u>	<u>27.5 – 36.4</u>
<u>E</u>	<u>36.5 and above</u>

9.2 The recording of scores shall be kept by differentials; that is the amount by which the player's gross score was above or below the MCCR/WCCR. If a player's differential equals their handicap or is within the "buffer zone" (the buffer zone is 2 for all handicap categories), no change is made to their exact handicap.

If the player submits a score with a differential that is greater than their handicap plus the buffer, their exact handicap must be increased by 0.1, irrespective of the extent to which their differential was beyond the buffer zone.

For example, a player on a handicap of 17 who records a differential of 17, 18 or 19 will not have their exact handicap adjusted.

9.3 If a player submits a score with the differential less than their handicap, their exact handicap is reduced by an amount per stroke that their differential was below their handicap; the amount per stroke being determined by the player's handicap category (see table below). The buffer zone does not apply to differentials less than the handicap.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Handicap</u>	<u>Buffer Zone</u>	<u>Add .1 if differential is above handicap by at least –</u>	<u>If differential is below handicap, subtract for each stroke under</u>
<u>A</u>	<u>up to 5.4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>.1</u>
<u>B</u>	<u>5.5 – 16.4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>.2</u>
<u>C</u>	<u>16.5 – 27.4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>.3</u>
<u>D</u>	<u>27.5 – 36.4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>.4</u>
<u>E</u>	<u>36.5 and above</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>.5</u>

A player on 12.2 returns a score with a differential of 15; their exact handicap becomes 12.3. If they then return a score with a differential of 5, their exact handicap is reduced by  $7 \times .2 = 1.4$  ie to an exact handicap of 10.9 and their playing handicap is 11 which is immediately the player's new handicap.

9.4 When a player's handicap is to be reduced so that it goes from a higher category to a lower category, it is reduced at the rate appropriate to the higher category only so far as brings their playing handicap into the lower category – the balance of the reduction should be at the rate appropriate to the lower category.  
**For example:** A player on 28.2 returns a score with a differential of 22, ie 6 strokes below their playing handicap of 20; their reduction is as follows:

$$28.2 - (2 \times .4) \text{ (ie } - 8) = 27.4$$

$$27.4 - (4 \times .3) \text{ (ie } - 1.2) = 26.2$$

9.5 A player whose exact handicap contains .5 or over shall be given the next higher handicap, eg 12.5 exact would be 13 playing handicap.

9.6 Increases and decreases of handicap become effective immediately.

9.7 In a situation where a player competes in a competition round before a previous handicap-altering score is processed, their correct Australian Men's or Women's Handicap will be that displayed by either GOLF Link or (for clubs not operating within the GOLF Link system) such other display item as designated by their Home Club (even if they are aware of what their new handicap will be).

NB The provisions of Section 7 govern in the event of a conflict between it and 9.7.

Additionally, the Committee in charge of a competition may require a player to play off the figure their new handicap will be, even if their handicap is yet to be officially adjusted. A Committee may also adjust a player's handicap and net score after the player has submitted their score card in a stroke play competition – in such an instance, the listing of the incorrect handicap is considered to be a Committee error and consequently the player is not penalised. (In a match play competition, a player's handicap may not be altered after their round has commenced – any queries regarding a player's handicap must be raised with the club handicap manager/committee prior to the commencement of the player's round.)

9.8 At all times, differentials and adjustments must be applied to the recorded exact handicap rather than to any different handicap from which the player may have actually played.

## 10. Life of Cards

10.1 All handicap records will be examined at the beginning of a year with effect from 1 January, at which time all scores more than a year old will be disregarded, being no longer valid. For a player to retain an Australian Women's or Men's Handicap they must have at least 3 "live scores" at 1 January each year. (A member registered on GOLF Link with an Australian Men's or Women's Handicap by their club will be deemed to have submitted 3 scores as at the date of the initial data entry.)

10.2 If a player plays in a competition round but fails to return a score for handicapping (either for an approved or unapproved reason), this round will not count as a "live score".

- 10.3 A player's Australian Women's or Men's Handicap will lapse until the number of live cards since 1 January of the previous year reaches 3, with normal recording procedures operating from the player's last recorded exact handicap.
- 10.4 If a player returns to playing, having not submitted a score for two years or more, the Handicapping Manager/Committee may allot a new Australian Women's or Men's Handicap under the procedure as described in Section 8.1 (in doing so, the State Handicap Manager must be consulted when allocating a handicap more than two strokes higher than the previous handicap for players whose last recorded handicap was 4.4 or less; a handicap more than 3 strokes higher than the previous handicap for players whose last recorded handicap was 4.5-10.4; and a handicap more than 4 strokes higher than any previous handicap for players whose last recorded handicap was greater than 10.4), or reinstate their previous handicap initially as a Club Handicap.**
- 10.5 When a player changes from one Home Club to another, a copy of their handicap record shall be given to the new Home Club so that the exact Handicap (Australian or Club) shall be taken over by the new Home Club.
- 10.6 A handicap becomes null and void if a player has no current membership of an affiliated body (NB any live scores remain live).

## **11. Plus Handicaps**

- 11.1 No state association or Golf Australia approval is required for a player to hold a plus Australian Men's or Women's Handicap.**
- 11.2 If a player has an exact Australian Men's or Women's Handicap of +0.6 or greater, their respective playing Australian Men's or Women's Handicap is the rounded figure.**

## **12. Club Handicaps**

- 12.1 A player who is not qualified to hold an Australian Men's or Women's Handicap may be allotted a Club Handicap. In addition, if a player has an exact Australian Men's Handicap higher than 32.4 (or Australian Women's Handicap higher than 45.4) they qualify for an Australian Men's Handicap of 32 (or an Australian Women's Handicap of 45) and may also be allotted a Club Handicap based on the exact handicap at the discretion of their Home Club Handicap Manager/Committee.
- 12.2 The method of assessing Club Handicaps must strictly adhere to the Golf Australia Handicapping System. Clubs may impose their own Club Handicap limit over 32 for men and 45 for women.
- 12.3 When playing away from their club or in open events, players must play on their Australian Women's Handicaps or Australian Men's Handicaps, unless it is a specific condition of the competition that Club Handicaps are eligible.**

## **13. Generally**

- 13.1 Handicaps are intended to enable players to compete in handicap events on even terms. When a player is showing better form than their handicap or is showing an increased interest in playing better golf but is not returning cards which lead to an automatic reduction in handicap and the improvement, current ability, or some other justifiable circumstances make it apparent to the Handicap Manager/Committee that the player is over-handicapped, their handicap may be reduced. This should not be a penalty for lack of scores but solely to provide uniformity in handicapping among all who play handicap golf.**
- 13.2 A player's handicap may also be increased for players who may be recovering from injuries, illness or other justifiable reason. Such alterations may be effected at any time because the circumstances which give rise to this unusual step may be such as to require fairly prompt action in fairness to all concerned.**
- 13.3 When a player's returns give rise to suspicion they may be attempting to "manipulate a handicap", or are in serious breach of this System or the Rules of Golf or Etiquette (as contained in the Rules of Golf booklet, the Home Club is empowered to investigate the player's performances and, if considered warranted, temporarily suspend their Australian and/or Club Handicap.**
- 13.4 A decision to increase, decrease or suspend a player's handicap under this Section must be ratified by the General Committee (Board of Directors) of the player's Home Club.**
- 13.5 Should the State Association or Golf Australia, on inquiry, be satisfied that a player's Australian Women's or Men's Handicap has not been determined in accordance with the Golf Australia Handicapping System or the player has acted in serious breach of this System or the Rules of Golf or otherwise detrimentally to the best interests of the game, it may withdraw that player's Australian Women's or Men's Handicap.**
- 13.6 Implementation Conditions: The following conditions are to assist clubs in implementing Section 13. If these conditions are adhered to, the State Association will support clubs when action is necessary to provide uniformity in handicapping among all who play handicap golf:**
- 13.6.1 The General Committee (Board of Directors) must accumulate data, cards, scores, competition results, that would indicate handicap adjustments are necessary.**
- 13.6.2 The General Committee (Board of Directors) must as a body, make a decision to increase or decrease a member's handicap as indicated by Section 13 of the Golf Australia Handicapping System.**
- 13.6.3 No one person or group of persons, other than the General Committee (Board of Directors) has the power to increase or decrease a member's handicap when implementing Section 13.**
- 13.6.4 At no time can the General Committee (Board of Directors) ever "freeze" a member's handicap that is being calculated in accordance with the Golf Australia Handicapping System, at a particular figure.**
- 13.6.5 Appropriate letters for use by clubs are available from State Associations wishing to implement Section 13. The first letter advises the member that their handicap is to be reviewed due to better than reflected, or otherwise, performances. The second letter advises of the newly approved handicap.**

## 14. Handicap Information Disclosure

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No affiliated club, association or other affiliated or non-affiliated body may make handicaps or records of handicaps calculated under this System available outside the environs of its course, clubhouse, or office. This prohibits the unauthorised display of handicap information on the Internet and other forms of public media. For the purpose of viewing members' handicap information outside the club environs, the club, association or other body may, **with the express written consent of Golf Australia**, link its Internet site to the approved Golf Australia GOLF Link Internet site, and/or other GOLF Link media facilities as advised from time to time.