

Handicap Secretaries report – AGM 14th Dec 2021

We all have our own opinions of the World Handicap System but it is here to stay and perhaps time to let it do its job and stop fighting it.

Over the years we have all become used to having a handicap that was calculated on our best cards. The WHS aim was to provide handicap indices that reflected our average play. So unless you were a golfer still improving on 2nd November 2020 there was only one way most of our handicaps were going.

At the AGM in 2018 I starting suggesting that you put in more cards and repeated that in 2019. Those of your who did have 20 cards in time for WHS were allocated a handicap index based on an average of your 8 best cards and many of you gained a few shots to play with. Those of you with less than 20 cards probably ended up with a HI that was perhaps nearer you old handicap, depending on your view was this a good thing or not.

At a seminar a few weeks ago I listened to some interesting data-

Since the WHS platform opened 6.75 million cards nationally have been registered.

94% for 18 holes 6% for 9 holes

4.9 million in competition only 1.8 million for general play in our club the records show most general play cards are submitted by men, one man has 38!!

If I tell you the average handicap for a man in England is 17 and a woman is 27.2, as a section we are not doing too badly.

We all worried about handicaps going up to 54. Well they are hard to find only 1006 men and 1254 women with most being shown as new players or juniors – both from categories that improve rapidly.

So here at Harpenden Common we have been plodding along coping with greens much faster than we have been used to and long lush grass, especially this year, both making scoring well that bit harder. Scores back in the summer of 2019 probably do make more recent scores look a little shabby.

As new cards go onto our handicap records those nice 2019 cards begin to drop off our pile of 20 cards and inevitably our handicaps rise but these handicaps are beginning to reflect our recent play.

Only 6 ladies have reduced their handicap index over the year – we could all write that list.

A few have stayed about the same, these are the steady eddy group mentioned in the England Golf presentations before WHS began.

That leaves a final group into which most of us fall, England Golf politely called declining players. This group must expect their handicap indices to rise. My advice is to wait for the warmer weather when

the course has dried out a little and get in some competition cards. Don't worry about your handicap index going up, get some more shots, become more competitive and enjoy your golf .

The committee has agreed to make a few changes. We promised to review the divisions. The figures we chose in November 2020 were pure guess work and perhaps we expected a few more ladies to have moved from silver to bronze by now. This year on a regular basis there have been more players in the silver division than the bronze so to try and get the balance right, so the upper limit of the silver division will now be a HI of 23.8 which is course handicap of 25 instead of the present 24.7 course handicap 26.

After a couple of difficult years the committee will try to return to their previous promise of one third of our competitions being sign ups, one third in divisions and one third open draws. This gives us all some chances to choose who we play with and also chances to get to know players outside of our divisions.

As from Jan 2022 we are asking players to try and submit 10 qualifying cards a year. To some this may sound a lot but this year even with the late start 30 ladies have achieved that number or more. So from Jan 2023 no lady will be able to win a major trophy without having submitted 10 cards in the previous year.

Within two years this will mean that most handicaps will not be calculated on a card that is more than 2 years old and will reflect current play more accurately.

This is beginning to sound like the Chancellors budget but I just have one more observation to make. The committee were saddened to see the ladies section begin to fragment with ladies choosing to play outside of our start times on a Tuesday and to avoid playing in some of the competitions. I realise you are doing nothing wrong but in doing this you are potentially reducing the number in the competitions to a level that the club may no longer allow us the 2 tee start that we have enjoyed for so long. Also we are asked to allow guests and other club members to make use of tee time we do not use but on a number of occasions they have been surprised to find ladies in that time.

We think we have a solution! Carol will expand upon that later.

Thank you again to Diane for her help with the handicaps and managing the ClubV1 system.

Questions

General play cards or casual rounds – need to be pre-registered on the psi before you go out.

Acceptable score for general play cards– 9 holes – every hole has to be played.

18 holes – minimum of 10 holes has to be played for the remaining holes you will receive a nett double bogey unless there was a valid reason.

Why did you not play the other holes? There are valid and invalid reasons. Valid reasons – injury or illness, called off the course for an emergency, holes closed by the committee, course became unplayable, it got dark

You are not supposed to give up because you were playing badly, it started raining etc.

When entering your card where there are holes you do not have a score enter 0. You then have two options, one is for a hole played but you picked up and the other if you did not start the hole.