



ENGLISH GOLF UNION

...at the heart of golf

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.
- 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 2008 handicap software package.

The report will 'flag 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* should:

- 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 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.
- Not apply a formula to make adjustments such as the winners of club match play events being the subject of a handicap reduction of two strokes.

Note: *It is anticipated that the computer generated report designed to assist in the Annual Revision will be the subject of further development and refinement in the light of practical experience in golf clubs. Consequently, constructive comment on the value of Appendix M in the practical application of the Annual Review / General Play Adjustments would be useful. It would be appreciated if such comments could be sent to the Secretary of the Council of National Golf Unions.*