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Important Memorandum



TOPIC:	Retirement of GOLF Link and transition to GolfConnect
TO:	Australian Golf Club and Venue Administrators
FROM:	Golf Australia
DATE:	Thursday 12 September 2024
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You are receiving this communication as you were registered as a club/venue administrator who required updates on the GOLF Link/ GolfConnect transition project. Please do not distribute this communication to your members at this time. This is the first in a series of communications that will be provided over the coming weeks as we progress towards the transition date.

1. THE RETIREMENT OF GOLF LINK AND TRANSITION TO GOLFCONNECT

We are writing to provide you with further details on the retirement of GOLF Link and the introduction of Golf Australia's new handicapping club management, and membership platform – GolfConnect. This transition is a significant evolution for the Australian golfing community, and we want to ensure that you and your club/venue are well-prepared for the changes ahead, including how it will integrate with GA-licensed third-party products.

The transition is set to take place between the evening of Sunday 01 December and Friday 06 December 2024.

Golf Australia has appointed DotGolf as our key digital provider for significant long-term benefit to the sport. The platform promises to better service the needs and support growth of clubs and facilities, create a better overall experience for participants both existing and emerging and, provide better information for clubs, facilities and governing bodies to drive growth in the sport.

DotGolf is a golf technology company half owned by Golf NZ and The R&A. At the time of acquiring a 50% share in DotGolf in August 2023, Martin Slumbers, CEO of The R&A, said, "We have a long-term vision for how golf can thrive in the future and a large part of that is based on embracing technological solutions that can bring more people into the game and enhance services to golfers. Golf is a global sport and we believe DotGolf has huge potential to deliver cutting edge platforms and solutions to the industry."

The DotGolf technology is already used by national associations in New Zealand, England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales

For your reference, last year's announcement of Golf Australia's partnership with DotGolf can be viewed [HERE](#).

2. INTRODUCING GOLFCONNECT - HANDICAPPING, CLUB MANAGEMENT AND MEMBERSHIP SYSTEM

Every club/venue will be required to use the new GolfConnect Venue Management System (VMS) to at least some degree.

Note: Tier 1 is the GOLF Link website that has historically been used by clubs with smaller memberships for all their handicapping and competition management needs, whereas clubs with larger memberships have used a GA-Licensed Third Party Software product.

Impact for organisations actively using the GOLF Link Tier 1 software.

As a part of the transition, the GOLF Link Tier 1 software will be retired from use. Golf Australia is committed to supporting clubs through the provision of the GolfConnect product that includes membership, handicapping, and competition management software.

All functions currently performed in GOLF Link Tier 1 will be performed in GolfConnect, along with further capability to enhance the volunteer and golfing experience at your club.

There will be no cost to clubs for the provision of like-for-like services in GolfConnect.

Full training on the platform will be provided in the lead-up to the deployment of GolfConnect.

3. INTEGRATION WITH GA-LICENSED SOFTWARE PRODUCTS

Impact for those organisations that currently use one or more of the following third-party GA-Licensed Software products – MiClub Golf, MiClub's OneGolf, SimpleGolf, Golf Magic, Pulse Club, Golf Genius, or GolfBox.

For clubs and venues that use third-party GA-Licensed Software, there will be a set of one-off tasks required to transition to GolfConnect. Additionally, some ongoing functionality will be housed in the GolfConnect VMS, for example, course ratings and hole-by-hole information including stroke indexes. The tasks will be communicated, and training provided, in the lead-up to the transition. Your provider will communicate with you separately regarding any system changes resulting from the transition to GolfConnect.

Golf Australia acknowledges the significant efforts of the GA-Licensed Software Providers in undertaking modification to their products to integrate with the GolfConnect solution and the ongoing role they play in providing software products and services to golf clubs.

GolfConnect VMS does not replace third-party software products, and any club or facility interested in engaging a GA-Licensed Software provider can be assisted by Golf Australia.

Existing scoring applications and websites provided by third-parties will continue to operate and be offered by providers.

4. THE IMPACT OF THE TRANSITION ON GOLFERS

Please do not distribute to your members at this time. This information is provided to clubs and venues as an FYI. In due course, Golf Australia will provide you with communications and guidance that is tailored to the specific experience of your members.

Introducing the new Golf Australia Official App

As part of the transition, Golf Australia will be introducing a new handicap app, the Golf Australia Official App, replacing the existing Golf Australia Handicap App.

The new Golf Australia Official App will continue to provide handicap look-up functionality while introducing new features.

Golfers will be prompted to download a new app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. Instructions on how to do this will be supplied directly to golfers, clubs, and venues in the lead-up to the new app becoming available. Advance notice of communications to golfers will be provided to clubs in due course.

Golf Australia will provide clubs and venues with communication and training materials to assist your members with the transition to the Golf Australia Official App.

Introducing the new GOLF.com.au

As part of the transition Golf Australia, in partnership with the PGA of Australia, will be introducing a brand new one-stop website for golf in Australia, GOLF.com.au.

GOLF.com.au will be the new home of Golf Australia and the PGA of Australia and will, amongst many other things, host the player's GA Handicap record. It will also be the place to stay up to speed with everything happening in Australian golf.

Lifetime Golf ID numbers

The term 'Golf ID' will replace the term 'GOLF Link Number' from the time of the GolfConnect launch day. The existing GOLF Link number protocols will remain unchanged until this time. As with GOLF Link numbers, Golf IDs will be 10-digit numbers.

On GolfConnect's launch day, every member's Golf ID will be exactly the same as their GOLF Link number was at the time GOLF Link was retired – and this number will remain with them for life. For all current and future club members, a person's Golf ID will remain unchanged, regardless of how many club membership changes they have over the duration of their golfing experience.

Golf IDs for new club members will be entirely randomly generated by GolfConnect, and the first five digits will no

longer indicate a person's Home Club. For example, if a club generates Golf IDs for two new members at the same time, the two new Golf IDs may have no resemblance to each other.

The physical GOLF Link card will also be retired, with membership information provided within the GA Official App or via the new joint website.

Golfers will use their Golf ID to log in to both GOLF.com.au and the GA Official App, a change from the current email address login.

5. TIMELINES, TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Project Timeline

The transition is scheduled to occur between the evening of Sunday 01 December and Friday 06 December during which there will be a necessary interruption to handicapping services. This interruption will be minimised to the extent required for the transition with further timing to be communicated closer to these dates.

The offline period will begin when GOLF Link is switched off, and end when GolfConnect is switched on. During the offline period Golf Australia, DotGolf and the GA-Licensed Software Providers will be working to shift all the golfer, course and rounds data across to the new platform. The offline period is anticipated to last 4 business days, beginning in the evening of Sunday 01 December and Thursday 05 December. During this period, and for the days immediately following, we encourage all clubs to run non-handicapped events and advise members accordingly. Golf Australia will continue to update clubs about the offline and go-live periods during the onboarding process.

For clubs serviced by third-party GA-Licensed Software Providers, your provider will communicate with you separately on how they will manage their service to you during the period the central system is offline.

During the offline period, clubs will NOT be able to upload scores for handicapping, allocate new GOLF Link numbers or Golf IDs, or complete other handicapping or course rating functions. Clubs and individuals will NOT be able to look up handicap details via the GA Handicap App and golf.org.au during the offline period until the transition to the new Golf Australia Official App and GOLF.com.au.

The setup and training phase for clubs and venues will commence in the 4-weeks leading up to the transition. There will be a 4-week period for setup and training that will be critical to the successful implementation of GolfConnect. Further details on this plan will be sent to clubs and venues shortly.

Training and Resources

Golf Australia will be supporting clubs and venues with a comprehensive set of resources to assist with the transition. These resources will include:

- National webinars sessions with content delivered to your specific situation,
- Step-by-step digital and printable user guides,
- Training videos explaining various software functions, and

- An onboarding checklist, so you can be comfortable that you have completed every task to ensure a smooth transition.

Centralised Support

As part of the project delivery and to support clubs and facilities into the future, Golf Australia is providing a dedicated support centre. At this time help@golf.com.au is the preferred contact method, with a phone number being provided for club and venue use at the commencement of the training process. The existing GOLF Link helpdesk will be retired shortly after the transition to GolfConnect.

Future Communications

If you have received this communication you will continue to receive communications from Golf Australia throughout the duration of the project. If administrators at your club have not received this communication and would like to be informed, they can register for updates via [this link](#).

Kind regards,



James Sutherland

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