



SINGLES COMPETITIONS PLAYED FROM MULTIPLE TEES & MIXED-GENDER SINGLES COMPETITIONS: Operational Guidance for Clubs

1. What is The R&A's position on singles competitions in which different groups of players play from different teeing grounds, or in which men and women are eligible to enter?

The R&A has authorised committees to conduct competitions of these types, provided a given player plays from the same tees on every hole.

- EXAMPLE: Player A plays from the White tee markers on all 18 holes, and Player B plays from the Blue tee markers on all 18 holes. Neither player gets to choose as they play the round whether to for example start the 1st hole from the Blue tees and the 2nd hole from the White tees.

Competitions of these types are played throughout the world of golf.

2. Does Golf Australia (GA) encourage clubs to conduct competitions of this type?

It is GA's position that each club should make its own informed decisions around whether or not to conduct competitions of these types. Competitions of these types will be suited to the culture and fabric of some clubs, however they will not be suited to the culture and fabric of other clubs.

GA encourages clubs to explore ways in which the club membership experience can be enhanced. One such way can be to provide to members of lesser ability a shorter course option than would otherwise be available to them (which in many cases can make for a more enjoyable experience). For example, it would be permissible to conduct a men's competition in which the players on a handicap of 18 or less played from the Blue tees, and players on a handicap of more than 18 played from the White tees. A further benefit of this is that it will almost certainly lead to an improvement in the pace of play. A common refrain in world golf is that players should be encouraged to choose tee options that align with their level of play.

3. At my club we have decided to conduct some singles competitions in which different groups of players play from different teeing grounds, or in which men and women are eligible to enter. Do we need to wait until the new handicap system becomes fully operational on 23 January 2014 before we start?

No. Some Australian clubs have been doing this for a number of years.

4. I have heard that Slope needs to be implemented before it will be equitable to conduct singles competitions in which different groups of players play from different teeing grounds, or in which men and women are eligible to enter. Is that correct?

It is correct that Slope will make competitions of this type more equitable. However in most cases, Slope will not make a substantial difference. From an equity standpoint, a more significant distortion occurs in cases where there is a difference between the Scratch Ratings of the two tee options being played.

However even if there is a difference between the Scratch Ratings of the two tee options being played, there will not be any obligation on clubs to make an adjustment. Some clubs will choose to make an adjustment for this, and others will not. Golf Australia takes the view that either approach is fine.

5. Can you explain why it is that a distortionary impact can arise from there being a difference between the Scratch Ratings of the two tee options that are being used?

The Slope formulas are designed to provide a player with a handicap that will enable them to have a fair chance of playing to the Scratch Rating of the set of tees they are playing from. Slope is designed to cater for competitions in which everyone is of the same gender and is playing from the same tee markers. Slope is also designed to be flexible enough to provide a fair handicap for play on a course of any degree of difficulty by a player of any level of skill. However, the creation of a level playing field for a single competition in which there is play from multiple teeing grounds, or in which men and women are eligible to enter, is beyond the scope of what Slope was designed to achieve.

- EXAMPLE 1: The X Tees at South Pole Golf Club are the forward tees. The overall course length of the X Tees is only 4800 metres. The X Tees have a par of 72 and a Scratch Rating of 66. For X Tees, Slope will give the player a Daily Handicap that allows them an equitable chance of playing to the Scratch Rating of 66.
- Player x (who has a GA Handicap (ie a central handicap index) of 15.0) plays from X Tees and has a net score of 66.
- EXAMPLE 2: The Y Tees at South Pole Golf Club are the tiger tees. The overall course length of the Y Tees is 6400 metres. The Y Tees have a par of 72 and a Scratch Rating of 75. For Y Tees, Slope will give the player a Daily Handicap that allows them an equitable chance of playing to the Scratch Rating of 75.
- Player y (who has a GA Handicap (ie a central handicap index) of 15.0) plays from Y Tees and has a net score of 75.
- And which of the two net scores is better, Player x's score of 66 or Player y's score of 75? Well, neither! They're both equally as good because in both cases the player has played to their handicap.
- So what do we have to do to enable us to fairly compare these two scores?
 - ✘ Firstly we determine the difference between the two Scratch Ratings (in this case it is $75 - 66 = 9$).
 - ✘ We then establish which tees most competitors played from (let's assume it was Y Tees), and we adjust the scores of the competitors who played from the other tees by the difference in the Scratch Ratings (which in this case is 9).
 - ✘ So in this case, Y Tees had the greater number of players. As a result, it's Player x's score that gets adjusted as follows: $66 + 9 = 75$.
 - ✘ For prize giving purposes Player y had 75 and Player x is also deemed to have had 75. As a result, they finish equal in the competition.
 - ✘ Note that in this scenario, the score that GOLF Link will handicap Player x on is the net score of 66 (the adjusted score of 75 is only used at the local level for the purposes of determining competition placings).

6. If my club decides to conduct competitions of this type, does GA recommend we make an adjustment to the scores (for prize allocation purposes ONLY, ie not for handicapping purposes) to reflect the difference between the Scratch Ratings of the two tee options IN ADDITION to applying Slope?

GA takes the view that in most cases it is best for clubs to make their own decisions as to which approach will be preferred by the club membership. GA also takes the view that as either approach will align with the requirements of the Rules of Golf and the GA Handicap System, the key consideration for a club on this issue should be membership acceptance and satisfaction.

GA has received varied feedback from clubs on this issue in the past. Some clubs prefer to make the adjustment to cater for the difference in Scratch Ratings. Others do not.

The one set of circumstances for which GA does make a recommendation is when the players that play from one set of tees have much the same set of golf characteristics as the players who choose to play from the other set of tees. For example a club decides to conduct the following type of competition:

- A singles competition in which members may choose to play from either the White tees or the Blue tees (a player may not change their selection once they have nominated which tees they are to play from). Most players in the competition choose to play from the White tees.
- There is no distinct set of characteristics that differentiates those players who choose to play from the White tees from those players who choose to play from the Blue tees (ie for example it is NOT a case of the Veterans playing from the White tees, and the rest of the field playing from the Blue tees).
- In this scenario, GA recommends that an adjustment be made to the scores of the players who play from the Blue tees (for prize allocation purposes ONLY, ie not for handicapping purposes) to reflect the difference between the Scratch Ratings of the two tee options

NOTE: Further to the above example, where a club decides to conduct a singles competition in which the Veterans will play from the White tees, and the rest of the field will play from the Blue tees, GA takes the view that the club itself should determine whether its membership will prefer that the competition results are adjusted to account for the difference in Scratch Ratings of the two tee options.

7. Let's say that my club decides to conduct competitions of this type and that we also decide to adjust the scores (for prize allocation purposes ONLY, ie not for handicapping purposes) to reflect the difference between the Scratch Ratings of the two tee options IN ADDITION to applying Slope. Will we have to make these adjustments manually or will the computer system do it all for us?

There will be a set-up option in GOLF Link (or in your third-party software system – unless your third-party software provider advises that it will not support this functionality) that will enable these adjustments to be made automatically. You will be able to activate this option for some competitions, and not activate it for others.

GOLF Link (or your third-party software system – unless your third-party software provider advises that it will not support this functionality) will also ensure that the net score made against your proper Daily Handicap (and not the adjusted score) is what is added to your GOLF Link record. This process is as per what is required by the handicap system.

When you do choose to activate the score adjustment option in your computer system (unless you operate a third-party software system that does not support this functionality), it will make the following lists of results available to you:

- A combined list of results for all competitors (and where the players who played from the least populated Tee option have had their scores adjusted by the difference between the two Scratch Ratings).
- A separate list of results for each of the Tee options (where the players' scores on these separate lists are the un-adjusted scores).

8. Let's say that my club decides to conduct a singles Stableford competition where women playing from the Red tees (par 73, Scratch Rating 74) are able to enter, and men playing from the White tees (par 72, Scratch Rating 70) are able to enter. We typically get three times as many male entrants as we do female entrants. Let's say that we also decide to make an adjustment to the scores (for prize allocation purposes ONLY, ie not for handicapping purposes) to account for the difference between the Scratch Ratings of the two tee options. Because the Scratch Ratings AND the pars of the two tee options are different (and because it's Stableford), what formula should we use to adjust the scores?

Because there are more male entrants than female entrants, the following formula should be used to adjust the Stableford points total of each female player as follows (note: the Stableford points totals of the male players are not adjusted):

- WOMEN'S ADJUSTED COMPETITION SCORE = Regular Stableford Points Total PLUS (Women's Scratch Rating MINUS Men's Scratch Rating) MINUS (Women's Par MINUS Men's Par)
- So in this example, say the player had 34 points when playing from the Red tees, her Adjusted Competition Score = $34 + (74-70) - (73-72) = 37$ points.

NOTE i: The women players will be handicapped on their unadjusted Stableford scores.

NOTE ii: The adjustment formula to apply for a Par event in which there are more male entrants than female entrants is: *WOMEN'S ADJUSTED COMPETITION SCORE = Regular Par Result PLUS (Women's Scratch Rating MINUS Men's Scratch Rating) MINUS (Women's Course Par MINUS Men's Course Par)*

9. Let's say that my club decides to conduct a singles match play event in which women and men will compete against each other. Let's say that we also decide to make an adjustment to account for the difference between the Scratch Ratings of the two tee options. How should we do this? Is there anything else we should be aware of in relation to this type of event?

The relevant points to note around this are as follows:

- Firstly, each player will calculate the Daily Handicap that is appropriate to the Slope Rating of the set of tees they are to play from.
- Secondly, the player with the lower Daily Handicap is reduced to a handicap of 0, and the other player's handicap is reduced by the same amount. For example, Player L's Daily Handicap would be 16 and Player M's Daily Handicap would be 28 – Player L is reduced to 0 and Player M is reduced to 12.
- Thirdly, Player M's handicap for the match is then adjusted by the difference between the Scratch Ratings.
- If the Scratch Rating for Player M's course is higher than the Scratch Rating of Player L's course, the difference between the two Scratch Ratings is added to the handicap that Player M plays off in the match.
- If the Scratch Rating for Player M's course is lower than the Scratch Rating of Player L's course, the difference between the two Scratch Ratings is subtracted from the handicap that Player M plays off in the match.
- Note: If a subtraction would result in Player M's handicap being reduced to a negative number (because for example there is only a 1 shot difference between the Daily Handicaps of the two players), Player M will NOT play off a negative handicap. Instead, Player L will be credited with the strokes. For example: Player M's Daily Handicap would be 13 and Player L's Daily Handicap would be 12, so Player M is reduced to 1 and Player L to 0. If Player L's Scratch Rating is 74 and Player M's is 71, this means that Player L then gets 3 strokes credited to their handicap. So Player L will play off a handicap of 2 in the match, and Player M will play off 0 in the match.
- For match play it is recommended that the Match Index of either the men's course or of the women's course be used by both genders. (Note: GA recommends that the standard match

play index be used by both women and men on all courses; details of this generic GA match play index are provided in Part I(a) of the document on the following webpage www.golf.org.au/site/content/document/00014129-source.pdf.) This should produce a fair and balanced outcome for two reasons: firstly, many players do not play their best (or worst) golf on the holes where they get a shot, and secondly, there can be considerable disagreement between golfers as to which holes they would like to give or receive strokes against a specific opponent. As a result, the swings and roundabouts should all balance out over the course of the match. (Note: For Stroke, Stableford, and Par stroke play events it is recommended that each player use the stroke index that is relevant to their gender.)

- Let's say that the pars of a hole are different for men and women (eg one hole is a par 4 for men and a par 5 for women). The standard international position is that the par of the hole is disregarded and the player who completes the hole in the least number of strokes wins the hole in a gross event, and the player who completes the hole in the least number of net strokes wins the hole in a handicap event. This can however lead to some outcomes that are perceived to be unfair to the woman. As a result, it is recommended that if there is a hole where the men's and women's tees are normally closely positioned, but is a par 4 for men and par 5 for women, that the Committee move the women's tees forward and play the hole as a par 4 for that event.

10. If we decide to make an adjustment to the scores (for prize allocation purposes ONLY, ie not for handicapping purposes) to account for the difference between the Scratch Ratings of the two tee options, what count-back method should we use?

GA recommends that you use the standard GA count-back method (see Part III(g) of the document on the following webpage for details of this method - www.golf.org.au/site/content/document/00014593-source.pdf). In applying this method, it is recommended that you do not adjust the hole-by-hole scores to account for the difference in Scratch Ratings between the two tee options.