COMPETITION HANDICAPS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Key Points:

- A non-competition handicap is still an official CONGU Handicap. It is not lost or lapsed.

- All members of affiliated Clubs with CONGU handicaps are required to submit at least 3 qualifying scores per calendar year to retain a Competition handicap. To have a Competition handicap a member must have returned 3 qualifying scores during the previous year.

- Qualifying scores are those returned in qualifying competitions or supplementary scores over 9 or 18 holes, (Home or Away). Scores returned socially or in match play competition are not acceptable.

- Exemptions are permitted for those who have had health/injury problems that has prevented them from returning the required number of qualifying scores.

- A Club is permitted to adopt restrictions for those with non-competition handicaps in Club and Open competitions.

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Jan 2018
What is a Competition/Non Competition handicap?
A Competition handicap a player has returned at least 3 qualifying scores per annum. A Non-Competition handicap identifies that less than 3 qualifying scores have been returned.

What do I need to do to have a Competition handicap?
In order to have a Competition handicap, a member is required to return 3 qualifying scores in the previous calendar year. These can include scores returned in qualifying competitions (both home and away), Supplementary Scores played over 9 or 18 holes at any club within GB&I which you are a member and 9 hole qualifying competitions. Scores returned in non-qualifying events and in social golf are not acceptable.

Does a Non-Competition handicap mean my handicap has lapsed?
Absolutely not. A Non-Competition handicap is still an official CONGU handicap. You will still be entitled to receive a handicap certificate and enter events that do not require a Competition handicap as an entry requirement.

When I submit 3 cards will I get a new handicap?
No, having a Non-Competition handicap does not mean you have lost your handicap. Each qualifying score will adjust your current handicap accordingly. The Club is not permitted to issue a new handicap on the return of the 3 qualifying scores.

I only have two qualifying scores from last year. Do these carry over?
It is a requirement that 3 qualifying scores are returned per calendar year (between 1st January and 31st December). If you did not submit three qualifying scores in a calendar year you will need to submit three qualifying scores to regain your competition status.

Why are 3 scores required for a Competition handicap?
England Golf were keen to adopt the system without putting a large burden on our affiliated members. 3 qualifying scores were felt to be very easy to achieve over a 12 month period.

What restrictions can be imposed on Non-Competition handicaps?
A Club does not have to impose restrictions regarding non-competition handicaps and entry into club competitions. If a Club wishes to include restrictions on non-competition handicaps it may do one of the following:
• Prohibit entry into the competition. This should be adopted for match play knockout competitions. This condition can also be adopted for qualifying competitions although it is not permissible to adopt this as a blanket condition for all Club competitions. The CONGU UHS stipulates anyone with a CONGU handicap is entitled to compete in a reasonable number of qualifying competitions per year (see CONGU definition of Member).

• Allow entry into all competitions (including Open days) but restrict them from winning prizes. Entry fees may be charged and any subsidiary prizes (2s sweeps) may still be won. This is considered to be the favored option amongst affiliated Clubs and of England Golf.

What happens if I cannot return enough qualifying scores?
A player will only be exempt from receiving a Non-Competition handicap under the following circumstances:

• Injury/Illness over a lengthy period of time that has given the member insufficient time to return 3 qualifying scores

• Golfers new to the game who are being issued with their first CONGU handicap. The scores returned to gain a handicap are deemed to be qualifying scores.

• Members who do not wish to return qualifying scores or are unable to compete at weekends will not be exempt from receiving a Non-Competition handicap

How is the status of my handicap changed?
Once the Handicapping Committee have agreed to make the change under one of the aforementioned situations, a manual override of the Non-Competition status can be made. All handicapping software has this written into their software.

Do NR’s count towards my 3 qualifying scores?
As all medal scores are transferred into Stableford points (Clause 19.8) it lessens the damage imposed on the player’s scores because of one or two bad holes. If the Committee believes that the NR is a genuine score then this may be accepted. If however, the Committee are of the opinion a player has deliberately returned an NR or bad score, then they may refuse to accept this score and keep the player’s handicap as Non-Competition until they are satisfied genuine scores have been returned.
I have just changed Clubs. Do my qualifying scores returned at my old Club count towards a Competition handicap?
Yes. Qualifying scores returned at any Club in the UK shall count towards a Competition handicap. It is not permissible for a Club to stipulate that only home qualifying scores are permitted for a Competition handicap.

How will an Away Club be able to identify whether someone has a Non-Competition handicap?
Handicapping certificates, master handicapping lists, results sheets, the English Central Database of Handicaps (CDH) and ISV websites will all show a Non-Competition handicap.

Can someone build a handicap by returning 3 bad scores to gain a Competition handicap?
The returning of the 3 qualifying scores will not allocate a new handicap. They adjust the existing handicap and therefore can only increase the handicap by 0.3 (3 bad rounds x 0.1). The Handicapping Committee are also permitted to refuse a score if they are of the opinion that the player walked off the course or returned a bad score deliberately in an attempt to ‘build a handicap’. If this is found to be the case disciplinary action may be taken against the player in accordance with Clause 24 of the CONGU UHS.