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Important Memorandum



TO: Australian Golf Club and Venue Administrators
FROM: Golf Australia
DATE: Wednesday 11 December 2024
SUBJECT: 2025 Changes to the Rules of Handicapping

We are writing to advise you of the following changes to the Australian Rules of Handicapping that will take effect at the time the new GolfConnect platform commences operation and replaces GOLF Link (an update on timelines for the introduction of GolfConnect will be provided to all clubs on 29 January 2025):

1. Change to the Daily Handicap formula – inclusion of new ‘Consistency Factor’
2. Change to the Daily Handicap formula for 9-hole rounds
3. Use of an ‘Expected Score’ for a Hole Not Played
4. Inclusion of shorter-length golf courses within the Course Rating System
5. Change to the Daily Difficulty (PCC) formula (to be back-calculated to 1 January 2023)

Important Note: Most Australian golfers will have a different GA Handicap. As a result of the back-calculation work, almost every Australian club member should expect some degree of change to their GA Handicap when GolfConnect commences operation, projected to be less than .5 on average.

Whilst we will distribute communications direct to golfers about the changes closer to the transition to GolfConnect, you are welcome to provide this information to your members in accordance with your own timelines.

These reforms have been designed using extensive statistical analyses performed on hundreds of millions of scores returned globally since the introduction of the World Handicap System in 2020. This research and development continues the commitment of golf's governing bodies to the ongoing enhancement of our handicapping services, which we recognise are central to the enjoyment of golfers globally.

The international Rules of Handicapping are reviewed every four years by the joint international governing bodies, The R&A and the United States Golf Association (USGA), in collaboration with Golf Australia (GA). They comprise a core set of Rules together with some discretionary items that enable each country to cater for the diverse golf playing cultures around the world. Any previous information you may have seen about 2024 handicapping changes will have been tailored for a non-Australian jurisdiction.

1. Change to the Daily Handicap formula – inclusion of new ‘Consistency Factor’

A new ‘Consistency Factor’ has been added to the Daily Handicap formula. The statistical analysis underpinning

this change involved assessing the different levels of consistency exhibited by various segments of golfers, and the competitive advantage the handicap system's existing settings offer to more inconsistent players.

The new '*Consistency Factor*' values accommodate the tendency of men/boys to exhibit greater inconsistency in their scoring patterns compared to women/girls. The '*Consistency Factor*' will enhance equity within single-gender and gender-neutral events, reinforcing the handicap system's purpose of providing each golfer with a reasonable prospect of winning or placing well if they play close to their ability. On average, the introduction of the '*Consistency Factor*' will generate a slight increase of approximately 5% to the Daily Handicaps of women/girls. We will continue to assess club and golfer feedback as we monitor the impact of consistency more broadly on equity in handicap competitions and review these settings periodically.

CLICK HERE and follow link to **APPENDIX A** for details of the upgraded Daily Handicap formula. No work will be required of players – the software will be updated accordingly. The only work required of club administrators will be to print updated Daily Handicap Look-up charts using GA's website chart generator. We will let you know when the upgraded formulas are live in the chart generator.

2. Change to the Daily Handicap formula for 9-hole rounds

A new 9-hole Daily Handicap formula will be used. The new formula will calculate a 9-hole Daily Handicap for a player that is usually about 50% of what their 18-hole Daily Handicap would be.

No work will be required of players – the software will be updated accordingly. The only work required of club administrators will be to print updated Daily Handicap Look-up charts using GA's website chart generator. We will let you know when the upgraded formulas are live in the chart generator.

Clubs may choose to create a 9-hole stroke index allocation. 18-hole stroke indexes may also continue to be used in 9-hole play.

CLICK HERE and follow link to **APPENDIX B** for more information on the new formula, and on stroke indexes for 9-hole Daily Handicaps.

3. Use of an 'Expected Score' for a Hole Not Played

Improvements have been made to the method used to handle holes not played, which will now be based on a player's 'expected score' rather than a score of net par. This new method will produce a 9-hole or 18-hole result that more accurately reflects a player's ability by using a statistically developed '*expected score*' formula.

How does the new formula work? A model formula for every GA Handicap for women/girls and men/boys has been developed using millions of previous scores. The applicable one will be applied to create a player's expected score when they have only started 8 holes in a 9-hole round, or only started 16 or 17 holes in an 18-hole round. This process replaces the one of filling gaps with net pars. The new formula is built to account for a standard golf course, so the calculations aren't course dependent. **CLICK HERE** and follow link to **APPENDIX C** for full details of the process for handicapping scores returned from anywhere between 8 to 17 holes.

No work will be required of players or administrators – the software will be updated to automatically calculate all '*expected scores*'.

4. Inclusion of shorter-length golf courses within the Course Rating System

The overall length requirements for international Course Rating will be significantly reduced. A set of tees on an 18-hole course may now be as short as 1,370 metres to be eligible for a Scratch Rating and Slope Rating, and a set of tees on a 9-hole course may now be as short as 685 metres. This change is intended to enable many more golfers to obtain and use a GA Handicap.

5. Change to the Daily Difficulty (PCC) formula

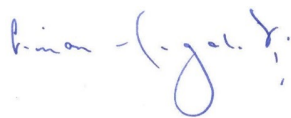
The R&A and USGA have modified the Daily Difficulty formulas to increase the likelihood by approximately 5% of an adjustment for abnormal playing conditions. The change to these formulas was held back in Australia to coincide with the introduction of GolfConnect. To address the resultant minor misalignment that has arisen between Australian handicaps and handicaps in other parts of the world, Daily Difficulty calculations for all Australian competitions will be back-calculated to 1 January 2023 as a part of the transition project to GolfConnect. [CLICK HERE](#) and follow link to APPENDIX D for more information.

Note: The technical term for Daily Difficulty is 'Playing Conditions Calculation' or PCC. PCC is a daily rating that is assessed purely by analysing scores. Under the PCC system, the software automatically assesses a Scratch Rating adjustment each day. The PCC is displayed on a golfer's handicap record as an adjustment value (eg '+2' or '-1').

More information

Please reach out to us at any time if you would like more information on the changes to the Rules of Handicapping (rules&handicapping@golf.org.au). Reminders for clubs, and advice for golfers will be distributed closer to the transition to GolfConnect. We look forward to these developments taking effect across Australia.

Kind regards,



Simon Magdulski

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Golf Australia



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