

## NEWS LETTER EGA HANDICAP SYSTEM 1

Dear member Federations

December 2007

In the November 11<sup>th</sup> meeting the Handicap and Course Rating Committee have reviewed the implementation of the 2007-2010 edition of the EGA Handicap System.

The first year of operation has given rise to comments from member Federations while analyses of real as well as modelled data have improved our insight into the complex interaction of the various parameters of Course and Slope Rating and Handicapping. The Ctee. would like to stress that whilst it is too early to draw definite conclusions a few trends appear to be establishing themselves. Therefore it is proposed to make adjustments as we gain more experience and monitor developments closely in order to prepare properly for the next i.e. 2011 edition of the EGA system.

The objective of this newsletter is to keep you abreast of developments in the EGA system, hopefully also encouraging you to share your comments and experiences with the Ctee. At a later date we plan to send you a questionnaire to systematically evaluate the performance of the EGA System

### Implementation

Of 21 Federations holding a license for the EGA system the implementation status is as follows:

- Fully implemented 8
- Partially implemented 7  
i.e. without active / inactive indicator
- Plan to implement in 2008 or undecided 4
- No response 2
  
- CSA 11 of 15
- EDS 13 of 15
- 9-Holes 13 of 15

We do not believe this is a very satisfactory result and we are working closely with the National Federations to improve the score significantly.

The Ctee. is disappointed with the lack of uniformity of application, particularly of those elements that were not offered as options. It is hoped that, by working closely with the National Federations, over the four-year period a unified approach will emerge.

### 9-Holes scores

The first indication is that 9-holes scores are quite popular and will contribute to better participation in the EGA Handicap System. CONGU will be introducing 9-holes scores in 2008.

## **Annual Handicap Review**

Further testing of the procedure to flag handicaps that merit consideration for increase or reduction has shown that the present algorithm, i.e. the "gate" for reduction, needs a minor adjustment upwards. The old gate would have flagged too many candidates. We believe the amended version of Appendix L will reduce the amount of work for the Handicapping Ctee to a manageable size, whilst improving the credibility of the process. You have received an advanced draft copy of Appendix L early October, the final version also including minor modifications of the measure of adjustment is attached.

As an alternative to marking handicaps active or inactive an option has been added to record the number of scores returned in brackets behind the handicap at the time of the Annual Handicap Review. Obviously this does not change the principle that a handicap (0,1,2 or 3) is inactive and a handicap (4 or more) is active.

The following points may be of help when conducting the Annual Handicap Review:

- Check whether the software is up to date
- The Handicapping Authority has no power to declare a handicap active when less than four scores have been returned
- The group of players that have only entered 9-holes scores of 14 or less points may not be flagged for increase because of the 18 points addition. Evaluation may be done by doubling the Stableford Scores before computing the ABHSS.
- A Cat.1 player need only return 3 scores under Handicapping Conditions to reactivate his handicap.
- Cat 1&2 must return 18-holes scores to reactivate, Cat 3-5 may return 9-holes scores.
- All of these scores will be used to update the inactive handicap, they may count for the minimum requirement of four scores per year if the requirements for Qualifying Scores per category are met.

## **CSA**

Contrary to what we expected CSA is probably the feature that has drawn most comments and criticism focussed on:

- Complexity versus marginal effect
- Individual handicap influenced by rest of field
- No CSA for EDS
- "Stolen" reduction of handicap when CSA -1
- Distribution of CSA results shows high proportion CSA -1

Live data from Germany, France and Italy has shown that the current method for calculating CSA produces a significantly higher proportion of CSA -1 than would have been expected based on CONGU experience. Comparisons and simulations have led to the conclusion that the causes of this effect are complex and may be related to factors that are difficult to evaluate. In other words the scoring model of CONGU on which the CSA table is based can not be used in the EGA system without modification. It is also clear that more study and modelling is required to fully understand the several components that have caused this discrepancy and refine the model accordingly.

The H&CRC has decided to make the following adjustment to the CSA procedure for an experimental period starting 2008:

One CSA table, the B table, must be used but two methods of calculation dependant on the field composition. The deviation from the CONGU model is greater the larger the ratio of Cat

3&4 players compared to Cat 1&2 gets. This ratio rather than field size determines the calculation

Method 1: For all competitions where the proportion of Cat. 1&2 competitors is 60% or higher calculate the CSA as now with the “target” score being **34** points.

Method 2: For all competitions where there are less than 60% Cat. 1&2 competitors: Calculate the CSA using **35** points as the “target score”.

As there appears to be little distortion of the CONGU model in Cat. 1 and 2 it is considered that, if this dual approach is not adopted, for elite player competitions there would be a disproportionately large number of events where the CSA will be +1 which should not be.

Analysis has shown that, overall the situation has had minimal effect on players' handicaps,, because of the high proportion of participation equal treatment of handicaps across Europe is still guaranteed. This is especially important for elite players because of entry requirements into international competitions.

Live CSA data in different countries has also shown that some courses may have to be re-rated, some even exceeding 50% on the CSA -1 count. In that sense CSA is a good quality check on rating outcome.

It is very unfortunate that the introduction of a system that has been operating very satisfactorily for almost 20 years in CONGU, has caused so many negative reactions in letters, websites and even magazines. After all the sole purpose of CSA is to provide a competition-by-competition check that the “standard” playing conditions on which all handicaps are based apply and thus improve, albeit in a modest way, handicapping as a true measure of playing ability.

It will require a continuous effort from all of us to convince the players how CSA can and should work in everybody's interest. Naturally with your help we will monitor and evaluate the results in 2008 and report to you in detail.

## **FAQ's**

Currently we are preparing a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) for publication in the spring to assist you and the players. If we can be of any help in the meantime please let us know.

At this stage the following questions can be answered:

1. Q: Is CSA applicable for 9-hole scores ?

A: No, not in this format.

2. Q: Two competitions on one day, two CSA's?

A: If two or more competitions are run on the same day from the same tees, in the same format calculate one CSA (also one competition with prizes for different classes, divisions or handicap categories).

If conditions are very different during the day or a competition consists of more than one round the same day separate CSA's shall be calculated.

3. Q: Why does CSA not apply to Extra Day Scores?

A: Extra Day Scores are applied differently across EGA member Federations. On the day an EDS is returned most likely there is no field that can serve as a standard for comparison.

It is expected that in most cases the player electing to enter an EDS will not choose a day with severely adverse conditions.

4. Q: Is it not unfair that my handicap should be influenced by other people's performance? Your handicap is DIRECTLY influenced only by your own score. However the nett result on which handicaps are adjusted has always been calculated by reference to a "standard": the score that would be returned by the scratch player. This is true whether CSA is used or not.

All that CSA does is indicate whether, on the day, there is an acceptable probability that the scratch player would play to his handicap or not and reflect that probability in adjusting the standard of reference. This probability can be assessed whether there are any scratch players in the competition or not by applying the CSA model for expected scores".

CONGU has recently published the 2008-2011 edition of the CONGU Unified Handicapping System in which also improvements have been introduced to the CSS (the CONGU equivalent of CSA) methodology. Also these will be taken into account for possible amendments.

The CONGU website [www.congu.com](http://www.congu.com) provides some very useful background on different aspects of handicapping including CSS, should you wish to gather more information on these questions.

It is hoped that you have found this Newsletter interesting and informative. Further editions will follow and the H&CRC invite all member Federations to communicate any problems they are experiencing implementing the System and any suggestions they may have for its improvement. In this way the Committee hope that the 2011 edition will further enhance the relevance and reputation of the EGA Handicapping System

This Newsletter No 1 and the new appendices will also be published on the EGA website [www.ega-golf.ch](http://www.ega-golf.ch)

On behalf of the H&CRC

Jan Kees van Soest

Chairman

Attachments:

Appendix L amendment 2008

Appendix D amendment 2008