



ROUNDS OF BETWEEN 8-17 HOLES INCLUSIVE

Handicapping Regulations & Operational Guidance

1. At my club we regularly play 9-hole competitions (or competitions of between 8-17 holes). Should we develop a policy on the handicapping of these scores, and if so, does Golf Australia (GA) have a recommendation for us?

Your club should have in place a policy stipulating whether or not such scores will be processed for handicapping. Exceptions to the policy may be made to cater for events that have a character which is not typical to the club (such exceptions should be announced prior to the relevant day's play).

GA encourages the handicapping of scores played over anywhere between 8-17 holes inclusive, provided this does not place an undue administrative burden on the golf club, and provided there is not a clear novelty nature to the competition.

2. GA is making a change to the handicap system which will enable clubs to handicap Conforming Social Scores (CSS). Can 9-hole scores qualify as Conforming Social Scores?

The new handicap system regulations will provide clubs the flexibility to handicap 9-hole CSS if they wish (or CSS of anywhere between 8-17 holes inclusive). The key points around this are as follows:

- The player must nominate prior to playing a stroke on their first hole to be played that the score is to count for handicapping purposes.
- The player must nominate prior to playing a stroke on their first hole to be played the number of holes they will play.
- Such nominations must be in accordance with the procedure established by the club.

3. What are the new handicap system regulations for 9-hole scores (or for scores of anywhere between 8-17 holes inclusive)?

- 16-17 holes: entered into GOLF Link as an 18-hole score.
- 8-15 holes: entered into GOLF Link as a 9-hole score (it is either the front 9 or back 9 that is used, the other holes are disregarded).
- For rounds of 8 holes, or of 16-17 holes: net par (ie 2 Stableford points) is awarded for the missing holes.
- A 9-hole score will be stored by GOLF Link for automatic combination with the player's next 9-hole score.
- The two 9-hole scores do not need to be played consecutively, multiple 18-hole rounds may be played between the play of two 9-hole scores.

- An 'un-joined' 9-hole score will only expire when it is no longer in the player's most recent 20 scores.
- There is no requirement for the two 9-hole scores being combined to be played at the same course. Eg, it would be fine for a score from the back 9 at Royal Hobart to be combined with a score from the front 9 at Royal Perth.
- It would be equally fine for two 9-hole scores from the front 9 at The Lakes to be combined.
- The GOLF Link database in future will hold 9-hole ratings for each club's front 9 and back 9. As a result, 9-hole scores will be compared against the actual difficulty of the 9 holes that have been played (and not simply 50% of the 18-hole value).
- A club may wish to ask its State Association to provide ratings for an unusual combination of 9 holes (provided the club regularly uses such a configuration).
- 7 holes or less: disregarded.

4. Are 9-hole cards acceptable as initial cards for the purpose of obtaining a handicap?

Yes, at the club's discretion.

Note that three 18-hole scores are required before an official GA Handicap is allocated to a player (two 9-hole rounds = one 18-hole round). Clubs should enter scores upon receipt (and not wait for all 3).

5. What Scratch Rating and Slope Rating should be used for a 9-hole score?

The GOLF Link database in future will hold 9-hole ratings for each club's front 9 and back 9. So when you enter a 9-hole score for a player, you should choose the appropriate 9-hole course entry (in exactly the same way you would choose an 18-hole course option if the player had returned an 18-hole score).

6. What stroke index should be used for 9-hole competitions?

It is important that you use the course's ordinary 18-hole stroke index.

7. What handicap (ie what Daily Handicap) should be used for 9-hole events?

It is important that you apply the following process:

- The 9-hole course option you are using will have a Slope Rating number that looks like an 18-hole Slope Rating number.
- You assess the 18-hole Daily Handicap the player would play off for that Slope Rating number.
- The 18-hole Daily Handicap number is then applied to the stroke index on the score card to determine how many handicap strokes the player receives for the 9 holes being played.
 - ✧ EXAMPLE 1: If stroke index holes 1 and 3 are on the front nine and the 9-hole round is being played over the front 9, then a player whose 18-hole Daily Handicap came out at 3 (after following the above process) would play off a handicap of 2 for that nine. (The same player would play off a handicap of 1 if the round was being played on the back nine.)
 - ✧ EXAMPLE 2: If stroke index holes 1,3,5,7,9,11,13,15,17,19, and 21 are on the front nine and the 9-hole round is being played over the front 9, then a player whose 18-hole Daily Handicap came out at 21 (after following the above process) would play off a handicap of 11 for that nine. (The same player would play off a handicap of 10 if the round was being played on the back nine.)

8. When I enter a player's 18-hole score into GOLF Link, as a part of the score entry process I obviously have to enter the 18-hole Daily Handicap that the player played off for that round. But what Daily Handicap do I enter for 9-hole score entry?

It is important that you follow the process described in Item 7 above, and enter the 9-hole Daily Handicap that has been calculated for the player as a result.

Why is this important? Well, part of the process GOLF Link will automatically perform for you when it marries together two 9-hole scores, will be to add together the 9-hole Daily Handicaps from the two 9-hole score entries. So if you wrongly enter 18-hole Daily Handicaps with 9-hole score entries, GOLF Link will think that the player played off a handicap which was twice as large as what it actually was – and that will credit the player with a score that is twice as good as what it actually was.

9. For a 9-hole event, which handicap does the Rules of Golf require a player to record on their score card?

- a) In order to meet the requirements of the Rules of Golf, the player's 18-hole Daily Handicap must be recorded on their score card.
- b) Unless specified otherwise by the club, players are obliged to assist their club administrators by ALSO listing their 9-hole handicap allowance on their score card. (The 9-hole handicap allowance is to be calculated in accordance with the process described in Item 7 above.)

10. Will DSRs be calculated for 9-hole scores (or other eligible scores of less than 16 holes)?

No. 9-hole scores will be handicapped against the 9-hole Scratch Rating.

11. If a club conducts a single competition over multiple days, how should the competition be processed for handicapping purposes?

For handicapping purposes, each day will need to be processed as a separate competition.

12. If a club conducts concurrent 9-hole and 18-hole competitions, and a player enters both, which of their scores is processed for handicapping purposes?

For handicapping purposes, only the 18-hole score is used – the 9-hole score is disregarded.

13. If an 18-hole competition gets interrupted mid-round by rain, can we shorten it to 9 holes?

For competition purposes (ie prize giving), it is The R&A's position that a stipulated round may not be shortened once that round has commenced (Decision 33-1/2).

For handicapping purposes only, clubs have the discretion to use incomplete rounds in accordance with the process outlined in Item 3 above.