

Guide for Committees

Introduction

The new Rules of Golf come into effect on 1st January 2019 and The R&A / USGA have produced an Official Guide to the Rules of Golf containing the “Committee Procedures” which gives detailed advice to committees as regards the new rules.

Within the Committee Procedures there are certain aspects, particularly in competition play, where clubs may need guidance from their National Union and in particular from their Area Authority. On certain occasions there will be an obligation to contact their handicapping authority; on others it will merely be a recommendation.

This document will guide Club Committees and support the guidance provided by their Unions.

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the Committee in respect of both competition golf and general play are fully set out in Section I of the Committee Procedures (clause 6 of the CONGU Manual).

The most important areas where the changes require reference to the National Union/Area Authority are:

- Penalty Areas
- Maximum score competitions
- Alternative to stroke and distance
- Teeing grounds

Penalty Areas

The *Committee Procedures* document gives guidance to the Committee when reviewing and/or amending penalty areas. Clear guidance on what should or should not be marked, including how to mark it, can be found in **Section 2c** of the *Committee Procedures*. Committees should pay particular attention to the advice given in **Section 2c(1)** regarding the challenge of the hole and architects design. As Course Rating has already been carried out by the Union and standard scratch scores allocated, any additions or changes to their defined areas, other than to existing water, **must** be referred to the Area Authority for review by the course rating committee prior to implementation.

Maximum Score Competitions

This is a new competition format for medal play where a maximum score per hole is used and the methodology is explained in **Section 5A(4)** of the *Committee Procedures*.

Please Note:

Players should pick up when they reach the maximum score allocated.

A “no return” cannot be submitted as all incomplete holes will be credited with the maximum score. Situations where disqualification might apply (e.g. teeing outside of the teeing ground not corrected) would incur the maximum score. See Rule 21.2c.

Under the CONGU® UHS the Maximum Score per hole will be defined as a number of shots over par (e.g. 5 over par which would be 10 on a Par 5, 9 on a Par 4 and 8 on a Par 3). A competition is eligible for handicapping when the value is set to 5 or more over par. This is to ensure that no player, regardless of handicap, can be credited with less than Net Double Bogey on any hole. The value can

be set to higher than 5 to reflect the handicap level of the players and/or if there are particularly difficult holes on a course.

The Net double bogey approach will still be used to generate a gross and net differential.

Alternative to Stroke and Distance

Ireland strongly recommends that Clubs do not put this Local Rule on their Score Cards.

The *Committee Procedures* allow for the introduction of additional relief options when a ball is lost outside a penalty area or out of bounds, by way of Model Local Rule E-5. This local rule is appropriate for general play where golfers are playing casual rounds or playing their own competitions. Under the CONGU® Unified Handicapping System scores **must not** be submitted for handicap adjustment if this local rule is in place. Where the Local Rule is in use for general play, the club must ensure they remind players it is not allowed when scores are to be submitted for handicap adjustment (Qualifying Competitions and Supplementary Scores).

Teeing Areas

(This is covered by **Sections 2B and 2E** in *Committee Procedures* and under Clause 14 of the CONGU® UHS)

For guidance on where tee markers may be located and which tees can be used in order for scores to be submitted for handicapping purposes, the committee must comply with the terms set out in Appendix A of the CONGU® UHS Manual.

If the committee wish to use different teeing areas to those of a measured course, they **must** consult with the Area Authority to establish a course rating for the course otherwise such use of teeing areas would render the competition non-qualifying for handicap purposes.

Model Local Rules (Section 8 of *Committee Procedures*)

A Local Rule is a modification of a Rule or an additional Rule that the Committee adopts for general play or for a particular competition. The Committee is responsible for deciding whether to adopt any Local Rules and for making sure they are consistent with the principles found in **Section 8**. The Committee needs to make sure that any Local Rules are available for players to see, whether on the scorecard, a separate handout, a notice board or the course's website (though it would be unwise to utilise only the Website for such postings).

Any Local Rule which may have an effect on handicapping **must** be referred to the Area Authority for advice (for examples of unauthorised Local Rules, see **Section 8L** of *Committee Procedures*).

*“As a general principle, when a player is playing a round that is to be posted for handicapping purposes, he or she is required to play it under the **Rules of Golf**. If the committee authorises players to play in ways that differ significantly from the Rules of Golf, the player **will not** be permitted to post the score for handicapping purposes and the handicapping system operating in the local jurisdiction **must** be consulted”.*

Disqualification

There are various mentions of disqualification in the *Committee Procedures* but the committee must ensure that disqualified scores conform with the definition in the CONGU® Manual and with Appendix P.

Preferred Lies and Cleaning the ball - Model Local Rules – E-2 and E-3

In Ireland the Preferred Lie period is from November 1st to April 30th. Clubs can run Qualifying Competitions during this period when both Model Local Rule E-2 and E-3 are in force. It is recommended that a Local Rule permitting preferred lies in the general area outside of the preferred lies period should be used only in extreme circumstances where scores will not be accepted for handicapping purpose.

Model Local Rule E-2 allows players to clean their ball in designated areas in the General Area. The ball must be marked before lifting and cleaning. The ball must be **replaced on its original spot** before playing. Model Local Rule E-2 can be in force at any time.

The purpose of preferred lies as described in this Model Local Rule E-3 is to protect areas of the course cut to fairway height or less. This Model Local Rule allows players to lift, clean and place the ball within six inches in the General Area cut to fairway height. It is recommended that the ball should be marked before lifting. The ball must be placed in the relief area within six inches of the reference point.

When MLR E-2 and MLR E-3 are used during the preferred lies period scores may be returned for handicap adjustment.

Pace of Play

It is recommended that a Committee **should** have a pace of play policy as part of its Local Rules (**Section 4A(1)** of the *Committee Procedures*). However it is recognised that enforcing the policy will be dependent on the resources available. Guidance on how to implement Pace of Play can be found in **Section 5G** of the *Committee Procedures*.

Cancelled Rounds

Guidance on whether to cancel a round is given in the *Committee Procedures* **Section 6E(4)**. If any players have completed their round before the competition is stopped then the rules for Abandoned Competitions, Clause 18.7 in the CONGU® Manual, will apply.

Dealing with Withdrawals

See **Section 6G(3)** in the *Committee Procedures*. However, should a player retire for any reason during a round, he or she must report to the Committee who should consider the reason before recording a score. Clause 7 notes 1a and 1c in the CONGU® Manual provide advice for this.