



SCOTTISH GOLF
UNION



SCOTTISH LADIES'
GOLFING ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL HANDICAPPING PACK 2011

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

Dear Match & Handicap Secretary,

Once again, the 2011 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 Enquiry Contacts

Scottish Golf Union

Kevin Weir
Golf Services Manager
Tel: 01334-466489
Mob: 07769-678181
E-Mail: k.weir@scottishgolf.org

Fiona Hastie
Golf Administrator
Tel: 01334-466490
E-Mail: f.hastie@scottishgolf.org

Scottish Ladies' Golfing Association

Sheila Hartley
Chief Operating Officer &
Company Secretary
Tel: 01738-442357
E-Mail:
secretary@slga.co.uk

Jennie French
National Handicap Advisor
Tel: 01250-872194
E-Mail:
jennie.french@o2.co.uk

June McEwan
National Course Rating
Assessor
Tel: 01620-810464
Mob: 07790-219460
E-Mail:
junemcewan@btinternet.com

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 as follows:

- SGU – primary contact is your appropriate SGU Area Secretary, whom failing the SGU office contacts above
- SLGA – primary contact is the SLGA National Course Rating Assessor, June McEwan, whom failing the SLGA offices (contact details above)

Preferred Lie extensions granted by either body for a golf course shall apply to both the Men's 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 from the appropriate Authority 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.

What if we can't get hold an appropriate Authority representative to give us permission to extend the use of preferred lies for a qualifying competition?

Where a golf club has experienced difficulties contacting the appropriate Authority to request a preferred lie extension prior to a competition commencing e.g. very early on a weekend morning, sympathetic consideration will be given by the above Authorities to retrospectively authorising a required preferred lie extension for the required holes/areas of the golf course for specific competition purposes. Affiliated golf clubs should contact their appropriate authority as soon as practicable following a competition under these circumstances to obtain such retrospective permission.

CONGU® UHS Manual 2008-2011

A number of CONGU® UHS Manuals have been distributed to affiliated golf clubs over the last three years as we move into the final year of the 2008-2011 Manual's operation. 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 inclusive of postage and packaging, 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>

The quadrennial review of the CONGU® UHS is currently in progress and revised editions of the 2012-2015 CONGU® UHS Manual will be issued free of charge to all affiliated golf clubs in November / December 2011.

2011 Changes to the CONGU® UHS Manual

The following updates have been introduced to the CONGU® UHS, effective 1 January 2011:

Supplementary Scores

Clause 21.1:

Players in all handicap categories, including Category 1 are now eligible to submit Supplementary Scores, with effect from 1 January 2011. The restriction of 10 scores per annum per player remains in place (Clause 21.5).

Clause 21.2:

Players in all handicap categories are eligible to submit Supplementary Scores irrespective of how many qualifying scores they submitted in the preceding period between Annual Handicap Reviews. The restriction of six or fewer scores submitted the previous year to be eligible to submit Supplementary Scores has been removed, with effect from 1 January 2011.

Nine-Hole Qualifying Competitions

Clause 22.10:

The restriction on the number of Nine-Hole Qualifying Competitions that can be run by any recognised section of a golf club has been removed, with effect from 1 January 2011. Clubs can, at their discretion, allow recognised sections to run more than 10 Nine-Hole Qualifying Competitions should they so wish.

Appendix O: Events in which competitors play from different sets of tees

Section 2 – Mixed Stableford Competitions:

Rather than deducting points that have actually been achieved by players with the higher target points score to 'play to handicap', the differential between targets will now be added to players' handicap allowance for those playing to the lower target score. This adjustment is for competition result purposes only.

Example 1:

Men's Course (White Tees): SSS 70, Par 69 Ladies' Course (Red Tees): SSS 72, Par 72 Men playing to handicap return 35 points – Ladies playing to handicap return 36 points. The differential (36-35 = 1 stroke) must be added to the men's handicap allowance		
	CONGU® Handicap at time of competition entry	Handicap Allowance for Competition purposes
Lady	23	23
Man	14	(14 + 1) = 15*

***Note:** If the man in the above example does not return a score on the Stroke Index 15 hole, that is lower than a net double bogey, he does not score any points on the hole and no further adjustment is made.

Example 2:

Men's Course (White Tees): SSS 69, Par 70 Ladies' Course (Red Tees): SSS 73, Par 72 Men playing to handicap return 37 points – Ladies playing to handicap return 35 points. The differential (37-35 = 2 stroke) must be added to the lady's handicap allowance		
	CONGU® Handicap at time of competition entry	Handicap Allowance for Competition purposes
Lady	23	(23 + 2) = 25
Man	14	14

Committees are reminded to ensure that they have a Condition of Competition in force, to determine a winner in the event of a tie in such competitions.

For Competition purposes (e.g. allocation of prizes), where the addition of the differential handicap allowance results in the handicap allowance exceeding the maximum handicap of 28 for men or 36 for ladies, the calculated handicap allowance should be used e.g. where a 35 handicap player is allocated a 2 stroke differential they receive a 37 stroke handicap allowance i.e. 3 strokes at the hole with Stroke Index 1.

For those clubs subscribing to handicapping software from a CONGU® Licensed software provider, these changes should have been incorporated within your 2011 software updates.

We recommend that you append these updates to your CONGU® UHS 2008-2011 Manual for your Handicap Administrator's future reference.

Nine-Hole Qualifying Competitions (Clause 22)

If affiliated clubs wish to introduce Nine-Hole Qualifying Competitions, which are proving popular particularly amongst Ladies' and Seniors' sections, they must first apply for a designated nine-hole course Standard Scratch Score. A joint Nine-Hole SSS application form can be found at:

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

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:

Fiona Hastie
Golf Administrator
Tel: 01334-466490
E-mail: f.hastie@scottishgolf.org

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 topics where it is desirable to have knowledge of their application when playing the game of golf, whether an experienced member or 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 order for your members or committee representatives, in various order quantities. These pocket guides are available FREE OF CHARGE, the only cost to the club would be the postage and packing charges.

The order form can be found at:

www.scottishgolf.org/clubservices/guides&resources



CONGU® UHS

Competitions Qualifying for Handicapping Purposes 2011

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 30th 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.



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 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

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

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 (See pages 5/6).

It is recommended that a single CSS adjustment is calculated for mixed competitions where all competitors are playing in the one competition for the same prizes, albeit they may play from different sets of tees. Some of the CONGU® licensed handicapping software packages provide facilities to calculate a joint CSS adjustment, however, others may not and the joint CSS adjustment would then need to be calculated and applied manually. Should you wish further guidance on this please do not hesitate to contact the appropriate SGU/SLGA office.

It is hoped that this will encourage golf clubs to consider adopting regular mixed competition formats into their annual fixture listings.

Central Database of Handicaps (CDH) Update

Current Status

The CDH is being piloted during January/February 2011, the feedback from which will refine the final CDH solution to be rolled out to all affiliated golf clubs. As soon as the solution is finalised we aim to roll-out this out to as many affiliated clubs as possible during 2011.

The pilot involves 10 affiliated golf clubs, an SLGA County and a Competition Organising Committee, each of which use handicapping software supplied by the first three independent software vendors (ISV's) to have completed their CDH testing with our CDH, IT infrastructure developers GolfBox. These ISV's are:

- Club Systems (Club 2000)
- HandicapMaster
- Intelligent Golf

Testing continues to go well and is helping ensure that the final CDH will function as expected when rolled-out to all affiliated golf clubs.

CDH Benefits

To re-cap on the intended benefits that the solution seeks to deliver to golf club and handicapping administrators, these are once again, as follows:

The CDH will:

- Assist golf clubs in automating the administration of member's handicaps
- Automatically return 'away' qualifying scores to the 'home' club of golfers

- Ensure a standardised handicapping system of assured integrity for all golfers across Scotland and Wales
- Record all affiliated golf club members 'Qualifying Scores' on the CDH, to reflect the handicap records held at a player's nominated 'home' golf club
- Allow individual golfers online access to look up their handicap and full player handicap records
- Provide opportunities to analyse the demographic and participation profiles to guide our future development of the game in both Scotland and Wales

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

Data upload requirements

As previously presented, the population of the CDH will rely on the interface between CONGU® licensed ISV's handicapping software and 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

The date-of-birth requirement has prompted the greatest level of interest amongst affiliated golf clubs and it is therefore important to revisit the reasons for requesting all 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 individual 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

Member's wishing to hide their identity/name

Members who wish access to look up their handicaps and full Player Handicap Records will be required to register individually on the CDH. For any members that wish to hide their identity/name on the CDH an option has been made available for members to select to do this when registering on the CDH.

Next steps

Affiliated golf clubs will soon be offered the opportunity to upload their membership data onto the CDH. The initial roll-out will be in controlled, small clusters of affiliated golf clubs and once a successful pattern of clubs:

- uploading data to the CDH,
- accepting the CDH unique ID numbers for their club members,
- uploading members handicap records and finally
- interfacing through end user screen functionality to access applicable CDH data and reports

...is established and working successfully, the roll-out process will then be accelerated to accommodate an increasing number of golf clubs uploading to the CDH servers.

Keeping informed

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 handicapping software records are up-to-date containing all members' details and ensuring that Home and Away players are correctly identified within the system. Players who are no longer members should be deleted. This will help ensure that only current, accurate information is uploaded to the CDH.

Open Competitions

Committee's Timeous Closing of Competitions

Handicaps can only be up-to-date if all competition results have been duly reported back to the home golf club of all open competition participants. The responsibility to return the score lies with the individual player, reporting back the following information:

- The date of the Qualifying Competition
- The venue (club/course)
- Standard Scratch Score from tees played from
- Competition Scratch Score
- Any applicable Stableford/Nett Double Bogey Adjustments
- (Par/Bogey Competitions – par of course and score against par)
- (Stableford Competitions – par of course and number of points scored)

It is therefore desirable for Competition Committees to close down open competitions timeously and make the appropriate CSS's available to visiting participants to facilitate the return of their scores back to their home golf clubs

Committee's Returning Away Scores to Participants' Home Clubs?

The CONGU® UHS requires players to return all away scores to their home club as soon as practicable after playing. (*CONGU® 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 competitors 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. Please note that this will also apply during the transitional period where some clubs are registered on the CDH system and others are not. Individual players will still be responsible for ensuring that the correct score details are returned to their 'home' club

Conditions of Competition

It is recommended that Committees establish Conditions of Competition for all Qualifying Competitions. This will ensure all competitors are aware of the rules applying to each competition, any Local Rules that are in force for competitions you run and how a winner will be determined in the event of a tied competition. Specimen Conditions of Competition which may offer Committees a reference and guidance are contained within Appendix I, Part C (p141) of the R&A Rules of Golf 2008-2011.

'Reduction Only' Competitions

Competition Committees are advised that qualifying competitions cannot be run on a 'reduction only' basis. A reduction only status/result can only be achieved in one of two ways:

1. CSS calculation where result is $CSS=SSS+3(R/O)$
2. Where a competition is abandoned (Clause 18.6) - only players with a nett score below the SSS will have their handicaps reduced accordingly. All other players in an abandoned competition do not have their handicaps increased.

Transportation Policies

Both the Scottish Golf Union and the Scottish Ladies' Golfing Association have published transportation policies for golf clubs reference and guidance. These policies are available for reference and information, at:

SGU: <http://www.scottishgolf.org/go/events>

SLGA: http://www.slga.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=45&Itemid=41

New Scorecards

The start of a new season often requires clubs to print new scorecards. This is an ideal time to review the club's Local Rules. Clubs are reminded that Specimen Local Rules can be found at Appendix 1, Part B (p126) of the R&A Rules of Golf 2008-2011 and we would recommend that clubs should follow the R&A's wording when drawing up their own Local Rules. Any club that wishes to use a Local Rule that is not covered by this Appendix or by any Decision on the Rules of Golf should request specific permission from the R&A's Rules Department. Any club requiring further information or assistance with their Local Rules may contact either the SGU or SLGA using the contact details on page 4 of this booklet.

There are no changes to the Rules of Golf or to the Decisions this year but for 2012 both the R&A Rules of Golf and the Decisions on the Rules of Golf will be amended and new publications issued by the R&A. The details of the changes are expected to be available publically in November 2011. Clubs needing to reprint scorecards for the 2012 season are advised to wait until the changes are published to ensure that their Local Rules comply with the Rules of Golf.

Permanent Distance Markers on New Tees

Committee's attention is drawn to Decision 7(b) of the CONGU® UHS where it specifies that:

- a) "Distance Points on all new courses and on any new holes or holes that have had their length altered on existing courses shall be placed not less than four yards from the back of each tee.

Note: There is no requirement to change or reposition Distance Points on existing courses, except under sub-clause a) above."

This requirement is simply to ensure that an R&A Rules of Golf compliant Teeing Ground is available on new tees for competition play conditions.

Guidance for Competition Organising Committees on dealing with inclement weather and consequent adverse course conditions

During the winter months Scottish golf clubs are very accustomed to experiencing periods of extreme and inclement weather e.g. heavy rainfall, frost, snow, gales etc. 2008 showed only too clearly that such problems are no longer confined to the winter months and that the impact of a changing climate is also likely to present club Committees with some major challenges during the summer months as they try to keep their golf courses in competition condition for their membership. Many of the queries to the offices of the SGU and SLGA relate to inclement weather problems often seeking solutions that may or may not be permissible under the Rules of Golf or the CONGU® UHS. This document therefore summarises some of the options available to golf clubs and Committees to cope with the impact of inclement weather conditions and consequent course conditions.

Dealing with adverse weather/course conditions that arise during a competition

Extreme bad weather conditions that evolve once a competition has started are a challenge for any Committee and one that affects golf worldwide. Committees should be conversant with the guidelines given by the R&A in section 8 – Inclement Weather and Suspensions of Play - of Chapter 6 – Competition Administration – in its publication “Guidance on Running a Competition”. In addition, Decisions on the Rules of Golf 33-1/2, 33-2d/1 and 33-2d/2 provide some assistance. Much of this guidance, however, relates principally to competitions played over more than one round i.e. 36 or 72 hole competitions when there is usually some flexibility to suspend play and resume the following day or, if absolutely necessary, reduce the number of rounds in order to complete the competition on schedule.

At club level problems more frequently relate to 18-hole club stroke play events and one-day open competitions; there is rarely an opportunity to extend these events over to the following day although sometimes completely rescheduling the competition is a possibility. The Committee has to make a judgement call based on the particular situation but as far as the Rules of Golf are concerned some important points must be borne in mind:

- The Rules of Golf are written with the underlying assumption that all players in the field will be able to complete their stipulated round (excepting for Disqualification or No Returns etc); if that is not possible the round will be cancelled.
- There is no authority within the Rules of Golf for a Committee to determine that a competition result will be declared if a certain percentage of the field e.g. where 50% / 75% have completed their rounds.
- The Committee has no power to reduce the number of holes of a stipulated round once play of that round has commenced (Decision 33-1/2).

Ultimately the Committee must determine the procedures for any given situation and must try to be as fair as possible to all competitors in any competition field. No one solution fits all. For many club events there will not be any Committee representative in the clubhouse and the players will be left to play on or discontinue as they see fit with the Committee left to sort out the situation retrospectively. A club hosting an Open event is in a different position; Committee representatives will be on site and must be prepared to take a proactive role in managing the situation and communicating any decision to the players. Points to consider:

- For localised problems with casual water – e.g. one or two greens – squeegees may enable a competition to be completed. See below for use of squeegees.
- If the disruption is predicted to be severe but short-lived, a prompt suspension of play may enable players to shelter from the worst of the bad weather; their play will not have been too adversely affected by the deteriorating course conditions and most will be willing to resume once the course is playable again.

- Once the play of a round has started, if it is clear that not all the field can complete their rounds on the day and the event cannot be continued later, the Committee has no option but to cancel the round. If the event is a qualifying competition for handicap purposes the round becomes Reduction Only with the CSS = SSS and handicap adjustments made only for competitors with a Nett Differential of less than zero (CONGU® UHS Clause 18.6).
- Whilst the variable CSS will take care of the effect of some adverse weather it cannot be expected to compensate for extremes of water on greens, fairways or bunkers or for very high winds on fast, sloping or exposed greens. It is not essential for a greenkeeper to be present to formally close the course – the organising Committee must often make a judgement call in this respect.

Safety

The Committee must be active in ensuring the safety of players (and any spectators). The most frequently occurring threat to an ongoing competition is lightning. Players are permitted to suspend play under Rule 6-8a if they believe there is a threat of lightning. Committees must not, however, take this to mean that they can leave this up to the players. One player may run for cover at the first sound of distant thunder while others will continue monitoring the situation to judge whether or not the threat is likely to materialise. A lightning detector (if available) or phone call to the local weather centre may help Committees assess the situation. Fog, a particular problem on coastal courses in summer, is another condition where safety considerations should be uppermost. Committees should have a procedure to enable them to notify players promptly of a decision to suspend play and evacuate the course, if necessary.

Casual water

Committees should be prepared to make a timeous decision when significant casual water arises during a competition and not leave it for most of the players to walk in and retire from the event. A Committee may take the view that such No Returns save it from formally cancelling the event but this may be unsatisfactory for any who are left on the course waiting for a Committee decision and also, if the course (or part of it) is genuinely unplayable, unfair to those who retired. Whilst some competitors will give up at the first signs of rain, it should be noted that Competitors have no authority to determine that the course is unplayable for competition purposes. Committee members should inspect the more vulnerable parts of the course and report back. It is not necessary to wait until holes are overflowing with or completely surrounded by water, fairways have large lakes forming and bunkers are flooding to suspend play and take stock of the situation – a judgement can be made to determine whether the course (or part of it) has become unplayable for competition play or has simply just become unpleasant to play.

Managing suspension and resumption of play

Unlike professional tour or elite amateur players, the average club player is not accustomed to organised suspensions of play. Suspensions of Play during televised tour events are controlled by experienced Rules Officials and most clubs simply do not have the personnel or sufficient horns, buggies and radios to organise a suspension or evacuation with such precision. Allowances should be made for misunderstandings and players' unfamiliarity with procedures.

Committees should be conversant with the provisions within Rule 6-8. In particular they should note that there is no absolute requirement for a ball to be marked and lifted it can be left *in situ*. In the case of a potentially dangerous situation, it is more important to get the players off the course and it is permissible for a ball to be left in play. Players should be advised by the Committee of the procedure for the resumption of play. In particular they should be reminded that if the exact position of the original ball cannot be determined (e.g. because it or the ball marker has moved during the suspension) the position must be estimated and a ball **placed** on the estimated spot. Committees should be aware that some players may expect to have to drop a ball in such circumstances and where appropriate this should be made clear for players.

Use of squeegees

Where casual water on the greens may be a problem squeegees can be employed both during a suspension of play and while play is in progress. If squeegeeing is envisaged during play club Committees should have a policy that is clearly set out, preferably in writing, for competitors at the start of the competition. It is usual for competitors to be allowed either to have the line of putt squeegee'd or relief to be available under Rule 25-1b (iii). See the R&A's publication *Guidance on Running a Competition* for further considerations and sample wording to assist Committees establish policies. Committees should be aware that squeegeeing the greens, particularly if this is left to the competitors themselves, will delay the pace of play. Players can assist in the process (without incurring a penalty under Rule 13-2) but only with the permission of the Committee (Decision 33/1). At club level it is rare to have sufficient support/equipment to allow squeegeeing on more than one or two greens. If casual water is a problem on most of the greens it is questionable whether the course is fit for a qualifying competition.

Relocating holes or teeing grounds

In match play a hole or teeing ground may be relocated if the original becomes unplayable e.g. due to casual water or because of high winds. In stroke play, however, the Committee does not have the authority to relocate a hole unless it is severely damaged – Rule 33-2b and its Exception and see Decisions 33-2b/1, 33-2b/2 and 33-2d/2. For relocating teeing grounds see Decision 25-1b/4.

Flooded bunkers

If a bunker becomes flooded once play has commenced players may only take relief under Rule 25-1b(ii). Decision 33-8/27 empowers a Committee to introduce a Local Rule that deems flooded bunkers to be GUR and classified as through the green. In such situations relief without penalty outside the bunker is available under 25-1b(i).

It should be noted that Committees cannot simply make a Local Rule providing generally that flooded bunkers are GUR and classified as through the green (Decision 33-8/27)

The purpose of the Decision is to enable a Committee to cope with a few known problem areas that otherwise could prove unfair to some of the competitors. When most of the bunkers are seriously affected by casual water the Committee should consider whether it is reasonable to hold a competition under such conditions – quite often there will be problems on other areas of the course as well. If the Local

Rule is applied as intended in the Decision to a very few, specific bunkers then the competition can be played as a Qualifying Competition for handicap purposes. If most bunkers are affected the SGU/SLGA should be contacted to see whether or not competitions played can be considered as qualifying for handicap purposes.

Ongoing problems and Winter Conditions

Most ongoing problems relating to wetness of, or damage to, the course can be addressed by marking affected areas as GUR and/or the introduction of Local Rules. Relief under Rule 25-1b for Abnormal Ground Conditions is optional and wherever practicable, particularly during the playing season, players should be given the option to play the ball as it lies if they so wish. Committees do have the power to prohibit players from playing from GUR (Appendix 1 Part B 2a of the Rules of Golf for specimen Local Rule) but this should be reserved for areas requiring specific protection e.g. areas under renovation or areas that are severely damaged, particularly if there may be safety considerations were players to play from these areas. It is recommended that white markings be reserved for GUR where relief is optional and that where play is to be prohibited from GUR such areas are marked in an alternative manner e.g. blue lines/ stakes. Guidance as to what conditions may be considered as casual water is given in Decisions 25/1 to 25/6 and for GUR in Decisions 25/7 to 25/23.

Local Rules that can be invoked

Appendix 1 Part A of the Rules of Golf gives guidance to Committees on publishing Local Rules and Appendix 1 Part B sets out Specimen Local Rules to assist in drafting. Whenever a Committee has a need for a Local Rule to cover a situation set out in these Appendices it should make use of the relevant specimen Local Rule the wording of which should conform entirely to that given in Appendix 1 Part B. Wording that does not conform exactly to the R&A's specimen wording causes confusion amongst players, particularly visiting players, who are conversant with the R&A's drafting. Note that Committees do not have the authority to modify a Rule of Golf without prior consent from the R&A. The Specimen Local Rules applicable to wet conditions and course protection are set out in Section 4 of Appendix 1 Part B.

Preferred Lies

The wording for the introduction of Preferred Lies is given in the Rules of Golf Appendix 1 Part B 4c. Competition Playing Conditions will apply and Qualifying Competitions can be held during a preferred lie period if the conditions set out in Clause 15 of the CONGU® UHS have been met.

- The wording of the Local Rule must be in accordance with the Specimen Local Rule and the specified area must be within 6 inches (150mm).
- For the use of preferred lies during the period from 1 May to 30 September inclusive to enable Competition Play Conditions to apply, permission must be first be obtained as appropriate, from:
 - SGU Area Secretary, whom failing the SGU offices
 - SLGA National Course Rating Assessor, whom failing the SLGA offices

This permission must be obtained prior to any competition for handicapping purposes commencing.

- During the “Preferred Lie period” from 1 October to 30 April inclusive permission for preferred lies for Qualifying Competitions is not necessary.
- Preferred lies may be applied on all closely mown areas or may be restricted to parts of the course where specific difficulties occur.

Extension of relief for embedded ball relief to “through the green”

Relief for an embedded ball under Rule 25-2 is limited to closely mown areas. A Committee is empowered to extend this to through the green where conditions so require under a Local Rule. (Appendix 1 Part B 4a of the Rules of Golf). This can be applied over all 18 holes or may be restricted to specific parts of the course. It is rarely necessary to invoke this option on links courses; indeed to do so usually only creates confusion amongst participating players. This is because it is extremely rare for a ball to be genuinely embedded in the rough on a links course – it is common for it to be embedded in tufts of grass, where the surface of the ground is not physically broken. If the Local Rule is in place players may inadvertently take relief to which they are not entitled. On parkland courses in wet weather it is often necessary to extend embedded ball relief both to help preserve the golf course and for the proper playing of the game. Extending the relief to through the green is acceptable for handicap purposes (CONGU® UHS Decision 1(c)).

Introduction of “Lift, Clean and Replace”

Wording for this Local Rule is given in Rules of Golf Appendix 1 Part B 4b. The purpose of this Local Rule is to give the player the opportunity to clean the ball under wet or muddy conditions but unlike the preferred lies Local Rule the player must replace the ball in the **actual position** from which it was lifted. Its use should be restricted to specific problem areas of the course or for unusual situations following periods of unusual wetness. This Local Rule option is used sometimes by the Professional Tours and very occasionally by Unions, Areas and Counties for specific stipulated rounds when every player can be advised of its implementation at the start of the competition. At club level this Local Rule is likely to be poorly understood (particularly given its similarity to the preferred lie Local Rule) and incorrectly implemented and should therefore not be used routinely. It is recommended that clubs implement the preferred lie Local Rule when conditions so require.

Declaring bunkers out of play for renovation

It is often necessary, particularly in winter, for greenkeeping staff to carry out renovations to bunkers and their surrounds. It is also undesirable for players to play from these areas until the renovations have been completed. To accommodate such work, without confusion over the status of the bunker, a revised R&A Decision on the Rules of Golf 25/13 was introduced in 2010 which states:

“If a bunker is being renovated and the Committee defines the entire bunker as ground under repair, the bunker loses its status as a hazard and is automatically classified as “through the green”. Therefore, unless a Committee specifies otherwise, Rule 25-1b applies, not Rule 25-1b(ii).”

Use of Fairway Mats

Decision 1(a) of the CONGU® UHS sets out the conditions under which the use of fairway mats is permitted in Qualifying Competitions. It is important that the specimen Local Rule therein is adopted in its entirety. In particular note that for Qualifying Competitions the use of mats is restricted to closely mown areas and that the ball must not be teed-up on the mat (the mat itself may, however, be pegged into the ground). The use of fairway mats for Qualifying Competition purposes is restricted to the period 1 October to 30 April inclusive.

Requirement to place ball from the fairway into the semi-rough

A Local Rule that requires or permits players to lift a ball from a closely mown area and drop or place in the semi rough to protect the fairway is not within the Rules of Golf and any competition played under conditions cannot be qualifying for handicap purposes (CONGU® UHS Decision 1(d)).

Artificially Surfaced Teeing Grounds

Artificially surfaced tees, whilst not usually fully satisfying the two club length distance under the Definition in the Rules of Golf, if placed at locations that relate to the relevant Measured Course may be used in Qualifying Competitions (CONGU® UHS Decision 1(b)).

It is the hope of the Joint SGU/SLGA Handicap and Course Rating Committee that clubs will make every effort to keep courses in condition such that Competition Playing Conditions prevail and Qualifying Competitions can be held for as much of the year as is practicable in our unpredictable climate. Committees requiring any additional advice, or clarification of any of the above matters are invited to contact the SGU (01334-466477) or SLGA (01738-442357) offices for further guidance.

Statements on the Use of Distance Measuring Devices (DMD's) in 'Qualifying Competitions'

Both the Scottish Golf Union and the Scottish Ladies' Golfing Association have published statements of the use of distance measuring devices, often referred to as DMD's, in national championships, order of merit events and other competitions. Full details of the policy for each body, can be accessed at the following links:

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. When the DMD Local Rule is in effect in a competition, if the player has and uses a DMD that can measure functions in addition to distance (e.g. wind speed or direction, the slope of the ground or the temperature) then the penalty is disqualification even if the extra functions are switched off. There is no penalty if a player carries such a device in their golf bag and does not use it in any way.

The SGU has decided that DMD's will not be permitted in 2011 SGU Scratch National Championships. For clarification this means DMDs will not be permitted in the following Championships/Events:

- Scottish Junior Champion of Champions
- Scottish Champion of Champions
- Scottish Boys Championship
- Scottish Youths Open Amateur Stroke Play Championship
- Moneygate Scottish Area Team Championship
- Scottish Open Amateur Stroke Play Championship
- Scottish Boys Area Team Championship
- Scottish Seniors Open Amateur Stroke Play Championship
- Scottish Boys Under 16 Open Amateur Stroke Play Championship
- Scottish Boys Open Amateur Stroke Play Championship
- Scottish Amateur Championship
- Scottish Boys & Girls Under 14 Open Amateur Stroke Play Championship
- Scottish Club Championship
- SGU Junior Tour Events 1, 2, & 3
- Scottish Golf Academy Winter Series Events

However, DMD's will be permitted in all stages of 2011 SGU Handicap Championships i.e.

- Belhaven Best Scottish Club Handicap Championship
- Belhaven Best Captain & Secretaries Championship
- clubgolf Junior Masters

This stance is consistent with the R&A, USGA, LGU, the ladies' and men's 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 Scratch Championships/Events under their respective jurisdiction.

However the SGU's policy does not preclude individual clubs and organising committees, including SGU Order of Merit Event organisers, from permitting the DMD Local Rule i.e. it is at the discretion of each organising committee to decide. **Players competing in any SGU Order of Merit event, outwith those directly organised by the SGU, should therefore check with the event organisers prior to competing whether the DMD Local Rule is in place or not.**

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, Blackberries and electric caddie cars with built in distance measuring technology.

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 (eg. altitude, temperature) are not permitted in any circumstances even if these functions are switched off. The penalty for using such a device on the golf course in a competition is disqualification.

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 2011. This includes the SLGA Medal Regional Finals & Grand Final, 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.

Previous Handicap Pack References

Topic references contained in previous editions of the SGU/SLGA Handicap Pack are listed below, which handicap administrators may find of interest

2009: http://www.scottishgolf.org/files/Annual_Handicapping_Pack_20091.pdf

- Player's obligations under the CONGU® UHS
- Summary of findings in the National Handicap Audits
- SLGA Match Play Survey 2008
- Joint Handicap Committees
- Terminology Update
- Sweeps
- Measured Golf Course

2010: http://www.scottishgolf.org/files/Annual_Handicapping_Pack_2010.pdf

- CONGU® Handicap Allocations - Category 1
- CONGU® Handicap allocations - General
- Starring/Lapsing of Handicap (Clause 25.1)
- Overseas Handicaps
- Open Competitions – Home and Away CSS Calculations (Appendix B)
- Abandoned Competitions (Clause 18.6)
- Junior Club Championships
- Conditions of Competition – Professionals competing in amateur club events
- SLGA Nine-Hole Qualifying Competition survey 2009
- R&A Decisions on the Rules of Golf 2010-2011 (Effective 1 January 2010)
- Groove Rule Changes
- Deciding Ties in Club Competitions

Scottish Golf Union

The Duke's
St. Andrews
Fife
KY16 8NX

Tel: 01334 – 466477

Fax: 01334 - 461361

Web: www.scottishgolf.org

Scottish Ladies' Golfing Association

The Den
2 Dundee Road
Perth
PH2 7DW

Tel: 01738 – 442357

Fax: 01738 - 442380

Web: www.slga.co.uk