



UNIFIED HANDICAPPING SYSTEM 2008-2011

LAPSE OF HANDICAP (CLAUSE 25):

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why has starring of handicaps been introduced by the SGU?

In 1997 the SGU sent a questionnaire to its members clubs seeking their views on a range of aspects relating to the handicapping system. Virtually all golf clubs responded and over 80% of clubs indicated that they would be in favour of a minimum number of qualifying scores being required to be returned each year in order to retain a handicap. Subsequently, the Council of National Golf Unions (CONGU) granted each home Union the right to 'direct that the handicap of any player, in whatever category, who fails to return a stipulated minimum number of qualifying scores in a period between annual reviews, shall lapse'.

Why is the SGU insisting on this change for all member clubs and associated competitions where a CONGU handicap is required?

To ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the handicapping system is fair, consistent and equitable to all players and to ensure that handicaps reflective of the relative playing abilities of players.

What is the deadline for the "starring" of handicaps to take place?

The "starring" of handicaps should become an integral part of a golf clubs Annual Review of handicaps for their home members. The deadline is, therefore, that the annual handicap review incorporating the "starring" of handicaps should be completed prior to the 1st March each year.

(See Clause 7.7 (i) of the Unified Handicapping System)

Under what circumstances is a player's handicap starred?

A player's handicap should be starred where the player has not submitted three qualifying scores during a period between annual handicap reviews.

If a player's handicap is starred at the end of the playing season how will that affect them?

The player will be unable to enter competitions in which a CONGU handicap is required. This includes official club stroke play and match play competitions and any qualifying competitions at other golf clubs. This does not preclude players playing in club competitions, where appropriate, for submission of a score for handicap purposes.

The player's starred handicap may, however, be used for social golf and the like and it will still be valid where a handicap certificate is required to gain access to play at another course.

What happens if a member has been ordered not to play golf during a season for medical reasons? (E.g. Serious heart conditions, broken bones etc.)

Where the golf club has been provided with evidence that a player has been instructed not to play golf during a period between annual handicap reviews, they have discretion not to star that player's handicap. The expectation is that the use of this discretionary power by golf clubs will be infrequent.

What happens to players that have been allocated a new handicap during the season? Are they expected to submit three additional cards under medal play conditions?

No, where a handicap is allocated during a playing season a player is not expected to return three additional scores that season and their handicap should not be starred. Three qualifying scores would be required for each subsequent year.

Do we star the handicaps of junior members under Clause 25?

Yes, where a junior member holds a CONGU handicap of 28 or below they are subjected to the same Unified Handicapping System rules as ordinary gentlemen members.

If a player enters a qualifying competition and records a 'No Return' does this count as one of the three scores required to retain their handicap?

The principle that the player has gone out to play with the intention of completing 18 holes is key in this situation. Therefore, if a card is returned by the player, with one or more holes incomplete and is adjusted under Clause 19 to produce a net differential, the score may be accepted.

Otherwise, if a player in a qualifying competition fails to return their card, it will not count as one of the three scores required.

What happens when a player has been re-allocated their handicap after having been starred? Do they still need to provide an additional 3 qualifying scores within that season?

No, a player who has had their handicap re-allocated during any one playing season shall not have their handicap starred at the end of that playing season. Three qualifying scores would be required for each subsequent year.

Do the three scores required each year need to be submitted from play over the player's home club?

No, all qualifying competitions whether home or away, are eligible to count towards the three qualifying scores required.

If a player is suspended for a period during a playing season, are they still required to submit three qualifying scores?

Yes, the expectation is that such players will submit three qualifying scores during the period between annual handicap reviews.

What discretionary powers in relation to the starring of handicaps are available to the golf club?

Golf clubs have been granted limited discretionary powers in the overall application of the System. In exceptional cases where ill health, injury or exceptional personal circumstances has precluded a player returning the specified number of cards, a club may allow the player to retain their CONGU handicap. This discretion, however, should only be invoked in exceptional circumstances.

What does a player need to do to remove the star from their handicap?

To regain a CONGU compliant handicap it is necessary to return a minimum of three cards in accordance with Clause 16.2 of the Unified Handicapping System.

Following submission, by a player, of the required number of cards to regain their handicap, would their handicap be restored at the previous level?

Not necessarily. The handicap allocated should be based on the cards returned, the 'live' cards carried forward, where applicable, together with all information available about the player's playing history and ability.

Will software suppliers be expected to provide the solutions for the starring process?

The starring of handicaps should be an integral part of the annual handicap review of all home club members and is therefore expected to be primarily a manual exercise. Some software providers may, however, offer technical solutions to manage the starring of handicaps automatically as part of their software packages. You are recommended to liaise with your software supplier to assess what they may offer in this respect.