

Key Developments & Actions Leading up to the Announcement of the Major Components of the Complete New GA Handicap System

(January 2011 – May 2012)



GA's Recent Handicapping Consultation Program

- March 2011 – National Series of Handicapping Focus Groups and Forums (involved representatives from all Member Associations and from over 100 clubs). GA's CEO and Rules & Handicapping Director attended all sessions, as did the USGA's Senior Handicapping Director.
- April-June 2011 – National Handicapping Survey. A survey was sent to every golf club in Australia seeking feedback on key items of change. A total of 389 clubs submitted complete survey responses, representing approximately 173,000 (or 40%) of all registered golfers in Australia which was a very good response rate in comparison to average survey response rates.
- A significant amount of written and verbal feedback from clubs and Member Associations has been received and reviewed.
- All of this has resulted in GA having a considerable amount of feedback on which to base decisions.

Development & Adoption of First Principles of New GA Handicap System (Early-Mid 2011)

The GA Handicap System should achieve each of the following:

- (i) Be primarily tailored for competition golf and afford each player in the field a reasonable prospect of winning or placing well if that player plays reasonably better than their handicap.
- (ii) A player's handicap should be reflective of their better performances and should not increase substantially due to a temporary loss of form.
- (iii) The calculation of a handicap should take into account the degree of difficulty presented at the time by the playing conditions.
- (iv) The calculation of a handicap should be sufficiently flexible to be consistently calculated irrespective of the mix of handicaps held by players on a course on any given day.
- (v) The handicap system should have the confidence of the Australian golf community and should not place an unreasonable burden on any club in order for proper administration to be achieved.

Development of Four Priority Changes to 'Best 10 of 20' Handicap Calculation Method

- In January 2011, GA commissioned a highly experienced statistician to analyse the impact of the changes to the handicap system made in April 2010.
- This analysis involved assessing over 1 million rounds of golf from the GOLF *Link* system for over 27,000 competitions played. It covered the past three years and involved 400,000 golfers.
- This study found that the incremental adjustment method (which operated in Australia prior to April 2010) had been biased in favour of low markers, and that the '10 of 20' rolling average method was biased, especially for larger men's fields, in favour of higher markers.
- A wide range of proposed solutions were modelled using every competition round played at a diverse range of 15 clubs from the previous three-year period. As a check, similar modelling was performed on a further 10 clubs.
- The suite of changes GA settled on was as follows:
 1. 'Best 10 of 20' altered to 'Best 8 of 20'.
 2. Multiplier changed from 0.96 to 0.93.
 3. The score that goes into a player's handicap record is now capped by GOLF *Link* at no more than the following amount over the course rating:
50 – Women 40 – Men
 4. Introduction of four-stroke Anchor.
- The response of clubs to the implementation of the Four Priority Changes has been very positive.

Handicapping Meetings Feeding into Design of Complete New GA Handicap System

- During the first half of 2011, GA worked through the process of constructing a major Policy Committee for the area of Handicapping & Rules (the Handicapping & Rules Committee) as well as a specialised Handicapping Sub-Committee. The specialised Handicapping Sub-Committee comprises a balance of state and club officials (it includes a mix of professional and volunteer administrators from city and regional clubs).
- The following meetings have been held with a view to advancing the development of the complete new GA Handicap System:
 - › 28 June 2011 – Handicapping Sub-Committee
 - › 22 August 2011 – 'Policy Committee'
 - › 14 September 2011 – Handicapping Sub-Committee
 - › 10 October 2011 – 'Policy Committee'
 - › 3 November 2011 – Handicapping Sub-Committee
 - › 14 November 2011 – 'Policy Committee'
 - › 20 January 2012 – Handicapping Sub-Committee
 - › 7 February 2012 – 'Policy Committee'
 - › 24 April 2012 – Handicapping Sub-Committee
 - › 2 May 2012 – 'Policy Committee'

Statistics and Specialised Analysis

In order to support the work performed by GA's policy making bodies on designing a new purpose-built handicap system, GA has:

- Engaged the on-going services of highly-experienced and accomplished statisticians.
- Commissioned production of an array of statistical reports analysing past and existing patterns, and detailing the projected outcomes of many regulatory options.
- Formed the DSR Statistical Review Group – The membership of this review group includes statisticians as well as handicapping experts and was formed specifically to pursue the development of an effective daily rating system. It reports to the Handicapping Sub-Committee and the 'Policy Committee'.
- Conducted live trialling of the new DSR system within a diverse sample of clubs across Australia.
- Total Impact Review Group – The membership of this review group includes statisticians as well as handicapping experts and was formed specifically to assess the total impact of the complete new GA Handicap System on handicaps and competition results patterns. It reports to the Handicapping Sub-Committee and the 'Policy Committee'.

Key Components of 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)