

Summary of Major Components of the Complete New GA Handicap System

Implementation Date – The complete new GA Handicap System is projected to come into full effect during the latter part of 2013.

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE COMPLETE NEW GA HANDICAP SYSTEM

Already in Effect

- Best 8 of 20, multiplied by 0.93
- Anchor
- Immediate updating of handicaps
- No lapsed handicaps

Yet to be Implemented

- DSR (Daily Scratch Rating)
- Slope
- SHA (Stableford Handicapping Adjustment)
- Handicapping of Conforming Social Scores
- Handicapping of Four-ball scores (will be similar to current regulations)
- Changed 9-hole regulations (9-hole score to be automatically held in GOLF Link for combination with next 9-hole score)

1. Calculation of GA Handicap – Best 8 of 20, Multiplied by 0.93 [already in effect]

To calculate a player's GA Handicap, you do the following:

- firstly identify their most recent 20 scores (which are clearly displayed on golflink.com.au),
- then average the Differentials from the best 8 of them (Differential is the calculation of the difference between the player's score and the course rating; it is the value listed in the 'Played To' column on golflink.com.au),
- finally you multiply this average by 0.93,
- the resultant figure is the player's GA Handicap.

2. Anchor [already in effect]

GOLF Link will automatically prevent a player's GA Handicap from increasing by any more than 4 strokes beyond their best GA Handicap from the previous 12-month rolling period.

The Anchor eliminates the capacity for extreme outward movements of GA Handicaps within short spaces of time. As a result, a sustained loss of form does not cause a player's GA Handicap to move too far from a level which is consistent with their underlying ability. The Anchor also makes the handicap system less susceptible to manipulation.

3. Immediate Updating of Handicaps [already in effect]

GOLF Link will recalculate a player's GA Handicap every time they have a new score processed.

4. No Lapsed Handicaps [already in effect]

Players will not be required to play a minimum number of rounds each year in order to maintain their GA Handicaps.

5. DSR (Daily Scratch Rating) [yet to be implemented]

How will the new DSR (Daily Scratch Rating) system work?

Under the new DSR system, we will assess a current course rating for you each day. This rating will be appropriate to the conditions you actually experienced. GOLF Link will do all of the work and publish the DSR immediately after the scores are processed.

The formulas used to assess the DSR are complex as our statisticians have advised that simple formula options are not efficient enough to produce reliable ratings – this was the problem with CCR.

Through GOLF Link, the DSR system will establish each of the following:

- The average net score for a field.
- The average handicap of a field.
- The field size.
- The type of competition (Stableford, Par, or Stroke).
- The gender of the competitors.

Once it has established each of these factors, GOLF Link will compare the ACTUAL average net score on the day with the average net score GOLF Link EXPECTS for this precise field composition. (The EXPECTED average is determined by GOLF Link from millions of prior rounds.)

GOLF Link will then determine the DSR by using the difference between what ACTUALLY happened on the day and what was EXPECTED to happen.

Will the DSR system mean more work for clubs?

No. GOLF Link will do all of the work and provide the DSR immediately after the scores are processed.

Why do we need course ratings?

- In order to process a player's score for handicapping, we need to know how hard the golf course was. If we don't, the score itself is largely meaningless and is unusable. For example, 82 on a very hard golf course is a much better achievement than 82 on a very easy golf course.
- For this reason, every set of tees on every golf course has a Scratch Rating assessed for it by a group of State/Territory Association experts.

What is the benefit of changing the course rating from day to day?

- Course ratings currently stay the same day after day, ignoring all daily shifts in conditions. We all know that the difficulty of a golf course can vary substantially from day to day. This means that on many days the Scratch Rating will not currently reflect the course difficulty.
- In a computerised world, clubs and golfers are becoming increasingly expectant of improved service standards. Utilising technology to provide ratings more closely aligned to the difficulty of a course is an innovation that will increasingly be seen as a basic requirement.
- With the vast majority of our golfers playing in coastal cities that are prone to variable weather conditions, it is particularly important for Australia to have a handicap system that is sufficiently flexible to cater for daily movements in course difficulty. If we don't, we end up processing scores against inaccurate course ratings, and that makes handicaps inaccurate.
- DSR will lead to more stable and comparable handicaps than if the vagaries of fluctuations in conditions from day to day and season to season prevail.

Can the DSR strategy be summarised in one paragraph?

DSR will provide golfers with a rating that is a reflection of the conditions they played under. The complex formulas will determine whether the difficulty presented at the time by the playing conditions was normal or different to normal.

6. Slope [yet to be implemented]

What does Slope do? Slope adjusts a player's handicap to the course they are playing by using that course's Slope Rating.

What is the aim of Slope? The aim of Slope is to increase the portability of handicaps and to create a more level playing field for golfers.

What does the Slope Rating provide that the Scratch Rating doesn't? Scratch Ratings are based solely on the challenge a golf course poses to an elite player, whereas the Slope Rating has factored into it the challenge posed to the elite player AS WELL as the challenge posed to the non-elite player.

How does this make things more equitable? We all know that on a difficult course a high-marker's score tends to deteriorate to a greater extent than the score of an elite player. Just how much more is what Slope measures. For example, if Course A is harder than Course B, a high-marker may play off 28 on Course A and 24 on Course B. The elite player finds it easier to adjust, so they may play off 4 on Course A and 3 on Course B. This is more equitable than our current system where the difference between the elite player's handicap and the high-marker's handicap is always the same.

Does that mean we no longer need Scratch Ratings? We still need Scratch Ratings. The Slope Rating and the Scratch Rating work in concert with each other. The Slope Rating is telling us how many more shots a player will need at a course in order to play to the Scratch Rating.

What are the features of Slope?

- Under Slope, every set of tees on every golf course will have both a Scratch Rating and a Slope Rating. The maximum Slope Rating is 155 (difficult) and the minimum is 55 (not so difficult). The neutral Slope Rating is 113.
- The Scratch Rating is the number of strokes a Scratch marker (ie a player with a handicap of 0) is expected to have. The Slope Rating indicates how much harder or easier the course will play for a player who is not a Scratch Marker.
- GOLF Link will calculate a central handicap for every player. This will be called the GA Handicap. Golfers will be able to directly compare their GA Handicaps with one another, no matter where they play their golf.
- Whilst the GA Handicap is the handicap that will be displayed in a player's GOLF Link record on www.golflink.com.au, it is not designed for use in handicap competition play.
- The handicap that is designed for use in competition play is the Daily Handicap. The Daily Handicap is the 'Sloped' version of the GA Handicap (ie the Daily Handicap takes into account the Slope of the course being played, whereas the GA Handicap does not). The formula for calculation of a Daily Handicap is as follows:
Daily Handicap = GA Handicap x (Slope Rating ÷ Neutral Slope Rating (ie 113))
- If that sounds difficult to work out, don't worry because GOLF Link will calculate it for you. GA will also provide each club with easy-to-use Daily Handicap look-up posters.

7. SHA (Stableford Handicapping Adjustment) [yet to be implemented]

- For handicapping, all Stroke scores must be converted to, and processed as, Stableford scores. (Where the competition is Stroke, the Stroke score will be the Competition Score; the Stableford Score will be the Handicapping Score.)
- Any round played under the Par scoring system will be converted by GOLF Link into a Stableford score by adding 36 points to the player's final result (for example GOLF Link will convert a score of 4 down into 32 points; the score of 32 points will be the player's Handicapping Score).
- If a player is competing in a Stroke or Par competition, their Stableford score is disregarded when assessing Competition placings.
- The purpose of this regulation is to:
 - Reduce the effect of high hole scores for handicap purposes in order to make handicaps more representative of a player's potential ability.
 - Make all handicaps as equitable as possible by using a uniform score type for all handicapping.

8. Handicapping of Conforming Social Scores [yet to be implemented]

- GA's extensive consultation program yielded strongly expressed views from some clubs that they should be permitted to handicap social rounds. Other clubs strongly expressed the view that they should not be obligated to handicap social rounds.
- It is a key objective of GA to have a handicap system that is sufficiently flexible to cater for those affiliated golfers who wish to play but not in formal competitions. This will facilitate greater participation.
- It is also a key objective of GA that policy be sufficiently broad to cater for the great diversity of Australian clubs, club environments, and competition and administrative challenges.
- The new handicap system will permit a social score to be used for handicapping but only if the following conditions are met. Firstly, the player's home club must have chosen to allow the use of social scores; and secondly, the player must have nominated prior to starting a round that it is to count for handicap purposes.

9. Handicapping of Four-ball Scores [yet to be implemented]

The four-ball handicapping component will be very similar to the current method except for a small amount of fine-tuning. The new system will permit a club to choose not to handicap four-ball scores if they believe their circumstances do not support four-ball handicapping.

10. Changed 9-hole and Incomplete Score Regulations (GOLF Link will store a player's 9-hole score for automatic combination with their next 9-hole score) [yet to be implemented]

In designing our new regulations, GA has been particularly mindful of two key points:

- Firstly, it is important that the GA Handicap System cater for 9-hole scores. This recognises the degree to which some groups of affiliated players have become time-poor. It also recognises those players who for various reasons have a strong preference for 9-hole golf.
- Secondly, a theme to emerge from the GA consultation program was concern with any regulation that involved the handicapping of scores that had been estimated or extended in more than a small way.

The key points of the new regulations for the handicapping of incomplete scores and scores of less than 18 holes are as follows:

- Where 16-17 holes inclusive have been played, the player will be deemed to have had net par for the remaining holes. The score will be processed as an 18-hole score.
- Scores returned over 9-15 holes will not be doubled or extended. They will be entered into GOLF Link as 9-hole scores. (Where 10-15 holes inclusive have been played, the first 9 holes played will be used and the remaining holes will be disregarded.)
- Where only 8 holes have been played, the player will be deemed to have had net par on the 9th hole. The score will be entered into GOLF Link as a 9-hole score.
- Any score of less than 8 holes will be disregarded.
- The initial 9-hole score a player returns is to be entered into GOLF Link; it will not immediately be used in the calculation of the player's GA Handicap. It will be automatically held by GOLF Link in the player's handicap record (together with the relevant 9-hole course rating) until another 9-hole score is entered. (Note: Under the new course rating system, all ratings are now stored in the database in 9-hole blocks.) The two 9-hole scores will be combined automatically by GOLF Link to create a single 18-hole score.

GENERAL NOTES

- To gain an initial GA Handicap a player will be required to submit 3 x 18-hole scores (or 6 x 9-hole scores, or a combination of the two).
- There will be no handicapping of match play scores.
- The system will not permit use of the USGA's 'Most Likely Score' regulation.
- Handicapping of scores returned by players playing alone will not be permitted.
- A social score may only be used for handicapping if the player's home club has chosen to allow the use of social scores, and if the player has nominated prior to starting a round that it is to count for handicap purposes. Otherwise, social scores will not be permitted for handicap purposes.



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