



SCOTTISH GOLF  
UNION



SCOTTISH LADIES'  
GOLFING ASSOCIATION

# ANNUAL HANDICAPPING PACK 2010

*Practical Guidance for  
Match & Handicap Secretaries / Conveners  
and Handicapping Committees*



Dear Match & Handicap Secretary,

Once again, the 2010 Annual Handicapping Pack is designed to provide some useful and practical guidance to assist you in the administration and application of the CONGU® Unified Handicapping System ('UHS') within your golf club(s). In addition, guidance on associated requirements for the running of Qualifying Competitions for handicapping purposes is also included for your reference, where appropriate. This booklet contains the following information:

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### Handicapping and Course Rating Enquiry Procedures

Queries on Handicapping should be addressed in the first instance to the Union / Association offices - either to Kevin Weir or Fiona Hastie at the SGU offices or to Sheila Hartley in the SLGA office.

Queries on Course Rating and in particular the extension of the preferred lie period should be addressed to either the SGU Area Secretary, whom failing the SGU office contacts above, or to the SLGA National Course Rating Assessor, June McEwan, whom failing the SLGA offices. Preferred Lie extensions granted by either body for a golf course shall apply to both the Men and Ladies sections for the period that the extension is granted. Clubs should note that the authority to adopt preferred lies for Qualifying Competition purposes cannot be delegated to affiliated golf club committees. Please ensure permission is sought prior to play as above and please be assured both bodies will adopt a very sympathetic approach to your enquiries, whilst ensuring fairness and equity within handicapping is maintained when running qualifying competitions on this basis.

### CONGU® Unified Handicapping System Manual 2008-2011

A number of CONGU® Unified Handicapping System Manuals have been distributed to affiliated golf clubs over the last two years. Should club committees require additional copies of the Manual, these are available for purchase directly through both the SGU and the SLGA. Manuals can either be ordered for delivery at £2 per copy, or alternatively collected from the respective governing body offices at £1 per copy. Order forms are available online at:

SGU: <http://www.scottishgolf.org/handicapping>

SLGA: <http://www.slga.co.uk/handicap>

## **JOINT MATCH & HANDICAP CONVENER PRACTICAL GUIDE**

The SGU, in conjunction with the SLGA, has published a Practical Guide for Match & Handicap Conveners presenting an overview of the handicap conveners' role, their responsibilities within a golf club, and outlining the key elements of the CONGU® UHS.

This publication was distributed to clubs in Summer 2008 and remains available in limited numbers in printed form. If you wish to order any additional copies, which will be limited to a maximum of two copies per club, please contact:

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In addition, this publication can be downloaded from the SGU website at the following link:

<http://www.scottishgolf.org/go/club-services/practical-guides>

### **Pocket Guides for Golfers – Rules / Etiquette / You and Your Handicap**

The Rules of Golf, Etiquette and You and Your Handicap are three of the most important elements of being a golfer, whether a member has years of experience within the game or is a novice or beginner.

To help golfers of all levels and abilities, the SGU has produced a set of three pocket guides to give a better and easier understanding of each of these aspects of the game. Samples of each have previously been circulated to all affiliated golf clubs for their Committee's reference. The handy-sized pocket guides are available for clubs to purchase for your members or committee representatives, in various order quantities.

The order form can be found at: [www.scottishgolf.org/clubservices/guides&resources](http://www.scottishgolf.org/clubservices/guides&resources)



## CONGU® UHS

### COMPETITIONS QUALIFYING FOR HANDICAPPING PURPOSES 2010

Clause 4.1(g) of the CONGU® UHS gives the Scottish Golf Union (SGU) and the Scottish Ladies' Golfing Association (SLGA) authority to determine the Competitions that may be recognised for Handicapping Purposes. The SGU and SLGA have decided that the events listed below shall be recognised as *Qualifying Competitions* by Handicapping Authorities in Scotland. The following Notes 1-6 apply to both the SGU and SLGA Qualifying Competition listings below.

#### Note 1

To be recognised as a *Qualifying Competition* the event must be covered under one of the categories on the SGU / SLGA *Qualifying Competitions* lists and satisfy the requirements of the Definitions of *Competition Play Conditions* and *Qualifying Competition* within the CONGU® UHS.

#### Note 2

Organisers of events covered within the Category A & Category B *Qualifying Competition* listings **must** display a notice advising competitors:

- a) If, for any reason, the event is not a *Qualifying Competition* for handicapping purposes, prior to commencement of play. (e.g. it is not being played over a measured course);
- b) Of the CSS as determined by Clause 18 of the UHS as soon as possible.

#### Note 3

Organisers of events within Category B on the SGU and SLGA lists below must ensure that:

1. The event is played over a *Measured Course* as defined in the CONGU® UHS.
2. The CSS is correctly calculated in accordance with Clause 18 of the CONGU® UHS.
3. The event complies with all the criteria for a round to be qualifying in accordance with the CONGU® UHS.

#### Note 4

All Clubs at which a player is a member, Clubs staging Open *Qualifying Competitions* and organisers of events in Category B are **requested** where practicable to send score, CSS and Stableford / Nett Double Bogey (Clause 19) adjustment details to the *Home Club* of all competitors as soon as possible after an event. This does not absolve the player from the responsibility of returning all his/her 'away' *Qualifying Scores* but serves to assist *Handicap Committees* in the timeous processing of away scores.

#### Note 5

Events played outside Great Britain & Ireland, including those directly organised by or under the auspices of the National Federation controlling golf in that country will not be accepted as "*Qualifying Competitions*" for handicapping purposes. However, this does not preclude the scores being used as a contributory element in any adjustment of handicap made under Clause 23 of the System.

## Note 6

Organisers of events wishing to be considered for inclusion in this list should apply to the SGU/SLGA (as appropriate) prior to 30<sup>th</sup> November for inclusion in the list for the following year. Organisations already authorised under Category B do not need to re-apply annually. Organisations no longer wishing to host *Qualifying Competitions* should notify the SGU/SLGA as soon as possible. The SGU/SLGA reserves the right to remove any Organisation from the *Qualifying Competition* listings if it has not fulfilled its responsibilities under the CONGU® UHS, or the above Clauses.

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### **Any Competition organised and administered by: -**

- The Scottish Golf Union
- The English Golf Union
- The Golf Union of Wales
- The Golfing Union of Ireland
- The Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews
- A Scottish Golf Union Area or Association of SGU Areas (and their equivalents in England, Ireland and Wales)
- Links Trusts
- Golf Clubs affiliated to the Scottish Golf Union (Affiliated Club Definition)
- Golf Clubs affiliated to the English Golf Union, The Golf Union of Wales and The Golfing Union of Ireland (Affiliated Club Definition)

### **Competitions organised and administered by: -**

- National Championships of the Armed Services, Police and Civil Services
- Scottish Champion of Champions Championship
- Scottish Schools Golf Association Championship
- Scottish Universities Golf Championship and Scottish Universities Annual Order of Merit competitions
- British Universities Golf Championship
- The Regional Rounds & Finals of the Golf Foundation/Weetabix Age Group Championships
- All competitions authorised by the English Golf Union, The Golf Union of Wales and The Golfing Union of Ireland as qualifying competitions for handicapping purposes e.g. Golf Illustrated Gold Vase, Faldo Junior Golf Series
- The Rotary International Championship
- National Scottish Golfers Alliance Championship
- Jameson Golf World Champion of Champions Regional Qualifying
- St. Andrews Children's Golf Club
- The Scottish Seniors Golfing Society Order of Merit Competitions
- The Scottish Junior Golf Tour Annual Order of Merit Competitions
- Troon Links Championship
- Golf Club Managers' Association Scottish Regional Competitions
- Paul Lawrie Foundation Open Competitions

**A. Any Competition organised and administered by –**

- The Ladies' Golf Union
- The English Women's Golf Association
- The Irish Ladies' Golf Union
- The Scottish Ladies' Golfing Association
- The Golf Union of Wales
- Junior competitions run by the Scottish Golf Union, The English Golf Union and The Golfing Union of Ireland.

**B. Competitions meeting the criteria below and organised and administered by -**

- Golf Clubs Affiliated to SLGA, EWGA, ILGU, GWU
- English Women's County Golfing Associations
- English Women's Divisional/Regional Committees
- English Schools' Golf Association
- Irish Ladies' Golf Union District Committees
- Irish Ladies' Golf Union District Junior Committees
- St Andrew's Links Junior Golf Association
- Scottish Ladies' County Golf Associations
- Scottish Ladies' Divisional Committees
- Scottish Girls' Divisional Committees
- Scottish Schools' Golf Associations
- Welsh Ladies' County Associations
- Welsh Ladies' Regional Associations
- Welsh Schools Golf Associations
- Links Trust Management Committees
- The Golf Foundation
- JSA Ltd – The Duke of York Young Champions Trophy
- The Daily Telegraph Junior Golf Championship
- Faldo Junior Golf Series
- British Universities Sports Association events held in Scotland
- Scottish Universities Sports Association events
- National Championships of the Armed Services and Police
- The Rotary International Championship
- Scottish Veteran Ladies' Golf Associations
- Paul Lawrie Foundation Open Competitions

## **Qualifying Competitions – Supplementary Scores/Nine-Hole Qualifying Competitions**

Both Supplementary Scores and Nine-Hole Qualifying Competitions were formally incorporated into the CONGU® UHS in the 2008-2011 version and have been adopted by many clubs since their inception. (See Clauses 21 and 22, respectively).

Both these forms of Qualifying Competitions are designed to encourage players who are restricted by business, family or social commitments from entering their golf club's scheduled fixture listing competitions, to play golf at alternative times for handicapping purposes. We hope that these flexible additional opportunities will also encourage members to frequent and make use of the clubhouse facilities on a more frequent basis than perhaps they would otherwise be able to. Other sections within the club are also encouraged to play additional Nine-Hole Qualifying Competitions and this format appears to have been particularly popular within Senior Sections. With both these formats now formally recognised as Qualifying Competitions this allows players additional opportunities to maintain their CONGU® Handicap. We, therefore, encourage all golf clubs to make these opportunities available to your Members, wherever possible.

A joint Nine-Hole SSS application form can be found at:

<http://www.scottishgolf.org/go/handicapping/nine-hole-qualifying-comps>

## **Guidance on running Mixed Competitions (inc. Juniors)**

Appendix O of the CONGU UHS Manual provides guidance on the running of Mixed Competitions and additional details are contained on the CONGU® website, [www.CONGU.com](http://www.CONGU.com)

Both sources recommend that for players playing from different sets of tees a handicap adjustment MUST be made to the players playing the course with the higher Standard Scratch Score (SSS). We would recommend that traditional Stroke Play is normally the simplest format to administer for mixed competitions, with Stableford and Par/Bogey Competitions being slightly more complex, particularly when the Par to SSS relationships are different for men and ladies.

It is, however, hoped that with a Unified Handicapping System now operational across both men and ladies golf within GB&I, that this will encourage golf clubs to consider adopting regular mixed competition formats into their annual fixture listings.

## Central Database of Handicaps Update

First, we would like to re-cap on the key benefits that the CDH is designed to deliver for all affiliated golf clubs, the Unions / Association and importantly individual golfers:

- Assist golf clubs in automating administration of member's handicaps
- Automatically return 'away' qualifying scores to the 'home' club of golfers
- Ensure a standardised handicapping system of assured integrity across Scotland and Wales
- All affiliated golf club members 'Qualifying Scores' will be recorded on the CDH
- Allow individual golfers online access to look up their handicap and full player handicap records
- Opportunity to analyse the demographic and participation profiles to guide our future development of the game in both Scotland and Wales

To deliver the benefits the active support of the CONGU® licensed ISV's is of paramount importance. We have therefore held a number of meetings (late 2008 / throughout 2009) working very closely with an invited working group of CONGU® licensed ISV's, including representation from:

- Club Systems International (Club 2000)
- HandicapMaster
- M H Systems (GC Gold)
- DJB Software
- Intelligent Golf

The ISV's requested that we investigate adopting the same data transfer protocol from clubs to the CDH platform as the EGU CDH. By doing so, the ISV's indicated that they would then only need minimal additional development work to interface with Scottish / Welsh CDH and delivery could therefore be achieved much quicker. Subsequent negotiations with the EGU proved fruitful and we have legally contracted with the EGU and all the other parties within their CDH Working Group with an intellectual property right claim, to adopt the same transfer protocol. This delivers a number of key benefits:

- The CONGU® licensed ISV's have already amended their software to interface with the EGU CDH and therefore with minor amendments can now also interface with the Scottish and Welsh CDH Technical solution
- Through use of a consistent unique ID numbering system, data will be transferable across borders throughout mainland UK – Scotland, Wales and England

As previously presented, the population of the CDH will rely on the interface between CONGU® licensed ISV's and also the availability of member data from affiliated golf clubs. The data fields that will be requested are as follows:

- Member's name
- Member's nominated 'home' golf club
- (...and details of any 'Away' golf club(s) of which they are a member)
- Gender
- Date of birth
- Handicap record

It is important to also revisit the reasons for requesting these data fields, in particular the date-of-birth, which are summarised as follows:

- To identify between members of the same name e.g. father / son
- To identify and reconcile individual golfers with multiple golf club memberships, ensuring integrity of unique CDH ID number allocation
- Analysis of demographic information – e.g. average age of club members
- Analysis of participation rates across golf – juniors / adults / seniors
- Assisting identification of golfers with special talent – potential invites to join Area / County / National Coaching framework
- Assess success of national strategies adopted to bring more people to the game e.g. clubgolf – junior participation, golf awareness initiative
- Assist governing bodies in ensuring resources are being directed to the right areas to develop the game, its participants and importantly encouraging growth in club membership

### **Current Status**

The development of the Central Database of Handicaps in Scotland and Wales continues to progress through its final testing stages. The first phase of testing with live club data has been successfully completed and we are now inviting a number of other independent software vendors (ISV's) to also test the data transfer protocol now adopted within Scotland and Wales.

### **Next steps**

- Complete additional testing with live golf club data with a number of other CONGU<sup>®</sup> licensed ISV's
- Run pilot test late Winter 2010 ensuring all data fields transferring / recording data correctly onto the CDH platform
- Commence staged roll-out throughout 2010

Throughout the CDH development a number of fundamental principles have remained consistent and extremely important to all the governing bodies, participating and delivering this project:

- The CDH will be supplied by the governing bodies as a service to affiliated golf clubs and from within existing resources
- Clubs with online access and operating a current CONGU<sup>®</sup> licensed version of handicapping software will be able to interface with the proposed CDH. For clubs currently not online or using a CONGU<sup>®</sup> licensed version of handicapping software we will work closely together to identify the best solutions to enable these clubs to transmit qualifying scores through to the CDH
- We will work closely with all CONGU<sup>®</sup> licensed ISV's to develop the final solution that delivers the intended benefits to all affiliated golf clubs
- We will remain committed to working with the EGU and the GUI to agree a solution that leaves the door open for the transfer of scores between all GB&I countries
- Under no circumstances will any third party commercial organisations be allowed access to any of the personal data contained within the CDH

A comprehensive list of benefits that the CDH will provide for individual golfers, golf club handicap administrators, Areas/Counties and National Unions/Association along with a detailed Q&A paper have been published on the SGU website. These can be accessed via:

[www.scottishgolf.org/handicapping/CentralDatabaseH'caps](http://www.scottishgolf.org/handicapping/CentralDatabaseH'caps)

We will continue to keep all affiliated golf clubs informed of progress throughout the remainder of this project as well as publishing appropriate CDH information and updates on both the SGU and SLGA websites.

### **How can clubs help?**

Clubs can help the process by ensuring that their handicap records are up to date in terms of player details. Also by ensuring that they have their Home and Away players correctly identified within the system and that any players who are no longer members have been deleted. This will help ensure that only current, accurate information is entered onto the CDH.

### **CONGU® HANDICAPS**

#### **Handicap Allocations - Category 1**

Handicap Committees are referred to Clause 16.3(f) of the CONGU® UHS which requires Category 1 Handicap Allotments to be ratified by the SGU/SLGA before issuing to the member. Ratification of Category 1 handicap allotments are required irrespective of whether the handicapping software used by the club allows such a handicap to be allocated to a member.

#### **Handicap Allocations - General**

Handicap Committees are reminded that clubs should request a series of information on a player's golfing experience and background before allotting a new CONGU Handicap e.g. previous club memberships held, previous handicap held (even if held under a different handicapping system), notable golfing achievements.

#### **Starring /Lapsing of Handicaps (CONGU® UHS Clause 25)**

Both the SGU and the SLGA adopt the same policies in respect of starring/ lapsing of handicaps in Scotland. Full details of the implementation procedures and controls can be found at:

<http://www.scottishgolf.org/handicapping/starringofhandicaps>

We would highlight that golf clubs should be aware that it is only under exceptional circumstances that a player not returning the requisite three qualifying scores between Annual Handicap Reviews should not be starred e.g. where the player has a medical incapacity to play during a season. Unless extenuating circumstances exist, players not submitting 3 qualifying scores must be starred/ lapsed.

A player is only required to submit three qualifying scores to maintain a CONGU® Handicap and this principle extends into the submission of three scorecards for a new handicap allocation, or for a reallocation of a handicap, following a starring. In

both cases once the three scores have been submitted and the handicap is allocated / reallocated there is no further requirement for any additional qualifying scores to be submitted by the player during that playing season. The player will be required to submit at least three qualifying scores in subsequent years to maintain their CONGU® Handicap.

It may be of interest to note that the EGU, EWGA and the GUW have all implemented an Active / Inactive handicap policy from 1 January 2010, similar to (but not exactly the same as) the Starring/ Lapsing policy adopted in Scotland. Clubs that have Away members with English or Welsh Home clubs should consider whether or not they want to insist upon an Active handicap for these players as being a necessary prerequisite for entry to club competitions. Similar consideration should be given by clubs to entrants for their open competitions. In all such cases the conditions of competition must cover the policy adopted.

## **Overseas Handicaps**

### **Conditions of Competition – Eligibility to Enter**

Clubs often ask whether players with overseas handicaps are eligible to play in Qualifying Competitions. The answer will be governed by the clubs Conditions of Competition, in particular the eligibility to play in competitions. This condition should specify what handicaps are acceptable for entry into club competitions.

### **Course Handicap Calculations**

Where a player enters from an overseas country where the USGA Slope System is adopted the appropriate Handicapping Systems require that the player should furnish the committee with confirmation of their appropriate Handicap Index. European entrants are also required under the EGA Handicap System to furnish competition organising committees with the Slope rating of the standard set of tees at their home club. The Committee should then calculate the Course Handicap for entry into the competition, as follows:

**US** –  $(\text{USGA Handicap Index} / 113) \times \text{Slope of the course} / \text{tees to be played}$

**EGA** –  $(\text{EGA Handicap Index} \times \text{Standard tee Slope rating of player's Home Course}) / 113$

The resulting calculations are rounded up to the nearest whole number, with .5 or greater rounding up.

For European entrants that cannot produce official certificates of their EGA Exact Handicap or the Slope Rating, the EGA Handicap System states that the committee would be justified in accepting the entry of the player, playing from their rounded EGA Exact Handicap.

### **CSS Calculations**

For CSS calculation purposes, all entrants accepted in the competition should be included within the CSS calculation. Overseas entrants will be required to report their scores back to their home clubs in their own countries and will therefore require the USGA Course and Slope rating to enable them to do so. The USGA ratings are available from both the SGU or SLGA, if required by clubs.

## **Open Competitions – Home and Away CSS Calculations**

We are encouraged by the results of the Open Competition ‘home’ and ‘away’ CSS calculations over the past two years, distinctly reflecting the intentions of separate CSS’s being calculated for both sets of players. (*CONGU<sup>®</sup> UHS, Clause 18.1(b), and Appendix B, Section 2 Open Competitions*). The separation between ‘home’ and ‘away’ players is aligned with CONGU’s expectations, reflecting the nature and scale of home advantage within the game of golf.

Clubs are reminded to ensure that each competition entrant is correctly categorised as a ‘home’ (e.g. any home or away member of the golf club or member of a golf club that also plays over the golf course on which the competition is being held) or an ‘away’ (i.e. true visitor) player. This will allow the home and away CSS calculation to truly reflect the ‘home advantage’ benefiting those with local knowledge of the course.

### **Open Competitions - Committee’s Returning Away Scores to Participants’ Home Clubs?**

The CONGU<sup>®</sup> UHS requires players to return all away scores to their home club as soon as practicable after playing. (*CONGU<sup>®</sup> UHS, Clause 8.10*) In many cases though, players inadvertently expect that competition organising committees will automatically return Open competition results back to their home club. We would recommend that the situation is clarified with competition entrants, perhaps by simple notice at the registration desk, to ensure all are aware of the committee’s policy. This does not mitigate the player of their responsibility, however, and players should still check that any away scores returned by competition organising committees have reached their home club in a timely manner for handicap adjustment purposes.

### **Abandoned Competitions**

Where a stroke play competition has commenced but has been abandoned usually because the course has become unplayable or because of the threat of lightning clubs are reminded that the scores of any completed rounds must be treated in accordance with Clause 18.6 of the CONGU<sup>®</sup> UHS i.e. no CSS is calculated. Any scores with a nett differential below the SSS are reduced in the normal way and no handicap increases are applied to any player in the field.

### **Junior Club Championships**

Both the SGU and SLGA have received a number of queries regarding junior club championships and other scratch events that are open to both boys and girls particularly concerning the tees that should be used and whether or not the girls should get any additional strokes. Some clubs have sufficient numbers of boys and girls at clubs for meaningful scratch championships to be held for both genders but frequently clubs have too few girls for this to be realistic with perhaps only one or two girls being of a comparable standard to the club’s best junior male counterparts. The exact format and conditions of such scratch competitions is for the club to decide and this should be done and posted well in advance of the event.

A few points to note, however:

- If both genders play from the same tees any girl will usually need to play better than her male counterparts to achieve the same relative performance. This is because a scratch male golfer would be expected to go round the course in fewer strokes than a scratch female golfer
- To be equitable both genders should be set a comparable target which often does not mean all players playing on the same course from the same tees
- Where the SSS's for both genders is the same from the men and ladies tees, then under these circumstances the scratch stroke play scores will give a directly comparable assessment of player's relative performance on the day
- Frequently, however, the SSS's from the ladies' tees and the men's tees are not comparable therefore the lowest gross score will not necessarily reflect the best relative performance e.g. a boy returning a gross 75 from tees with a men's SSS of 71 (nett differential 4) will have performed relatively less well than a girl returning a gross 76 from tees with a ladies SSS of 74 (nett differential 2)
- To ensure equitability of competition the players playing from the course with the higher SSS, should have a stroke allocation representative of the difference between the respective SSS's deducted from their score. Scores are then equated against a consistent target for all competitors
- In match play the same principle applies - where there is a difference in the SSS's of the tees being played from, an additional stroke allowance must be awarded to the players playing the course with the higher SSS

### **Conditions of Competition – Professionals competing in amateur club events**

Golf clubs have the discretion to decide whether professionals are eligible to play in their amateur club competitions or not. Conditions of entry and policies on winning sweeps and/or prizes within club competitions should be clearly outlined within the Conditions of Competition and/or the golf club rules.

Where a club does decide to allow professionals to enter club competitions, professionals' scores should not be included within the Competition Scratch Score (CSS) calculation. Where a handicap is nominally allocated to a professional by a golf club, often a plus or scratch handicap, this should be administered purely as a social handicap.

### **SLGA – 9-Hole Qualifying Competition Survey 2009**

At the end of 2009 the SLGA sent a questionnaire to the ladies' section of approximately 160 clubs that had been issued with a SSS for 9-Hole Qualifying Competitions (Clause 22 of the CONGU® UHS). 85 responses were received and we thank those clubs for taking the time to complete the survey. Some clubs made useful comments which our CONGU representatives can take into account when any potential changes to the format for the 2012 manual are discussed. Eight clubs did not hold any 9-Hole Qualifying Competitions in 2009. Of those clubs that held

these events 36% held 1 to 4 competitions, 39% held 5 to 8 competitions and 25% held 8 or more events. Several ladies' sections held their maximum 10 events.

## **Participation**

- 49% of the clubs reported poorer participation in 9-hole events compared with the usual 18-hole events. Some of these clubs, however, held their 9-hole competitions at the same time as the 18-hole events so players had a choice but could not play in both. 26% of clubs reported participation to be about the same and 25% of clubs reported a better participation in 9-hole competitions than in their 18-hole ones.
- Overall 64% reported that the 9-Hole Qualifying Competitions attracted some players who would not normally compete in club events; 36% reported no significant difference in terms of who played. 60% of clubs that reported poorer participation overall in 9-hole competitions nevertheless reported that these events did attract ladies who would not normally play in their 18-hole competitions. The survey showed that the largest group of additional players were the older members, many of whom found 18-holes too difficult, particularly where the course is hilly. Clearly with membership at many clubs falling this can be of benefit in helping to retain long-standing members within the game. Several clubs mentioned players returning from illness or injury as benefiting from 9-hole competitions. A few clubs noted working players, those with childcare responsibilities and players new to golf welcoming the 9-hole format. For working players it is important, however, to consider the timing of the events in the calendar. Some clubs reported that if the 9-hole events were at weekends they were not well-supported by working players as this category wanted to play 18-hole competitions whenever possible. Midweek competitions held during the daytime could not attract those at work but evening competitions did. Clubs traditionally holding their 18-hole competitions during weekday afternoons/ evenings found the format useful in extending the playing season when the daylight hours decreased.
- Comments from some clubs suggest that many lower handicap players and those who play a lot of 18-hole competitions are not often attracted to this format. Some clubs and players see the 9-hole format as only being of use to maintain a handicap. Others see the format as one that encourages the social side of golf. Only two clubs reported holding the 9-hole events as mixed competitions even though this format is the easiest for men and women to compete against each other since everyone requires 36 points to play to their handicap and no additional adjustments are required to allow for differences in par and SSS's.

## **Summary**

The 9-Hole Qualifying Competition format is proving for some clubs to be a popular additional competition in their annual schedule. The timing of these events in the club schedule is an important factor in determining the uptake and some element of experimentation with this will help clubs to identify how best to incorporate this format so as to target those sections of their membership who derive real benefit and enjoyment from the shorter competition round.

## R&A RULES OF GOLF / DECISIONS ON THE RULES OF GOLF

### R&A Decisions on the Rules of Golf 2010-2011 (Effective 1 January 2010)

The R&A has published the new Decisions book which took effect on 1 January 2010. The Decisions book is an integral part of the Rules of Golf. It is recommended that all Golf Clubs have a copy of this book and that any decisions they make during 2010 and 2011 are in accordance with this current version.

The new book contains 30 New Decisions and 49 Revised Decisions (*these amendments are listed on pages v-x at the beginning of the book*). Amongst these are some very important additions and changes of which all Committees should be aware and, if necessary, take steps to implement at club level. Three significant changes are highlighted below.

New **Decision 33-8/34** (page 529) will impact upon many clubs in Scotland:

#### **“33-8/34 Relief from Divot Holes**

**Q.** May a Committee make a Local Rule providing relief without penalty from divot holes or repaired divot holes (e.g. holes that have been filled with sand and/or seed mix)?

**A.** No. Such a Local Rule would modify Rule 13-1 and is not authorised. (New)”

#### **Action Required!**

- All clubs that currently have a Local Rule allowing free relief from seeded divots must take steps to remove this for all future Qualifying Competitions (since Qualifying Competitions must be played in accordance with the Rules of Golf). To avoid confusion amongst players it is recommended that such a Local Rule is removed for all forms of play by clubs as soon as possible.
- It is appreciated that many clubs will have a large supply of scorecards printed with the non-conforming Local Rule and that it may not be practicable to immediately reprint these cards nor to manually delete the Local Rule from all the cards in stock. Clubs must ensure that any such non-conforming Local Rule is deleted prior to the printing of new scorecards. We would ask, however, that clubs consider manual deletion by crossing through such Local Rules for all scorecards issued for any Open Competitions they organise.
- Affected clubs should consider how best to bring this change to the attention of all of their members, bearing in mind that some members may not play regularly in club competitions. We would recommend that at least for the first few months notice is clearly displayed alongside any signing-in sheet for Qualifying Competitions.

The New **Decision 6-2/1 Meaning of Handicap** is not of immediate application in Scotland as it refers to handicap systems that use slope adjustments e.g. the EGA or USGA handicapping systems. If, however, you permit a player with an EGA, USGA or other such slope-related handicap in any of your club or open competitions and make the relevant slope adjustment to their handicap index then

you should be aware of this decision and ensure that they use the slope adjusted handicap on their scorecard.

**Decision 25/13 Bunker Totally Under Repair** has been Revised. Such a bunker, when entirely ground under repair, is now automatically deemed to be “through the green” unless the Committee states otherwise. Previously the Committee had to make the declaration before the status of through the green was effective. Committees should note, however, that this automatic status of through the green only applies to bunkers that are under “repair”. If a Committee invokes the provision of Decision 33-8/27 to specific bunkers that are completely flooded with water then the Local Rule specifying the bunker(s) concerned must include the change in status to “through the green” if free relief is to be obtained.

## **STATEMENTS ON THE USE OF DISTANCE MEASURING DEVICES (DMD's) IN 'QUALIFYING COMPETITONS'**

Both the Scottish Golf Union and the Scottish Ladies' Golfing Association have recently issued statements of the use of distance measuring devices, often referred to as DMD's, in national championships, order of merit events and other competitions in 2010. Full details of the policy for each body, are as follows:

### **Scottish Golf Union**

The use of electronic Distance Measuring Devices (DMD's) remains contrary to the Rules of Golf unless they are permitted by virtue of the applicable Local Rule (see the Note to Rule 14-3 and Appendix 1, Part B, Paragraph 9 on Page 140 of the Rules of Golf 2008 - 2011).

It is a very important proviso of the permission granted by the DMD Local Rule that such devices must measure distance only. The use of devices that measure functions in addition to distance (e.g. wind speed or direction, the slope of the ground or the temperature) is not permitted in any circumstances even if these extra functions are switched off. The penalty for using such a device on the golf course in a competition is disqualification. There is no breach of the rule if such a device is carried on the course but not used in any way.

The SGU have decided that DMD's will not be permitted in 2010 SGU Championships and Order of Merit events. This stance is consistent with the R&A, USGA, LGU, the ladies and gents governing bodies of Wales and Ireland and the ladies bodies in Scotland and England. The said bodies have made a commitment to maintaining a consistent approach on this matter meaning DMD's will not be permitted in any Championships/Events under their respective jurisdiction.

However the SGU's policy does not preclude individual clubs and organising committees from permitting the DMD Local Rule i.e. it is at the discretion of each organising committee to decide.

If an organising committee wishes to adopt the DMD Local Rule then the following wording is recommended:

“(Specify as appropriate, e.g. In this competition, or For all play at this course, etc.), a player may obtain distance information by using a device that measures distance only. If, during a stipulated round, a player uses a distance-measuring device that is designed to gauge or measure other conditions that might affect his play (e.g. gradient, windspeed, temperature, etc.), the player is in breach of Rule 14-3, for

which the penalty is disqualification, regardless of whether any such additional function is actually used.”

For a further detailed explanation please refer to the R&A / USGA Joint Statement on Electronic Devices, Including Distance-Measuring Devices.

The R&A / USGA Joint Statement includes reference to multi functional devices such as iPhones and Blackberries:

[http://www2.randa.org/news/files/Joint%20Statement%20on%20DMDs%20R&A%20Final\\_.pdf](http://www2.randa.org/news/files/Joint%20Statement%20on%20DMDs%20R&A%20Final_.pdf)

### **Scottish Ladies' Golfing Association**

The use of electronic Distance Measuring Devices (DMDs) remains contrary to the Rules of Golf although clubs and organising committees may permit their use by Local Rule and in the conditions of competition (see the Note to Rule 14-3 and Appendix 1, Part B, Paragraph 9 in the Rules of Golf). Devices which measure functions in addition to distance (e.g. altitude, temperature) are not permitted in any circumstances even if these functions are switched off. The penalty for having such a device on the golf course in a competition is disqualification.

The R&A and USGA have recently confirmed that DMDs will not be allowed in any of their events in 2010.

The SLGA, in common with the Ladies' Golf Union and the other National Governing Bodies except the English Golf Union, will not be permitting DMDs in **any** of its Championships and other competitions in 2010. This includes the SLGA Medal Regional Finals, the semi-finals and final of the Scottish Match Play Foursomes, the County Finals, County Open Meeting, the Champion of Champions and the Commonwealth Spoons.

Players should note that electronic DMD's may be used at club level in SLGA Medals and in the rounds up to and including the quarter finals of the SLGA Scottish Match Play Foursomes **only** if the relevant Local Rule has been adopted for the course in question by the club committee.

### **Groove Rule Changes**

The new groove rule changes are receiving significant media profile, particularly on televised golf tournaments where professionals must now play clubs conforming to this rule. The R&A and USGA have laid out their policy for major professional tours, lower level professional events, elite amateur events and club level golfers. In summary, this will not currently affect club level golf until 1 January 2024, although this date is subject to review in 2020. All requirements for other level of the game are also detailed on the R&A website at:

<http://www.randa.org/rules/groovetest/explained>

### **Deciding Ties in Club Competitions**

Committees are reminded that guidance on how to resolve ties in both stroke play and match play is given by the R&A in Appendix 1 Part C 11 of the Rules of Golf. It is important that Committees decide well in advance what method is applicable for each particular competition and that the decisions on methodology are included in the Conditions of Competitions and clearly notified to competitors in advance of the events.

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