



## Questions and Answers

### **1. What are the key objectives of this initiative?**

To unify 6 different handicap systems into a single World Handicap System that will:

- enable golfers to play and compete anywhere around the world on equal terms;
- be easy to understand and implement, without sacrificing accuracy; and
- meet the needs and expectations of golfers, golf clubs and golf authorities all around the world.

### **2. Why would this be a good change?**

Each of the existing handicap systems is well received in the areas where it operates. However, because they all calculate handicaps differently, the result can be players of the same ability having different handicaps. A World Handicap System would mean that a handicap of 6.0 in Lima should be the same as a handicap of 6.0 in both London and Los Angeles.

### **3. What are the other benefits of a World Handicap System?**

As the world becomes a smaller place with a much greater frequency of international play, we believe that the game of golf will benefit from a unified handicap system, where handicaps are portable from country to country. It would result in less confusion, easier administration of international events and, potentially, it could allow national associations more opportunity to focus attention on golf development and strategic planning to support the game. A single world handicap system would also provide the opportunity to aggregate data to help ensure the game remains healthy.

### **4. Where are the existing systems currently used around the world and how do they differ?**

The attached map and tables show the current handicapping landscape around the world and compares the key components of each system

### **5. When did work on this project begin?**

During The Open Championship at Royal St Georges in July 2011, The R&A and USGA met informally with the other handicap authorities to put forward an embryonic idea of a world handicap system and to ascertain whether there was any interest in pursuing this initiative. That meeting marked the inception of the project, and progress has been steadily gathering pace since that time with the following key milestones:

- May 2012 - first formal meeting between The R&A, USGA and the handicap authorities
- April 2013 - presentation by USGA's CEO and Executive Director, Mike Davis, at The R&A's Working for Golf Conference.
- March 2016 - Joint Committee structure established and operational.

## **6. Why is The R&A involved?**

Prior to 2011, The R&A had no direct involvement in handicapping matters since the 1920s, and its role in this project began as an independent facilitator. However, as discussions continued, it was recommended that a World Handicap System be positioned under the USGA/R&A governance umbrella along with the Rules of Golf, the Equipment Rules and the Rules of Amateur Status. The R&A has since formed a handicapping department to help facilitate this governance function along with the USGA and will do so together throughout the world

The day-to-day management of handicapping will continue to be the responsibility of individual national associations and handicap authorities.

## **7. Is it possible to have one identical handicap system the world over?**

It is true that there are variations in how golf is played around the world and it is not our intention to try to force a cultural change in the way that golf is played. Through collaboration with national associations around the world, the goal is to try to accommodate those cultural differences within a single World Handicap System.

## **8. Does the project have the support of National Associations around the world?**

A series of briefing sessions was conducted all around the world in 2015, which aimed to cover as many National Associations as possible. The reaction was very positive.

It is also worth stressing that the work that is being done to develop a World Handicap System is very much a collaborative effort and all of the National Associations who are directly involved in the process are very supportive of the initiative.

## **9. When will details of the proposed new system be made available?**

After additional collaboration around the world, we plan to share the details of the World Handicap System later in the year.

## **10. Why are you saying something now?**

We wanted to make a short statement at this time, to jointly confirm that this project is moving forward and to allow National Associations to begin to communicate with their constituents. As the project continues to receive support, preparations for change will be required everywhere around the world, which requires time. Until now, the project has been treated as confidential, and messaging has been restricted primarily to National Associations.

This communication will also serve as notice that further details will be forthcoming later in the year.

## **11. What is the timeline for implementation?**

Details of the proposed timeline will be made publicly available later in the year, but the proposed World Handicap System will not be implemented before all the necessary consultation, testing and education has been carried out and the necessary infrastructure has been put in place.

**12. What will the system be called?**

It is proposed that the Rules of Handicapping and the Course Rating System together will be jointly referred to as the World Handicap System (WHS).

**13. Have you consulted with golfers on this proposal?**

Until now, consultation and feedback has been mostly restricted to National Associations. However, we will be embarking on a communication effort with golfers and handicap administrators during the Summer of 2017.

**14. Does this have impact on the current technology infrastructure?**

While the installation of a World Handicap System will invariably impact upon the different technology systems and structures currently in use around the world at various levels, it is hoped that any disruption will be kept to a minimum. We aim to develop a cohesive and cost-efficient structure which, at the very least, provides a smooth transition.



**BREAKDOWN OF WHERE EACH OF THE CURRENT SYSTEMS ARE USED**

**EGA Handicap System**

ALBANIA  
ANDORRA  
ARMENIA  
AUSTRIA  
BELGIUM  
BULGARIA  
CROATIA  
CYPRUS  
CZECH REPUBLIC  
DENMARK  
ESTONIA  
FINLAND  
FRANCE  
GEORGIA  
GERMANY  
GREECE  
HUNGARY  
ICELAND  
ISRAEL  
ITALY  
KAZAKHSTAN, REPUBLIC OF  
LATVIA  
LIECHTENSTEIN  
LITHUANIA  
LUXEMBOURG  
MACEDONIA, THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF  
NETHERLANDS  
NORWAY  
POLAND  
PORTUGAL  
REPUBLIC OF SERBIA  
RUSSIA FEDERATION  
SLOVAKIA  
SLOVENIA  
SPAIN  
SWEDEN  
SWITZERLAND  
TURKEY  
UKRAINE

**USGA Handicap System**

USA  
BAHAMAS  
BANGLADESH  
BERMUDA  
BOLIVIA  
BRAZIL  
CAMBODIA  
CANADA  
CAYMAN ISLANDS  
CHILE  
CHINA, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF  
CHINESE TAIPEI  
COLOMBIA  
COSTA RICA  
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
ECUADOR  
GUAM  
GUATEMALA  
HONDURAS  
HONG KONG  
INDIA  
INDONESIA  
JAMAICA  
JAPAN  
MALAYSIA  
MEXICO  
NEW ZEALAND  
OMAN  
PANAMA  
PARAGUAY  
PERU  
PHILIPPINES  
PUERTO RICO  
REPUBLIC OF KOREA  
SINGAPORE  
THAILAND  
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO  
U.S VIRGIN ISLANDS  
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES  
VENEZUELA  
VIETNAM

**CONGU Unified Handicapping System**

ENGLAND  
SCOTLAND  
IRELAND  
WALES  
BAHRAIN  
COTE D'IVORIE  
EGYPT  
GHANA  
KENYA  
MALTA  
MAURITIUS  
PAKISTAN  
QATAR  
SAUDI ARABIA  
SRI LANKA  
TANZANIA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF  
UGANDA  
ZAMBIA

**GOLF AUSTRALIA Handicap System**

AUSTRALIA  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

**AAG**

ARGENTINA  
URUGUAY

**SAGA**

SOUTH AFRICA  
NAMIBIA

**CURRENT HANDICAP SYSTEMS - COMPARISON OF KEY ELEMENTS**

|   | <b>USGA Handicap System</b>  | <b>EGA Handicap System</b>   | <b>CONGU Unified Handicap System</b>   | <b>South African Handicap System</b>              | <b>Golf Australia Handicap System</b>   | <b>Argentina Handicap System</b>                                      |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Course Rating / Slope Rating</b>                 | USGA Course Rating<br>USGA Slope Rating  | USGA Course Rating<br>USGA Slope Rating  | Standard Scratch Score<br>(Based on USGA Course Rating System)   | Standard Course Rating only                       | Daily Scratch Rating<br>(which modifies the USGA Scratch Rating) & Slope Rating | Course Rating only based on length and obstacles<br>(no Slope Rating) |
| <b>Basis of handicap calculation</b>                | Based on the average of 10 best of the last 20 rounds  | Initial EGA handicap is calculated, then each subsequent net score outside Buffer Zone increases or decreases EGA Handicap | Initial exact handicap is calculated, then each subsequent net score outside Buffer Zone increases or decreases (Exact) Handicap | Based on average of 10 best of the last 20 rounds | Based on average of 8 best of the last 20 rounds                                | Based on average of 8 best of the last 16 rounds                      |
| <b>Frequency of handicap revision</b>               | 1st and 15th of each month within the U.S.<br>Outside the U.S., between every two weeks and once a month (exception is Canada) | As soon as practicable after each score posted   | As soon as practicable after each score posted   | Calculated daily (overnight)                      | Immediately upon the score being processed through GOLF Link                    | Every month   |
| <b>Calculation of Course/Playing/Daily Handicap</b> | Handicap Index x (Slope Rating) / 113)   | EGA Handicap x (Slope Rating / 113) + (Course Rating - PAR)  | (Exact) Handicap rounded to nearest whole number   |   | GA Handicap x Slope Rating / 113  | Exact Handicap  |

|  | <b>USGA Handicap System</b>  | <b>EGA Handicap System</b>   | <b>CONGU Unified Handicap System</b>  | <b>South African Handicap System</b>  | <b>Golf Australia Handicap System</b>  | <b>Argentina Handicap System</b>  |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Score acceptable for posting in a player's scoring record</b> | Scores from all formats, assuming own ball played throughout the round and played under the Rules of Golf.<br>Nine-hole scores acceptable for players with both nine-hole handicaps and 18-hole handicaps (combined with other nine-hole scores) | Scores from Stroke Play, Par/Bogey and Stableford competitions. Round must be played under Handicap Conditions (which include the Rules of Golf).<br>National option to accept (for category 2-6 players):<br>- pre-registered Extra Day Scores (on rounds other than in a competition) and,<br>- nine-hole scores (18 Stableford points added, different buffer used) | Scores from Stroke Play, Par/Bogey or Stableford competitions only. Must be played under the Rules of Golf. Nine-hole scores accepted for all players (with 18 Stableford points added for players in or better than buffer zone; points doubled if worse than buffer zone) | All scores under the Rules of Golf, except match play. Nine-hole scores acceptable but recorded as 18-hole scores using par for un-played 9, plus 50% of players' handicap (rounded down) | Scores established in all 18-hole singles Stroke Play (including Par and Stableford) competition rounds and, in some circumstances, four-ball competition scores. Committees may also choose to accept 9-hole competition scores and pre-nominated social scores | Only 18-hole stroke play scores apply, completed under the Rules of Golf. Nine-hole scores are also acceptable if played consecutively on same course |
| <b>Maximum Score Per Hole</b>                                    | Equitable Stroke Control (ESC) based on Course Handicap  | Net double bogey (Stableford)  | Net double bogey (Stableford)   | A form of Equitable Stroke Control, based on handicap and strokes received  | Net double bogey (except in Par events where it is net bogey)  | No Limit (full score hole by hole posted)   |
| <b>Adjustment for Abnormal Playing Conditions</b>                | None   | Daily adjusted buffer zone (Computed Buffer Adjustment), when applicable   | Competition Scratch Score calculated as soon as practicable after the close of the competition.<br><br>Supplementary Scores/9-hole competitions are based on the SSS, with no CSS calculated.   | None  | Daily Scratch Rating (DSR)   | None  |