



Annual Review Guidance and Appendix M

The Annual Review is an essential element in the CONGU handicap system, and for players within a club to be correctly handicapped the committee must carry out the review on all home players within a scheduled window of 1st October and 1st March.

All handicap software has a report that should help with this review, by highlighting players who have played better and worse than their handicap suggests in the previous year. Only qualifying scores are taken into consideration in the review programme produced by the handicapping software.

If you have evidence that any player, whether appearing on the report or not, has been performing as expected in other events such as non-qualifying rounds, match play events or team competitions, the annual review is the ideal time to discuss any potential adjustments to handicaps based on these scores.

The annual review is not just the time to reduce members' handicaps – many players will have failed to play to their handicaps and this is the time to increase their handicaps to something realistic.

This is important because if they continue to return scores outside their buffer zones, then their scores will skew the CSS calculation. It is possible some players whose handicap you put up will not be happy about the situation. You need to be able to explain, as sympathetically as possible, that it is not just about their handicaps but about everyone's handicap and the relationship these have to each other that matters.

During the annual review you should also look at the handicaps of players who have not returned many/any scores during the year. These players tend to be 'decliners' and may well have given up altogether on entering competitions. Using the knowledge the handicap committee has of the club members, between you, you may decide to increase the handicaps of such players.

Things to remember:

- The perfect golfer will only play in his/her buffer zone 1/3rd of the time.
- Players who are incorrectly handicapped can have an effect on the CSS calculation and therefore the handicaps of all other players. (Cat 1-4)
- You can go up as well as down at the Annual Review.
- Handicap adjustments are a committee decision – We advise that all committees keep notes on the decision made for each player so that supporting evidence can be provided should the player wish to appeal the decision.
- The player has the right to appeal the decision of the club and this should be done in writing to the County Union/Association within 14 days of the player being informed of the decision.





CONGU - APPENDIX M

GUIDELINES FOR ANNUAL REVIEW / GENERAL PLAY ADJUSTMENT.

Affiliated Clubs are required to carry out an *Annual Review* of the handicaps of all *Members* in compliance with the requirements of Clause 23. It is considered essential that this review is conducted by the *Handicap Committee* rather than by one individual. The results of all relevant competitions that took place in the calendar year should be available at the Review meeting.

The purpose of the *Annual Review* is to identify:

- those players whose general playing performance and scoring pattern over the year is better than that expected for their *Handicap Category* and who should be considered for a reduction of handicap; and
- those players whose general playing performance and scoring pattern over the year is inferior to that expected for their *Handicap Category* and who should be considered for an increase of handicap.

It should be noted that the majority of *Members*, particularly those who have returned a reasonable number of *Qualifying Scores* through the year, will probably have had appropriate handicap alterations applied by the system and do not require further adjustment under Clause 23.

To ensure uniformity in club handicapping, it is important that the *Handicap Committee* conducts the *Annual Review* in a structured manner. It is recognised, however, that it is an extremely difficult and time consuming task for the *Handicap Committee* to carry out a detailed and effective review of the handicaps of all *Members* in the required manner, particularly in clubs with a large playing membership. Consequently, a computer generated report has been designed to assist *Handicap Committees* in the *Annual Review* and the report is part of the handicap software package.

The report 'flags up' those players whose playing performance over the year is outside the expected scoring pattern for their *Handicap Category* and who should be the subject of further consideration for an increase or decrease in handicap, as appropriate. It must be emphasised, however, that the list produced must not be taken as an automatic authority to adjust the handicaps of the listed players, or as indicative of the only players requiring review.

When carrying out the *Annual Review* and in giving consideration to possible handicap adjustments arising from the computer generated listing, the *Handicap Committee* must:

- take account of the player's achievements in *Non-Qualifying Competitions*, match play competitions, four-ball better ball competitions and other forms of team event in addition to medal play performance;
- examine the frequency of *Qualifying Scores* recently returned by the player to and below his *Playing Handicap*;
- possibly deal more severely with a player, whose general standard of play is known to be improving, than it would with a player who it is believed has returned scores below his general ability but whose general ability is not considered to be improving;
- only adjust a handicap after all information available in regard to the playing ability of the player has been considered. Decisions made on the basis of 'knee-jerk' reactions to a single performance or good score are seldom justifiable;





- recognise that it is as important to identify players of declining ability who have handicaps that are too low, as it is to identify players who have a handicap that is too high;
- ensure that the performance of any player who has been allotted a handicap since the last *Annual Review* is carefully assessed to confirm that his handicap reflects current ability;
- not use *General Play Adjustments* as a 'punishment' (or 'reward') for success in either match or stroke play competitions (unless other evidence exists to support an adjustment); and
- not apply a formula to make adjustments e.g. the winners of club match play events being the subject of a handicap reduction of two strokes.
- In **Ireland**, the frequency of *Non-Qualifying Scores*, achieved in competitions played over a course for which the *Union* has allotted a *Standard Scratch Score*, to and below his *Playing Handicap* must also be examined.

