

2018 Annual General Meeting

Handicap Secretary's Report

Of the 13 competitions played between May 2017 and April 2018, 2 of the winning scores were at the net equivalent of four under par, 2 were at three under; 3 at two under; one at one under; 3 at even par, one at two over and one remarkably at five over. One runner-up scored the net equivalent of two under par. Other scores of runners-up in the competitions ranged from the net equivalent of one under par to five over par. Most runners-up posted a score of net one under par or even par to claim their prizes.

In accordance with Society rules, all competition winners have their handicaps adjusted down by 2 strokes and 1 stroke, respectively, in the next two Society events played. Runner-up finishers are adjusted down 1 stroke in their next event. An adjustment of 3 strokes is similarly applied to a winner with a score of 40 Stableford points or better.

It is each member's responsibility to maintain a valid golf handicap and ensure scores from all rounds are posted. This is easily done via a USGA app called GHIN for posting scores directly from your phone, or from the equivalent website. A memo from the Committee on valid handicaps is attached to this report. For more information on handicaps, please refer to the USGA Handicap System manual at the USGA website.

An Extraordinary General Meeting was held on 19 October 2017 at which 2 resolutions were passed as regards handicaps. Firstly, it was resolved that the maximum handicap for LSW events should be 18 and that any course-adjusted handicaps above that level would be capped at 18 for the purposes of that event. This would also apply to the Society's matchplay competition. The other resolution moved the responsibility for submitting scores from Society events from the Handicap Secretary to the individual member. The old approach pre-dated the advent of GHIN and the ease with which scores can now be submitted by individuals.

This latter rule has now been in place for 7 events and so should now be well established. As a spot check, prior to this AGM I reviewed the submission of scores from the event held on 20 April 2018. Of the 26 members that participated in the event, 18 had filed their score correctly. Another 3 had seemingly posted a score relating to the event but with the course or score incorrectly reported. And a further 5 had failed to submit their score at all.

This is only a snapshot but it is nonetheless disappointing. The change of rule has been in place long enough for the change in behaviour to have bedded in. It should be automatic that you file your score after every round you play. The match report for the event even adjusts the score you need to file. To date, the Committee has discussed how to deal with offenders and to date nothing more than a warning has been issued. I will be stepping down after today's AGM but I would encourage the incoming Committee to carefully consider stronger sanctions against repeat offenders.

Duncan Spooner
LSWGS Handicap Secretary

Handicap Validity for LSWGS Competitions

The majority of our members living in Hong Kong are required to maintain a valid HKGA handicap. This means ALL SCORES FROM ALL AROUND THE WORLD MUST BE POSTED TO THE HKGA. Members who do not post all of their scores to the HKGA do not have a valid HKGA handicap.

HKGA Membership - As a general rule, the LSWGS requires its members to maintain a valid handicap through the HKGA. Most of our members are resident in Hong Kong and play most of their golf in Hong Kong. So it logically follows that these members should maintain a valid HKGA handicap. This requirement applies to the majority of our members.

HKGA Handicap Validity - A HKGA handicap remains valid ONLY IF scores of ALL qualifying rounds are posted to the HKGA. This means that ALL scores, no matter where they are played in the world, must be posted to the HKGA. It is the player's responsibility to ensure his handicap is valid and that adjusted scores of ALL qualifying rounds are posted.

Multiple Handicaps - It is not acceptable to maintain multiple handicaps with scores of some rounds posted to one handicap and scores of other rounds posted to another handicap. The USGA Handicap System manual states that if a player maintains a handicap index at another club, all scores should be posted at both clubs. Failure to post all acceptable scores at both clubs could produce a handicap index that is not based on the player's best 10 differentials of the last 20 scores, and consequently, it may not be termed a handicap index. For this reason, it is not acceptable for a member to maintain a HKGA handicap and another handicap (say in China or Thailand) and just play off the lower of the two handicaps. If all scores are posted at both clubs (or associations), then the two handicaps will be equal as calculated by the USGA Handicap System.

Hong Kong Non-Residents - There are exceptional cases where a member of LSWGS relocates and takes up residence in a country or city other than Hong Kong for a prolonged period. These members can join a club or the golf association in their country of residence and maintain a valid handicap through the local club or golf association. In these cases, the

LSWGS Handicap Secretary should be alerted and the member's valid foreign handicap will be verified for use in LSWGS competitions. In these cases, it is often impractical or impossible for a member to post scores to both his local club and the HKGA. Therefore, the requirement to maintain a HKGA handicap will be waived. In these exceptional cases, members are reminded that:

1. a) It is the member's responsibility to maintain a valid handicap and to post the scores of all rounds played.
2. b) Upon request, the scoring record of the member's handicap should be made available to the Handicap Secretary, Committee, or any other Society member for the purposes of peer review.
3. c) A foreign handicap that is not a USGA handicap index (or equivalent index) will not be adjusted to the relevant course handicap for LSWGS events. The member will simply play off his handicap for the event with no course handicap in accordance with the USGA Handicap System.
4. d) All questions concerning handicaps and their validity in LSWGS competitions can be directed to the LSWGS Handicap Secretary.