

**GOLF IRELAND
HANDICAP APPEALS PROCEDURES**

**RULES OF HANDICAPPING
WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEFINITIONS

- 1. Handicap adjustments/freezing by Home Club**
 - 1.1 Appeal procedure at Home Club
 - 1.2 Appeal procedure at Regional Authority level

- 2. Withdrawal of a Handicap Index Rule 7.1c**
 - 2.1 Withdrawal of Handicap Index procedure – Home Club
 - 2.2 Withdrawal of Handicap Index – Appeal to the Regional Authority

DEFINITIONS:

The definitions as detailed in the World Handicapping System Rules of Handicapping (CONGU) 2020 apply to this procedure together with the following:

“Club Handicap Committee”	the appointed Handicap Committee of an Affiliated Club
“Golf Ireland”	the National Governing Body of golf in Ireland, Carton Demesne, Maynooth, Co. Kildare
“Regional Authority”	operating under the auspices of its Handicapping Sub Committee - with direction provided by the National Handicapping Committee/National Board

1. HANDICAP ADJUSTMENTS/FREEZING BY HOME CLUB

Where the Handicap Index of a member of an Affiliated Club (hereinafter referred to as “player”) has been adjusted/frozen under Rule 7 of the Rules of Handicapping (World Handicap System), the player may appeal the decision. Prior to the initiation of any procedure, the parties should familiarise themselves with Rule 7 of the Rules of Handicapping.

- a) Golf Ireland recommends the following procedure be made available to a player dissatisfied with the determination made by the Club towards him/her in accordance with Rule 7 of the Rules of Handicapping.
- b) It is recommended that the appeals committees adhere to the gender balance as set out by Golf Ireland of a minimum gender representation of 30% male, 30% female and 40% either male/female. The appeals committee must consist of members with prior handicapping experience.

1.1 APPEAL PROCEDURE AT HOME CLUB

- a) If the player is dissatisfied with any Handicap Index adjustment/freeze made by their Club Handicap Committee, the player is required to, within 14 days, notify their Club Handicap Committee, in writing (includes by email), and request the rationale for the adjustment/freeze.
- b) Any adjustment carried out by the Regional Authority for an elite player (men with a Handicap Index of 0.0 or lower, women with a Handicap Index of 2.0 or lower) or an adjustment above 5 shots is made in consultation and with the agreement of the Club Handicap Committee. If the player is dissatisfied with any Handicap adjustment made, the player should notify their Club Handicap Committee in writing and request the rationale for the adjustment
- c) The Handicap Committee should provide all relevant information to the player in writing and, if appropriate, uphold, amend or rescind their initial decision.
- d) If this does not resolve the matter the player is required to lodge their appeal in writing within 14 days from the Handicap Committee's decision, setting out the grounds of their appeal in detail to the Honorary Secretary of the Home Club.
- e) On receipt of a written appeal, the Home Club Committee shall appoint an Appeal Committee of at least three in number, subject to 1.b), who can be fairly said to have no conflict of interest in the matter. The Appeal Committee must always have primary regard for the Rules of Handicapping and focus on the appeal itself.
- f) The Appeal Committee shall, in as timely a manner as possible, adjudicate upon the matter taking into consideration the detailed written evidence from the appellant and from the Handicap Committee, and shall seek further evidence, written or oral, where necessary.
- g) Any Handicap Index adjustment/freeze made by the Home Club will stand pending the outcome of the appeal.
- h) The Appeal Committee may uphold, amend or rescind the decision of the Handicap Committee having due regard to the Rules of Handicapping.
- i) The Appeal Committee shall communicate its decision to the Club Handicap Committee and then the appellant.
- j) Approved minutes of all oral evidence and meetings must be recorded and retained by the Home Club
- k) Any player who, having appealed against a Handicap Index adjustment/freeze made by the Home Club in accordance with Rule 7 of the Rules of Handicapping and having had such appeal heard wishes to further appeal the decision, is required to lodge their appeal in writing, setting out the grounds of the appeal, with the Regional Authority, within 14 days of receiving notification from their Club Appeals Committee decision (see 1.2 below for Appeal Procedure at Regional Level).
- l) Any appellant who remains dissatisfied at the completion of this procedure may, within 14 days from receipt of such decision, appeal exclusively by referral to Sports Dispute Solutions Ireland (SDSI) for final and binding arbitration in accordance with the Sports Dispute Solutions Ireland (SDSI) Arbitration Rules.

1.2 APPEAL PROCEDURE AT REGIONAL AUTHORITY LEVEL

- a) On receipt of a written appeal the Regional Authority will request a report in writing on the matter from the players Club Handicap Committee and the Honorary Secretary of the Home Club.
- b) The Regional Authority shall appoint an Appeal Committee of at least three, subject to 1.b) who can be fairly said to have no conflict of interest in the matter. The Appeal Committee must include a nominee approved by the National Handicapping Sub Committee of Golf Ireland (excluding anyone from the same region as the appellant), who shall chair the meeting and have the casting vote.
- c) Any Handicap Index adjustment/freeze made by the Home Club as per the determination of the Club's Appeal Committee shall stand pending the outcome of the second appeal.
- d) The Appeal Committee shall, in as timely a manner as possible, adjudicate upon the matter taking into consideration the written evidence from the appellant, the player's Handicap Committee and Club Committee, and shall seek such further evidence, written or oral, as it thinks fit.
- e) The Appeal Committee may uphold, amend or rescind the decision of the Club having due regard to the Rules of Handicapping.
- f) Once the Appeals Committee has made its decision it shall be communicated to the appellant in writing and the Home Club Handicap Committee forthwith.
- g) Approved minutes of oral evidence and all meetings must be recorded and retained by Golf Ireland at national level.
- h) Any appellant who remains dissatisfied at the completion of this procedure may, within 14 days from receipt of such decision, appeal exclusively by referral to Sports Dispute Solutions Ireland (SDSI) for final and binding arbitration in accordance with the Sports Dispute Solutions Ireland (SDSI) Arbitration Rules.

2. WITHDRAWAL OF A HANDICAP INDEX RULE 7.1C

Where a member of an Affiliated Club (hereinafter referred to as “player”) is subject to Withdrawal of their Handicap Index under Rule 7.1c of the Rules of Handicapping (World Handicap System), the player may appeal the decision. Prior to the initiation of any procedure, the parties should familiarise themselves with Rule 7.1c of the Rules of Handicapping.

- a) Golf Ireland recommends the following procedure to be made available to a player dissatisfied with the determination made by the Club towards him/her in accordance with Rule 7.1c of the Rules of Handicapping.
- b) It is recommended that the appeals committees adhere to the gender balance representation of 30% male, 30% female and 40% either male/female.

2.1 WITHDRAWAL OF HANDICAP INDEX PROCEDURE – HOME CLUB

- a) Golf Ireland directs that all disciplinary matters pursuant to Rule 7.1c of the Rules of Handicapping will be heard by the Club Disciplinary Sub Committee, who shall have the authority to withdraw the handicap index of a player under Rule 7.1c.
- b) In dealing with such disciplinary matters, the Home Club must have regard to the following points:
- c) The principles of natural justice must always apply when handing down a sanction of withdrawal of a Handicap Index.
- d) The rules relating to Handicap Index Withdrawal are set out principally in 7.1c of the Rules of Handicapping – where a player “deliberately or repeatedly fails to comply with the player’s responsibilities under the Rules of Handicapping.”
- e) The Handicap Index of a player may only be withdrawn after the player has been informed in writing and has had the opportunity to respond to their Handicap Committee and Club Disciplinary Committee.
- f) The Player must be notified of the length of time for which their Handicap Index will be withdrawn and any additional conditions.
- g) Clubs must put in place a process whereby minor infractions are dealt with by way of oral or written warnings. Withdrawal of a Handicap Index should only arise where there have been repeated breaches or where there is a single serious breach.
- h) Where the relevant Handicap Committee believes that there are sufficient grounds to justify a withdrawal of a player’s Handicap Index, it shall make a written submission to the Club Committee who should then appoint a Disciplinary Sub Committee, subject to 2.b), who can be fairly said to have no conflict of interest, to investigate and hear the matter.
- i) The Disciplinary Sub Committee shall first decide if a prima facie case exists in which event, they shall notify the player in writing that they intend to investigate the matter. If the matter proceeds to such an investigation, the player shall be furnished with details of the allegation made against them and shall be afforded an opportunity of stating their case in writing.
- j) The Disciplinary Sub Committee shall, in a timely manner, adjudicate upon the matter taking into consideration the written evidence from the appellant and the Home Club Committee(s) and may seek further evidence, written or oral, if necessary.
- k) The decision of the Disciplinary Sub Committee shall be made as a recommendation to the Club Committee/Council for their final approval and communicated by the Honorary Secretary of the Club to the player forthwith.
- l) Approved minutes of all oral evidence and meetings must be recorded and retained by the player’s Home Club.
- m) Any player wishing to appeal against the Withdrawal of their Handicap Index by the Home Club related solely to a breach of the Rules of Golf and Amateur Status and/or the Rules of Handicapping is required to lodge their appeal in writing within 14 days of notification of the Withdrawal of the Handicap Index with the Regional Authority (see 2.2 below for Appeal Procedure at Regional Level).

2.2 WITHDRAWAL OF HANDICAP INDEX - APPEAL TO THE REGIONAL AUTHORITY

Any player wishing to appeal against the Withdrawal of their Handicap Index by the Home Club related solely to a breach of the Rules of Golf and Amateur Status and/or the Rules of Handicapping must lodge their appeal in writing within 14 days of notification of the Withdrawal of the Handicap Index with the Regional Authority.

Role of the Regional Authority:

- a) On receipt of a written appeal, the Regional Authority shall appoint a Disciplinary Committee of at least three, subject to 2.b) who can be fairly said to have no conflict of interest in the matter. The Disciplinary Committee must include a nominee approved by the National Handicapping Sub Committee of Golf Ireland (excluding anyone from the same region as the appellant), who shall chair the meeting and have the casting vote.
- b) The Disciplinary Committee shall, in as timely a manner as possible, adjudicate upon the matter taking into consideration the written evidence from the appellant, the Home Club Committee(s) and shall seek such further evidence, written or oral, as it thinks fit.
- c) The Disciplinary Committee may uphold, amend or rescind the decision of the Home Club Committee having due regard to the Rules of Golf & Amateur Status and/or the Rules of Handicapping, as applicable.
- d) Once the Disciplinary Committee has made its decision it shall be communicated to the appellant and the Home Club forthwith.
- e) Approved minutes of all oral evidence and meetings must be recorded and retained by Golf Ireland at national level.
- f) Any appellant who remains dissatisfied at the completion of this procedure may, within 14 days from receipt of such decision, appeal exclusively by referral to Sports Dispute Solutions Ireland (SDSI) for final and binding arbitration in accordance with the Sports Dispute Solutions Ireland (SDSI) Arbitration Rules.