



ADVICE TO HANDICAP COMMITTEES

Key Terms:

CGD = CONGU Guidance Document on the WHS Rules of Handicapping as applied within GB&I

CONGU = Council of National Golf Unions (England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales – GB&I)

MLR = Model Local Rule

ROG = Rules of Golf

ROH = Rules of Handicapping

WHS = World Handicap System

1. HANDICAP COMMITTEE

- I.1 Appoint a person, with a good working knowledge of the ROH to chair the Handicap Committee.
- I.2 Have a minimum of 4 persons on the Committee, all of whom must be Club members.
- I.3 The Committee members should have a working knowledge of the WHS ROH and guidelines issued by CONGU and Golf Ireland www.golfireland.ie/Handicap-System.
- I.4 It is recommended that Committees adhere to the gender balance as set out by Golf Ireland of a minimum gender representation of 30% male, 30% female and 40% either male or female.
- I.5 Encourage new members to join the Committee and establish a member rotation.
- I.6 Ensure there is a sufficient number of members with experience on the Committee.
- I.7 Identify and educate new members continuously.
- I.8 Meet regularly or as required – minimum once per quarter.
- I.9 Review all non-acceptable scores and encourage members to return General Play Scores from Society/Alliance competitions played from Course and Slope rated tees on a course in Acceptable Score condition.
- I.10 Establish a disciplinary procedure for players who persistently fail to return their scorecard from General Play and Acceptable Score Competitions. Further Information will be provided on this separately.
- I.11 Ensure that the Appeals Procedure is readily available to members.
- I.12 Carry out handicapping responsibilities in accordance with Appendix A2 of the ROH.
- I.13 Ensure the membership status of all members is correctly recorded on Golf Ireland Clubhouse and link all Away members with their Home Club.
- I.14 Ensure ALL members, whose membership category entitles them to play golf on the course, are registered on the Golf Ireland Clubhouse.

- 1.15 Facilitate timely submission of scores by mobile App/Computer terminal to ensure scores are included in the Playing Conditions Calculations for that day.

2. ALLOCATION OF AN INITIAL HANDICAP INDEX

- 2.1 Apply the conditions set out in Rules 2.1, 4.1b, 4.5 and 5.2a of the ROH (a minimum of 54 holes or combinations of 9-hole and 18-hole cards signed by a responsible person acceptable to the Handicap Committee).
- 2.2 Ensure players are aware of their responsibilities when an initial Handicap Index has been allocated (Rule 1.3(i) and Appendix A). Prior to a first Handicap Index being assigned, establish the member's sporting history e.g., pitch and putt, hockey, hurling, camogie, tennis, cricket etc. No handicap should be allocated automatically.
- 2.3 If a player has ceased to be a member of your Club, he/she must be 'Resigned' on the Golf Ireland Clubhouse and every effort made to recover their swipe card. The Club must ensure that a copy of the player's scoring history is held on the Golf Ireland Clubhouse.

3. ELITE PLAYERS (Rule 5.2c)

- 3.1 Identify your Elite players (0.0 for men and 2.0 for women).
- 3.2 Be aware of their representation in elite championships and alert them to the importance of recording all National and International scores.
- 3.3 Contact your Regional Authority regarding the allotment of an elite Handicap Index.
- 3.4 Handicap Index adjustments or recommendations for adjustment to Elite players, or players who become Elite due to any adjustments, must be referred to your Regional Authority for approval prior to application to their handicap record.

4. COMPUTER SOFTWARE

- 4.1 Ensure that you are using the latest version of the licensed software and have downloaded the club's Course and Handicap Index data from the Clubhouse.
- 4.2 Have contact details for the software's support centre.

5. THE GOLF COURSE (Appendix G)

- 5.1 Have and maintain measured courses with Course Ratings and Slope Ratings in accordance with Appendix G of the ROH.
- 5.2 Have a current Certificate of Course Measurement on file in the Administration Office and keep an extra copy on the Handicap Committee's file. Provide a copy to Golf Ireland.
- 5.3 Submit a "Notification of Course Changes" form to Golf Ireland for all permanent course changes at courserating@golfireland.ie. This form may be downloaded from the Golf Ireland website on www.golfireland.ie/course-rating. An updated Course Measurement Certificate should also be attached.
- 5.4 All changes to golf courses must be notified to Golf Ireland (see Appendix G for full details). The club must notify Golf Ireland if the course has been restored to its original playing length.
- 5.5 Acceptable Scores may be returned **subject to approval from the Regional Authority**

- a) If the length changes are temporary and greater than 300 yards (274 metres) for an 18 hole course or 150 yards (137 metres) for a 9-hole course.
- b) If the changes are permanent
- c) If more than two temporary greens are in play
- 5.6 Ensure all tees in play have a current Course Rating and Slope Rating issued by Golf Ireland.
- 5.7 It is expected that the use of preferred lies outside of the preferred lies period would only be used in extreme circumstances.
- 5.8 Where course conditions permit, clubs should continue to run Acceptable Score Competitions using the prescribed preferred lies guidelines (ROG MLR E-2 & E-3) and by referring to Appendix H in the CGD. See - <https://congu.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/WHSDocs/Handicapping-Advice.pdf>
- 5.9 In Ireland, the permitted preferred lies period extends from November 1st to March 31st. An extension to this period may be granted on application to the Regional Authority.
- 5.10 Handicap Committees should consult with the Greens Committee before allocating non-acceptable score status to competitions.

6. **COMPETITIONS & GENERAL PLAY**

- 6.1 Ensure that players are aware of the methods required to register their intention, on the day, to play in a Competition or return a General Play Score. (A player who fails to enter an Acceptable Score Competition in the required manner, apart from Entry Fee, is considered to have neither a score for the competition nor a score for handicap purposes).
- 6.2 All 18-hole and 9-hole singles competitions should be for Acceptable Scoring, providing competition play conditions prevail.
- 6.3 Ensure that a sufficient number of Acceptable Score Competitions are available for all membership categories so that members' Handicap Indexes are adjusted to reflect their current playing ability through competition play.
- 6.4 The Course Handicap **must** be recorded on scorecards in all forms of competition. Penalty for Breach: Disqualification (ROG 3.3b(4)). **Golf Ireland requests that the Handicap Index and Playing Handicap are also recorded.**
- 6.5 All scores returned in a competition set up as Acceptable Scoring must be recorded for handicap purposes irrespective of whether or not there is a sufficient number of entries for prize purposes and must not be deleted or treated as abandoned. Guidance on when to cancel a round is given in the ROG Committee Procedures Section 6E(4).
- 6.6 Handicap Committees should check Appendix J in the CGD, to determine whether disqualified scores count for handicap purposes.
- 6.7 The scores of a player who has failed to pay the required Entry Fee still count for Handicap Index adjustment purposes and must be recorded (ROH Appendix J).
- 6.8 Advise all competitors to use Home Club swipe cards/number for all Acceptable Score Competitions/General Play Scores (both Home & Away).
- 6.9 Visitors can be verified, if necessary, on the Clubhouse Platform to assist in identifying unknown visitors.

- 6.10 If 18-hole and 9-hole Acceptable Score Competitions are run on the same day, players must choose which competition they wish to enter. A 9-hole Acceptable Score Competition may not be played as part of an 18-hole competition.

7. GENERAL PLAY ROUNDS – HOME AND AWAY

- 7.1 The Golf Ireland App, which provides for pre-registration and return of general play scores can be used at the Home club or Away Club.
- 7.2 Course must be in Acceptable Score condition and playing to its full length.
- 7.3 If a player does not use the Golf Ireland App and the computer terminal is not available, a book or other acceptable means (e.g. general play pre-registration form), must be provided to allow a player record their intention to submit a General Play Score.
- 7.4 If a player has registered their intention to return a general play score play on-line but not submitted their score, they must return the properly completed scorecard to their Home Club with the CDH number of the marker if not a Home Club member.
- 7.5 If a player has registered their intention to return a general play score play off-line they must return the properly completed scorecard to their Home Club with CDH number of marker if not a Home Club member, together with evidence of off-line pre-registration if round played at an Away Club
- 7.6 If certain tees are not in play e.g., due to maintenance, a notice should be posted near the computer terminal and/or at the first tee.

8. ON COMPLETION OF COMPETITION

- 8.1 Ensure that all scores are recorded.
- 8.2 Investigate all scores not returned as per Rule 7.1b.
- 8.3 Ensure that the club's Competition software uploads all scores on the day to the Golf Ireland Clubhouse by checking the upload report on their software.

9. OVERSEAS SCORES

- 9.1 Advise members that all competition and pre-registered General Play overseas scores are to be returned to the "Home" club promptly for immediate Handicap Index adjustment as appropriate. Evidence of pre-registration for General Play Scores must be supplied by the player.
- 9.2 Record the scores using the correct option, Competition or General Play, etc., from the drop-down menu on the Golf Ireland Clubhouse.
- 9.3 Keep a check on Elite players' championship participation to ensure that all scores are returned (See 3.2 above).

10. HANDICAP REVIEWS (Rule 7.1a) & (APPENDIX D)

- 10.1 **The Handicap year is from 1st January to 31st December. The Handicap Committee must conduct an Annual Review of all Home Club members and record all adjustments on the Golf Ireland Clubhouse after 1st October and no later than 31st December.**
- 10.2 The Handicap Committee must adjust a player's Handicap Index to an appropriate

figure when they consider that it is too high or too low and does not reflect demonstrated ability. This also applies to reviews carried out by the Handicap Committee or at the request of the player throughout the year. The minimum adjustment is 1.0 and further adjustments can be done in decimal increments. Application to the Regional Authority must be made for upward adjustments in excess of 5 shots in accordance with Rule 7.1 of ROH.

- 10.3 The purpose of an Annual Review is that handicaps are regulated at each Home Club so that they reflect players' demonstrated ability in Acceptable Score and non-acceptable score competitions. Uniformity in handicapping is only achieved by all Handicap Committees applying the same principles sensibly and consistently.
- 10.4 Success in club, inter-club and match play/team and society competitions must be regarded as notable performances and taken into consideration as part of the Annual Review.
- 10.5 Consideration should also be given to previous adjustments made by the Handicap Committee in the current year.
- 10.6 Determine Handicap Index accuracy based on a player's performance in Non-Acceptable Score Competitions and their handicap adjustments already made in Acceptable Score Competitions.
- 10.7 Increase and reduce a Handicap Index as appropriate. Approval of the Regional Authority is required for ALL Elite Player adjustments and for upward adjustments in excess of 5 shots in accordance with Rule 7.1 of ROH.
- 10.8 Complete the Annual Handicap Review documentation and return to your designated Regional representative. (This is a very important process in the monitoring of Handicap Indexes in your Club, both from the members' point of view and for Golf Ireland).
- 10.9 On approval, advise individual players of any adjustments which come into effect.
- 10.10 All documentation must be retained.
- 10.11 **Handicap adjustments only become effective once players have been notified in writing and they are entered in the Player's Scoring History.**
- 10.12 Scorecards should be retained for the current year.

11. **ADJUSTING A HANDICAP INDEX (Rule 7.1a iii)**

- 11.1 A Handicap Index may be reduced during the year due to exceptional circumstances without application to the Regional Authority. The minimum adjustment is 1.0 and further adjustments can be done in decimal increments. Application to the Regional Authority must be made for upward adjustments in excess of 5 shots in accordance with Rule 7.1 of ROH.
- 11.2 Circumstances that may be regarded as 'exceptional' include:
 - a) Impaired golfing ability resulting from extended illness or injury.
 - b) The need to correct a Handicap Index that was allocated at an inappropriate level.
 - c) A number of good playing performances, probably three or more, in Non-Acceptable Score Competitions by a player who otherwise may not participate with any regularity in Acceptable Score Competitions. Examples of Non-

Acceptable Score Competitions may include Mixed Foursomes.

- 11.3 **Handicap adjustments only become effective once players have been notified and they are entered in the Player's Scoring History.**

12. HANDICAP DOCUMENTATION

- 12.1 Display the methods on how a Handicap Index may be obtained.
- 12.2 Course Handicap Tables should be readily available.
- 12.3 Provide a book or other acceptable means to record a player's intention to submit a General Play Score.
- 12.4 Upon request provide a current handicap certificate, issued from the Clubhouse Platform.

REMINDER

Ultimately, it is the Player who is responsible for the accuracy of his/her current Handicap Index and ensuring that he/she is playing off the correct Course Handicap at all times.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE & REINSTATEMENT OF HANDICAP INDEX

The status of a member of an Affiliated Club when granted Leave of Absence is as follows:

- a) The player should be designated as 'Resigned' or 'Non-playing' on the Golf Ireland Clubhouse until playing membership is resumed.
- b) All 'Non-playing' members will be treated as 'Resigned' to de-activate Handicap Indexes.
- c) The player will not be required to pay a Golf Ireland Subscription for the period of Leave of Absence.
- d) The player shall not be eligible to represent his/her club in Inter-Club competitions or return scores for handicap.
- e) When a member returns from Leave of Absence his/her Handicap Index should be re-instated as per Rule 5 of ROH.
- f) The Handicap Index of a member who has ceased to be a member of an Affiliated Club shall have lapsed. On re-joining an Affiliated Club, the player's scoring record should be restored if possible and his/her Handicap Index re-instated as per Rule 5 of ROH.