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Memo

To: Member States, Clubs
c.c.: GA Board, GA Handicapping & Course Rating Committee, Golf Link, Tier 3 Providers
From: Simon Magdulski
Date: 29 January 2010
Subject: Launch Date & Details re First Package of Handicapping Changes

Dear All,

As has been widely advised in various communications from GA and State Associations, Australia's men's and women's handicapping systems are set for substantial changes over the next couple of years. These changes will not occur all in one hit, instead they will be bundled into several Packages and introduced incrementally.

Further to my December 2009 correspondence to clubs (which can be accessed from the following webpage – www.golfaustralia.org.au/default.aspx?s=newsandcommunication), **we can now confirm the First Package of Changes will come into effect at 9.00am (AEST) on FRIDAY 9 APRIL 2010.**

The Second Package of Changes (which is listed to include the regulation requiring all scores to be converted to Stableford scores for handicapping purposes) has been tentatively scheduled for implementation in the latter part of 2010.

The Slope component of the USGA Handicap System can not be implemented until all Australian courses have been rated under the USGA Course Rating System (this is because Slope requires the assessment of a Bogey Rating). Slope will be implemented as a part of the Final Package of Changes.

Further details relating to the Second and further Packages will be announced in due course.

The First Package of Changes to Men's AND Women's handicapping regulations incorporates the following only:

- A. Calculation of Handicap – Commence Operation of the USGA's 'Rolling Sample' Method.
- B. Remove CCR for Men's Handicapping (CCR was Removed from Women's Handicapping in 2007).

Note i: Golf Link clubs do not need to do anything to instigate the process of recalculating all handicaps in accordance with the new regulations. Golf Link will do everything for you. All Australian Handicaps stored on Golf Link will automatically be re-calculated in accordance with the new regulations and will be ready for use at 9.00am on 9 April 2010.

Note ii: Golf Link clubs do not need to do anything to prepare their computer systems for the First Package of Changes. All preparation will be performed by Golf Link.

Note iii: In preparation for the switch-over to the new method of calculating handicaps, Golf Link will be offline from 9.00am (AEST) on 7 April 2010 until 9.00am (AEST) on 9 April 2010.

Note iv: Non-Golf Link clubs will need to manually replicate all of the changed regulations being applied by Golf Link. There are now only 4% of Australian club golfers not on Golf Link. While it will be possible to maintain handicaps manually under the new regulations, GA feels the members of these clubs will clearly be best served by having their handicaps maintained by Golf Link.

Note v: Non-Golf Link clubs wishing to join Golf Link in the upcoming months should be aware they may experience a brief delay if they have not contacted Golf Link requesting to come online by Monday 15 March. This is due to anticipated extraordinary demand coupled with the scheduled heavy workload.

From the outset, GA has been determined to design the implementation strategy in such a way as to minimise cost and logistical challenges for all interested parties. With this in mind, the First Package of Changes to handicapping regulations will NOT require changes to any Tier 3 system. Additionally, the First Package of Changes has been designed to allow all Golf Link clubs (either Tier 1 or Tier 3) to continue to operate all of their computerised handicap operations exactly as they currently do. (Note: This includes for example the processing of competitions and the creation of initial handicaps.)

Once the First Package of Changes becomes effective, you will see that Golf Link will calculate handicaps quite differently. There will also be some miscellaneous Golf Link handicapping functions that your Golf Link club administrator will use in an unchanged way, but that will initiate changed Golf Link computer processing. (This will include the way Golf Link will create a new handicap, and the way Golf Link will treat an NCR.) All of this is because the changed handicapping system has required us to find different ways for Golf Link's operating functions to properly apply the rules. However, we reiterate that club handicap administrators should continue to follow their existing procedures.

Accompanying this memo are appendices which set out the changed regulations that comprise the First Package of Changes. The appendices also explain the miscellaneous Golf Link handicapping functions that your Golf Link club administrator will use in an unchanged way, but that will initiate changed Golf Link computer processing.

The appendices are as follows:

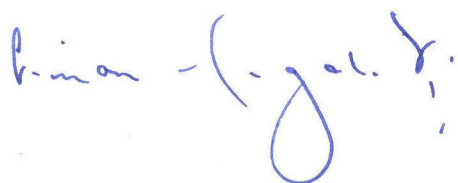
- Appendix 1 – Details of the New Method for Calculating an Australian Handicap
- Appendix 2 – Details of the Removal of CCR
- Appendix 3 – Miscellaneous Actions

In relation to GA's strategy beyond the First Package of Changes, Tier 3 clubs should be aware that the phased implementation in Australia of the USGA Handicap System is being designed with a view to incorporating no more than two separate Packages of software adjustments to Tier 3 computerised club handicap management systems. In short, we have identified the limitation of Packages of Tier 3 adjustments as a critical goal. The value of this will be self-evident to Tier 3 clubs.

We hope this information is of assistance. Additionally, please be aware we will be sending out reminders in the lead-up to 9 April. We will also be distributing further assistance in response to feedback.

Please contact GA or your State Association should you have any queries regarding any of the above.

Kind regards,



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APPENDIX to GA Memo (29/1/2010) regarding the First Package of Changes to the Australian Men's & Women's Handicapping Systems

Appendix 1 of 3: THE NEW ('ROLLING SAMPLE') METHOD FOR CALCULATING AN AUSTRALIAN MEN'S HANDICAP OR AN AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S HANDICAP

From 9 April 2010, Australian Handicaps will be calculated from a rolling sample of the player's previous 20 scores. If a player's handicap record contains a lesser number than 20 scores, the number of scores used to calculate the player's handicap is as listed in the table below.

Once a player's handicap record contains 20 scores, the next score they return will result in the oldest of the existing 20 scores being removed (to be replaced by the new score). Hence, the handicap record is considered to be a 'rolling sample' of the player's scores.

The new procedure for calculating an Australian Women's Handicap or an Australian Men's Handicap will be as follows:

STEP 1 – Use the table below to determine the number of Handicap Differentials to be included in the handicap calculation: (Note: *Handicap Differential = Gross Score – AMCR/AWCR (this is the value that from 9 April 2010 will be featured in the 'Played to' column on golflink.com.au).*)

[AMCR = Australian Men's Course Rating; AWCR = Australian Women's Course Rating.]

<i>Number of Scores in Player's Scoring Record</i>	<i>Differentials to be Used in the Calculation</i>
3 to 6	Lowest 1
7 or 8	Lowest 2
9 or 10	Lowest 3
11 or 12	Lowest 4
13 or 14	Lowest 5
15 or 16	Lowest 6
17	Lowest 7
18	Lowest 8
19	Lowest 9
20	Lowest 10

STEP 2 – Average the Handicap Differentials being used (as determined by the above table).

STEP 3 – Multiply the average by 0.96. (Note: This is the 'bonus for excellence' factor. Bonus for excellence is the incentive for players to improve their golf game. As a player's handicap improves (gets lower), the player has a slightly better chance of placing high or winning a handicap event.)

STEP 4 – After applying STEP 3, delete all numbers after the tenths' digit. Do NOT round to the nearest tenth. (For example 23.6983 becomes 23.6.)

STEP 5 – In the example provided in STEP 4, the exact Australian Men's Handicap or Australian Women's Handicap is therefore 23.6. (Note: The playing handicap is determined by rounding off the exact handicap. (For this calculation, .5 or more IS rounded up, so in this example the player with an exact handicap of 23.6 will play off 24.))

NOTES

- Note i** – The AMCR/AWCR is to be used to calculate all differentials used in the calculation of an Australian Handicap, not any CCR which may have been determined at the time a round was played. Hence, all 'Played to' values stored and displayed in each player's Golf Link handicap record from prior to 9 April 2010 will be recalculated according to this changed rule.
- Note ii** – At a later point, Australian Handicaps will only be revised (ie recalculated) on a periodic basis (somewhere between two weeks and one month). However, GA has not as yet determined a precise implementation date for this change. We are also as yet to determine the revision time period. When the 'rolling sample' method is first in operation, the existing regulations will continue to apply (ie the Australian Handicap will be recalculated by Golf Link immediately upon the processing of a player's score details). Processing of competitions through Golf Link should occur at the earliest convenience of the club's Golf Link administrator.
- Note iii** – There is no requirement for a player's most recent 20 scores to have been returned within a specific timeframe. For example, the most recent 20 scores may span a period of three years or they may span a period of three months.
- Note iv** – When the First Package of Changes becomes effective, the 'rolling sample' handicap calculation method will make use of scores already contained within a player's Golf Link handicap record. As a result, players with existing Australian Handicaps will not need to return any new scores to get a handicap under the new calculation method.
- Note v** – The following regulation has already been deleted: *"If on 1 January of a year, a player goes from having at least three "live scores" in their handicap record to having less than three "live scores", their handicap will be considered to be a "Lapsed Handicap" until the number of "live scores" again reaches three; at this point normal recording procedures resume operating from the player's last recorded exact handicap."* To clarify, it will no longer be possible for a player's Australian Handicap to lapse.
- Note vi** – Non-Golf Link clubs will need to ensure their calculation processes replicate those performed by Golf Link.
- Note vii** – Golf Link clubs will not need to do anything to instigate the process of recalculating all handicaps in accordance with the new regulations. Golf Link will do everything for you.



APPENDIX to GA Memo (29/1/2010) regarding the First Package of Changes to the Australian Men's & Women's Handicapping Systems

Appendix 2 of 3: REMOVE DAILY COURSE RATING COMPONENT (ie C.C.R.) OF AUSTRALIAN HANDICAPPING SYSTEMS

- Note i** – Women's CCR has not operated in Australia since the decision was taken by Golf Australia to suspend its operation from 1 October 2007.
- Note ii** – This change will involve using the AMCR/AWCR (*Australian Men's Course Rating / Australian Women's Course Rating*) for the calculation of ALL differentials. (*Handicap Differential = Gross Score – AMCR/AWCR* (this is the value that from 9 April 2010 will be featured in the 'Played to' column on golflink.com.au.)
- Note iii** – The AMCR/AWCR will be used to calculate all differentials involved in the calculation of an Australian Handicap, not any CCR which may have been determined at the time a round was played. Hence, all 'Played to' values stored and displayed in each player's Golf Link scoring record prior to 9 April 2010 will be automatically recalculated according to this changed rule.
- Note iv** – The existing women's regulation regarding tee-up through the green will apply also for men from 9 April 2010. Hence, the new men's regulation will be: "When Tee Up "through the green" applies, the AMCR must be reduced by 2 strokes". For Golf Link clubs, this reduction will be performed automatically if the appropriate Golf Link box is 'ticked'.
- Note v** – Note iv above refers to the term "Through the Green". "Through the Green" is a defined term in the Rules of Golf. It means: "The whole area of the course except; (a) the teeing ground and putting green of the hole being played, and (b) all hazards [ie bunkers, lateral water hazards, and water hazards] on the course." So, "Through the Green" includes fairways AND rough.
- Note vi** – Golf Link clubs will not need to do anything to instigate the process of recalculating all handicaps in accordance with the new regulations. Golf Link will do everything for you.
- Note vii** – Non-Golf Link clubs will need to ensure their calculation processes replicate those performed by Golf Link.



APPENDIX to GA Memo (29/1/2010) regarding the First Package of Changes to the Australian Men's & Women's Handicapping Systems

Appendix 3 of 3: MISCELLANEOUS HANDICAPPING ACTIONS

Once the First Package of Changes becomes effective, you will see that Golf Link will calculate handicaps quite differently.

There will also be some miscellaneous Golf Link handicapping functions that your Golf Link club administrator will use in an unchanged way, but that will initiate changed Golf Link computer processing. All of this is because the changed handicapping system has required us to establish different ways for Golf Link's operating functions to properly apply the rules.

However, we reiterate our previously-communicated message that Golf Link club handicap administrators should continue to follow their existing procedures.

Detailed in this Appendix are the following noteworthy miscellaneous Golf Link handicapping functions which Golf Link will process quite differently even though they will be operated by your Golf Link club administrator in the same way as currently:

- 1. *Player Fails to Return Score Card***
- 2. *Re-assessment of Handicaps***
- 3. *Allocating an Initial Handicap to a New Player (or to a player who does not currently have a handicap record)***

One final miscellaneous point some Club administrators should be aware of is listed at item 4 ("*Club Joins Golf Link Close to or after 9 April 2010 Resulting in Handicaps Being Calculated on the Basis of Unrepresentative Handicap Records*").

NOTES

Note i – Non-Golf Link clubs will need to ensure their calculation processes replicate those performed by Golf Link.

Note ii – Golf Link clubs will not need to do anything to instigate the process of calculating all handicaps in accordance with the new regulations. Golf Link will do everything for you.

Note iii – A competition processed before 9 April 2010 and then unprocessed and reprocessed from 9 April 2010 onwards will be reprocessed under the new rules.

1. Player Fails to Return Score Card

If a player fails (for a reason which is not approved by the committee in charge of the competition) to post an acceptable score as soon as practicable after completion of their round, the following process should be followed:

- ~ The round is to be recorded in Golf Link with the status of '*No Score – Not Approved*'.
- ~ However, if the Committee considers the player is most likely to have had a 'good' score, it should NOT use the '*No Score – Not Approved*' option. Instead it should enter a score for the player for that round equivalent to the best differential of the player's most recent (before the penalty score is added) 19 differentials AND select the Golf Link '*Disqualified*' score status option. Note: A Committee

has complete discretion to make such a determination – to avoid such action moving forward, the player only needs to return their score card at the completion of every round.

- ~ Where a Committee records a player's score status for a round as either 'Disqualified' (and also includes a score) or 'No Score – Not Approved', but then subsequently becomes aware of the score the player actually had, it SHOULD:
 - Enter the correct score by using the 'Correct Score' function found in both Tier 1 and Tier 3 systems, thereby replacing the 'penalty' entry with the actual score.
- ~ For 'repeat offenders' only, clubs ARE PERMITTED to record the correct score IN ADDITION to retaining the penalty score (ie 'Disqualified' (accompanied by the listing of a score) or 'No Score – Not Approved'). The correct procedure for this is to enter the correct score in Golf Link as an 'Ad Hoc' score.

Operational Notes:

- (i) **Selecting the Golf Link score status category for a round of "No Score – Not Approved"** will have the following handicapping ramifications:
 - The player's differential for that round will be deemed to be the equivalent of the worst differential of the player's most recent (before the penalty score is added) 19 differentials.
 - This score will be considered when determining a player's most recent 20 scores.
- (ii) **Selecting the Golf Link score status category for a round of "Disqualified" (accompanied by the listing of a score)** will have the following handicapping ramifications:
 - For handicapping purposes, the score is treated in exactly the same fashion as if the player had not been disqualified.
 - This score will be considered when determining a player's most recent 20 scores.

2. Re-assessment of Handicaps

- (a) Clubs and State Associations should continue to exactly follow the existing regulations and procedures which apply to the re-assessment of a player's Australian Handicap. This includes the way in which a club's Golf Link administrator effects the change in Golf Link.

Operational Notes:

When a club's Golf Link administrator uses the 'Adjust Handicap' function in Golf Link, Golf Link will automatically add a series of artificial scores to the player's handicap record. It is these artificial scores that will result in the player's handicap adjusting to the required figure. Relevant points regarding this process are as follows:

- If the required new handicap is a lower figure than the existing exact handicap, Golf Link will populate the respective player's handicap record with ten identical artificial scores.
 - If the required new handicap is a higher figure than the existing exact handicap, Golf Link will populate the respective player's handicap record with twenty identical artificial scores.
 - If the club's Golf Link administrator enters a required new handicap of for example 17.3, Golf Link will round the listed handicap provided to the nearest whole number (in this case it would be 17). The artificially generated scores in this case will all have a differential of 17. (Note: Remember that the average of the differentials in the player's handicap record will be multiplied by 0.96 (see the new handicap calculation procedure in Appendix 1). As a result, it will be permissible for a club to allow for this by slightly inflating the required new handicap it enters in Golf Link.)
- (b) From 9 April 2010, clubs and State Associations will be permitted to 'freeze' a handicap at a specific figure.

Operational Notes regarding freezing of handicaps:

- Only GA will have the physical access to the Golf Link freezing functionality (note: however a Club or State Association may take a decision to freeze a player's handicap).
- GA will freeze a player's handicap upon the direction of a State Association. A Club will have the same authority to take a decision to freeze a player's handicap that it currently does regarding the amendment of a player's handicap. In reaching a decision to freeze a player's handicap, a Club must follow the same process as is currently required to amend a player's handicap. However the process to follow in order to effect the freezing of a handicap on Golf Link is for the Club to notify its State Association of the decision to freeze; the State Association will then notify GA.
- The authority held by GA and State Associations regarding a decision to amend a player's handicap also applies to the freezing of a player's handicap.
- A freeze may be effected for a stipulated period of either one month, two months, or three months.
- Upon the expiration of the initial freeze period, and given reasonable justification has not expired, there will be nothing to stop the body that took an initial decision to freeze a handicap from extending the freeze period.
- The figure at which the handicap is frozen may not necessarily reflect the handicap which would be calculated via the normal computation method.
- Where a player's Australian Handicap is frozen at an exact figure (for example 12.4), their "Exact handicap" listing in the "Your Handicap" area of golfink.com.au will read: "Exact Handicap: 12.4 (FROZEN)".
- A frozen handicap may still be used by a player in exactly the same fashion as a non-frozen handicap.

3. ALLOCATING AN INITIAL HANDICAP TO A NEW PLAYER (or to a player who does not currently have a handicap record)

- a) In the First Package of Changes, there will be no alteration to the existing initial-card regulations which relate to the capping of a player's individual hole scores. (Note: There are also existing regulations which restrict the degree to which a player who has previously held a handicap can be allocated a new handicap higher than the previous figure. The First Package of Changes in no way alters these restrictions.)
- b) HOWEVER, the First Package of Changes includes a requirement to change the way in which an initial handicap is calculated. Instead of averaging the differentials from the first three cards as currently occurs, the First Package of Changes requires that an initial handicap be allocated in accordance with the following process:
 - (i) Have the player return three scores as per the existing procedures. (And also as per the existing procedures, the Club adjusts the hole-by-hole scores in the event that any of these scores exceeds the designated limit (this process is implemented for initial cards only).)
 - (ii) Determine the differential for each of these three scores (note: Differential for Initial Score = Adjusted Gross Score – AMCR/AWCR).
 - (iii) Discard the worst two differentials. The best differential is the only score to be used in the new allocation process.
 - (iv) As your club's Golf Link administrator will know, the Tier 1 system and all Tier 3 systems currently contain a function which allows a club to send a player's exact initial handicap to Golf Link. The First Package of Changes will not include an amendment to this.

To initiate a handicap from 9 April 2010, your club's Golf Link administrator should enter the player's best initial-card differential into this data box (eg 17.0 or 28.0). The administrator sends this to Golf Link (in exactly the same way that you would previously have entered and sent the average of the three differentials), and Golf Link will perform all of the further required calculations.

(Note: Some Tier 3 systems alternatively require all three initial scores be entered by the club administrator into the Tier 3 system. If your club operates a

Tier 3 system which does this, you should enter the best differential three times (the rest of your process will be exactly as you will previously have performed it).

- (v) Upon receipt of the best differential, Golf Link will automatically add to the respective player's scoring record three identical artificial scores as follows (note: as soon as these three artificial scores are added to the player's Golf Link handicap record, the player will automatically have an Australian Handicap):
 - Each score will be identical and will yield identical differentials.
 - If the figure provided does not end in .0, Golf Link will round the provided exact handicap figure to the nearest whole number and use this as the 'Played to' (ie differential) figure. Golf Link will multiply this differential by 0.96 to determine the player's exact handicap. [The club is permitted to allow for the 0.96 factor by slightly inflating the initial differential (or initial handicap) figure it provides to Golf Link.]
 - Note i: Each of the artificially-created initial entries in the player's handicap record will have the same date which will be the date Golf Link enters the data.
 - Note ii: Once Golf Link has automatically added the three artificial scores to the player's scoring record, none of these three scores may be deleted. However they may be amended via use of your existing Golf Link score amendment procedures.
- (vi) Non-Golf Link clubs will need to ensure their calculation processes replicate those performed by Golf Link.

4. Club Joins Golf Link Close to or after 9 April 2010 Resulting in Handicaps Being Calculated on the Basis of Unrepresentative Handicap Records

If a Club joins Golf Link close to or after 9 April 2010, it may well face the problem of its members having Golf Link handicap records which are missing a significant number of scores. As a result, there is potential for the handicaps of the affected players to be distorted. Whilst this problem will only affect a very small number of clubs, GA and Golf Link have put together some strategies for combating this problem. Details of these strategies will be posted on the GA website in the next month.