

## Changes in CONGU Handicapping System

With Four Ball allowance increasing to 90 per cent and exact handicap increases limited to 1.0 stroke in a calendar year, the Council of National Golf Unions Limited (CONGU) have announced a number of significant revisions to the CONGU manual.

While changes will take effect from the start of next year, the implementation date for clubs is set as 1 March, 2016. The new CONGU manual is in the process of being published and is the culmination of a four-year review cycle with the aim of assisting club members to have handicaps which truly reflect their playing ability.

Among the most significant changes in the 2016 edition of the manual are:

- **Exact Handicaps:** In Ireland lowest exact handicap is now restricted to 1.0 stroke increase in a calendar year.
- **Four Ball Better Ball Handicap Allowance:** In stroke play each partner will receive 90% of their full handicap, and in match play the back marker now concedes strokes to the other three players based on 90% of the difference between the full handicaps rather than 75% (3/4) as at present
- **Reinstatement of Handicap Status:** The reinstatement of a competition status handicap requires a player to submit 3 qualifying scores (which could be 18 hole competitions, 9 hole competitions or Supplementary Scores both home and/or away)
- **Continuous Handicap Review:** To assist with this process there will now be a computer generated report which highlights those players with 7 consecutive 0.1 increases. Handicap Committees are now recommended to review the performance of such players and to give due consideration to applying a handicap increase where applicable or required.
- **Dates –** The handicap year will now follow the calendar year, 1 January to 31 December, and a player's handicap will be based on scores returned within that period

CONGU have also altered the way that exceptional scoring reductions (ESRs) are applied in future. The first and second exceptional score will trigger an ESR; the third and fourth exceptional score will trigger the next. No longer will the third exceptional score automatically trigger a further cut. It will instead be used to indicate the first score of the next sequence.

According to Clause 23 of the UHS manual: "When a player returns a Qualifying Score with a Nett Differential of -4, or below, in a calendar year this triggers the ESR algorithm, setting an initial marker. An ESR calculation will be initiated the next time a Nett Differential of -4 or lower is returned by the player. The average Nett Differential of the two scores is then compared to the number of rounds in the sequence to establish an ESR. For this reason reductions of less than one stroke may be recommended as, when combined with the decrease applied by the system, the overall reduction will always be more than one stroke.

Further information is available at [www.congu.com](http://www.congu.com).