

# **CONGU Handicapping System**

## **Outline Guide**

**January 2010**

## Introduction

A golf handicap allows players of all levels of golfing ability to compete against each other on a fair and equal basis. The system developed and refined by the Council of National Golf Unions (CONGU) provides a player with a golf handicap that reflects their playing ability relative to that of all other players handicapped by CONGU.

CONGU handicaps are ONLY allocated to players who are members of Clubs affiliated to a National Union/Association or CONGU and authorised by CONGU to utilise the Unified Handicapping System (UHS). Such Clubs are obliged to administer the UHS in a tightly controlled and uniform way thus ensuring that the Members' golf handicaps are maintained with consistency and uniformity.

## Standard Scratch Score

The Standard Scratch Score for a particular course is the score that a scratch player is expected to return in normal mid-season course and weather conditions over a measured course

The Leicestershire & Rutland Golf Union has allocated Lutterworth a Standard Scratch Score (SSS) of 70 for the measured course off the white tees and EWGA has allocated SSS of 71 from the Ladies tees

## Initial Handicap

A handicap can only be allotted to a Member of an Affiliated Club and after full consideration of his previous playing history, including any handicap held previously at another club.

To obtain a handicap a player must submit three cards over 18 holes each of which must be marked and signed by a responsible person acceptable to the Handicap Committee.

When the Handicap Committee reviews the submitted cards, any score of more than 2 over Par for men and 3 over Par for ladies at any hole must be amended to 2 (3) over Par respectively. After these adjustments have been made a Handicap shall be allotted equivalent to the number of strokes by which the best of the submitted rounds differs from the Standard Scratch Score.

## Alterations to Handicap

The CONGU Handicapping system only allows three ways in which a handicap can be adjusted.

1. Playing in a Qualifying Competition
2. At the Annual Review
3. Submitting a Supplementary Score Card

### 1. Qualifying Competitions

Only a player with an official Handicap can play in a Qualifying Competition. A player who competes in a competition which has the status of a Qualifying Competition will have his/her handicap adjusted. The procedure for this adjustment is outlined below

1. CONGU divides Handicaps into the following categories

Handicap Category	Exact Handicap	Playing Handicap
1	Plus to 5.4	Plus to 5
2	5.5 to 12.4	6 to 12
3	12.5 to 20.4	13 to 20
4	20.5 to 28.0 (20.5 to 28.4)	21 to 28
(5)	(28.5 to 36.0)	(29 to 36)

2. At the conclusion of a Qualifying Competition the Committee will calculate the Competition Standard Scratch Score. This is a procedure to quantify the influence of course and weather conditions on the scoring ability of the field and regulate adjustments to handicaps accordingly. The CSS can adjust the SSS by a reduction of one shot, remain the same or increase it by up to three shots.
3. Prior to adjusting Handicaps the Stableford/**Nett** Double Bogey adjustment is applied to each score card. The purpose of this is for handicap purposes only to place a limit on the maximum score that can be recorded at any hole and to lessen the impact of the occasional "bad" score on a Player's return.
4. The Committee records scores by Nett Differential ie the difference (+ or -) between the Player's nett score and the Competition Standard Scratch.
5. If a Player returns a Nett Differential within his/her Buffer Zone his/her exact Handicap is not changed. The buffer zone is one shot above the calculated CSS for category 1 and increases in one stroke increments up to four strokes above the CSS for Category 4 (5 strokes for Category 5).
6. If a Player returns a score with a Nett Differential above his Buffer Zone or records a "No Return" his/her exact handicap is increased by 0.1 (irrespective of handicap category).
7. If a Player returns a nett differential of less than zero his/her exact handicap is reduced by an amount per stroke being determined by his/her handicap category as the table below

Handicap Category	Exact Handicap	Subtract for each Stroke Below
1	Plus to 5.4	0.1
2	5.5 to 12.4	0.2
3	12.5 to 20.4	0.3
4	20.5 to 28.0	0.4
	(20.5 to 28.4)	( 0.4)
(5)	(28.5 to 36.0)	( 0.5)

8. At the discretion of the Club, nine hole Qualifying Competitions may be run and such scores shall be used to adjust handicaps, however the procedure for adjustment differs from that stated above.

## 2. Annual Review

The Handicap Committee is required to carry out an Annual Review of the handicaps of all Members prior to 1st March.

The main purpose of this review is to identify those players whose general play over the previous year was better or worse than that expected of their handicap.

During this review the Handicap Committee looks at players' frequency of Qualifying Scores returned, as well as achievements in non Qualifying Competitions eg match play, better ball and team competitions.

The Handicap Committee may only adjust handicaps after taking into account all information available in regard to playing ability. An adjustment based on a single performance or one good score is not justifiable.

General Play adjustments as a punishment or reward for success in either match or stroke play competitions are not permissible, neither is applying a formula that reduces the winner(s) of Club match play events by two strokes.

### **3. Supplementary Scores**

As General Play adjustments are no longer allowed except in exceptional circumstances CONGU has introduced Supplementary Scores to allow players who do not regularly play in Qualifying Competitions to maintain or adjust their handicap.

A Player intending to return a Supplementary Score will be required to signify his/her intention by signing the book in the Pro's shop prior to commencement of play.

Any Player in handicap categories 2, 3, or 4 and (5) who has returned six or fewer qualifying scores in the preceding period between annual reviews may return a maximum of ten Supplementary Scores before the next annual review, subject to no more than one Supplementary Score per week.

The Supplementary Score will be recorded in the Player's handicap Record.

### **Responsibilities of the Player**

The CONGU Handicapping System is based on the premise that a player will endeavour to make the best score he can at each hole in every Qualifying Round he plays, in addition he/she must:

1. Have only one exact handicap which must be allotted and adjusted by his/her Home Club
2. Advise his/her Home Club of all other Clubs which he/she is a Member
3. Before commencing play on the day of a Qualifying Competition ensure his/her entry has been registered
4. Enter his/her current Playing Handicap on all cards returned in a Qualifying Competition
5. Ensure that all Competition cards are returned to the Committee and make computer entries as required
6. When competing away from Home produce a current CONGU Handicap certificate
7. Report to his/her Home Club all Qualifying Scores returned away from Home

### **Active/Inactive Handicaps**

The English Golf Union and English Women's Golf Association are launching a system that identifies the competitive nature of all Members with a CONGU handicap

As of 1st January 2010 all Members are required to return at least three Qualifying Scores (Supplementary and 9 hole events included) per year in order to have an active handicap. Those who fail to return the stipulated number of scores will still retain a CONGU handicap but may be prevented from entering certain events where an Active Handicap is required as part of the entry conditions.