

## **HANDICAP INFORMATION 6 - HOME CLUB'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Are there any circumstances under which our club can run stroke play competitions where Handicaps can be reduced but not increased? Examples would be a five-club competition and winter medals.**

Absolutely not. A club committee has the authority to deprive certain competitions of their status as Qualifying Competitions provided they do so before play commences. When a competition is declared non-qualifying, handicaps can neither be reduced or increased. Competitors should be aware of this before play commences. There are only two situations when handicaps can be reduced but not increased. These are:

- A competition where application of the CSS calculation determines that the competition is Reduction Only (R/O).
- When a competition has been abandoned for any valid reason, reductions of handicap are made on the basis that the CSS is equal to the SSS.

It should be noted that a five-club competition is non-qualifying as it does not conform to the Rules of Golf.

### **Why are there not more Qualifying Competitions?**

The spirit of the Rules is quite clear. It is that clubs should run as many of their competitions on a qualifying basis as is reasonably possible. It is clearly not within the spirit of the Rules to deliberately adjust the terms and conditions of a competition, particularly open competitions, so that it is technically non-qualifying e.g. restricting the number of clubs or using a  $\frac{3}{4}$  handicap allowance. The CONGU® handicapping system produces fair and accurate results for frequent competitors, but suffers from lack of information about those who have a smaller record. The CSS system is meant to help to solve this problem by adjusting the scratch score to match the playing conditions. This means that clubs can continue to run qualifying competitions in bad weather without being unfair to any particular category of player. It is quite unacceptable to use non-qualifying scores for handicap adjustment as if they had been returned under qualifying conditions. Such scores can be added to the player's record for later review, but that is all. Clubs are not permitted, under the UHS rules, to generate artificial "reduction only" situations in this way. This practice could eventually undermine the integrity of the handicapping system.

### **Why have Supplementary Scores been introduced?**

The broad purpose is to encompass more club golfers in the handicap system. Currently too few golfers participate in the handicap system and consequently many may not have a handicap reflective of their current playing ability. If few scores are returned it is difficult for the handicap committee to make informed decisions regarding the Annual Handicap Review procedure. Whilst it is preferable for players to compete in qualifying competitions CONGU® recognises that for some players this is not always possible. Supplementary scores have been introduced to help address the needs of some members of golf clubs who for example:

- Cannot submit many cards in qualifying competitions because of work or family commitments or who, particularly in busy clubs which have pressure on tee times, cannot regularly arrange to play on competition days;

- Are relatively new to the game of golf and are apprehensive about playing in competitions until they have acquired more experience;
- Because of advancing age, medical or other reasons play when the course is quieter when they can play without feeling they are holding up other competitors in the field; or
- Play most of their golf from forward tees with a lower SSS and would prefer to return some of their scores for handicap purposes from these forward tees.

Controls have been put in place to ensure that supplementary scores are not abused by restricting the number of scores that may be returned under these conditions.

**What is the purpose of the Stableford Point Alternative or Nett Double Bogey adjustment in the CONGU® Handicapping System as contained in Clause 19?**

Clause 19 is a form of 'equitable stroke control' and is the downward adjustment of individual hole scores to a maximum equivalent to nett double bogey. This control is for handicap purposes only. The intent is that by placing a limit on the maximum score that can be recorded at any hole, Handicaps are more representative of a player's potential ability.

**In the Winter months the Handicapping Committee of our club has taken the decision, based on the poor condition of the course, to make our medal competitions Non-Qualifying. Resulting from this decision a number of Members who played below the SSS in such competitions are seeking a reduction in their Exact Handicap and cannot understand why CONGU® do not allow this. Can you please provide an explanation?**

It is a fundamental tenet of the CONGU® Handicapping System that handicap adjustments can only be applied in qualifying competitions when handicaps are adjusted, upwards and downwards as appropriate, in relation to the CSS.

To allow a situation where handicaps can only be reduced, would distort the balance on which the system is based. There is also the beneficial psychological factor in playing in non-qualifying competitions with the knowledge that there is no risk of an increase in handicap.

To allow the handicaps of those players scoring below the SSS in non-qualifying competitions to be reduced is considered by CONGU® to be an unacceptable abuse of the system.

Scores returned in non-qualifying competitions can be one of a number of factors to be taken into account in consideration of Clause 19 adjustment. In the majority of cases, however, it is most unlikely that application of the minimum full stroke reduction imposed by this clause would be justified.