



GOLF IRELAND

HANDICAP INDEX[®] APPEALS PROCEDURE

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish a process if a member of an Affiliated Club is dissatisfied with a handicapping decision made by an Affiliated Club's Handicap Committee and wishes to appeal the decision.

DEFINITIONS:

The definitions as detailed in the World Handicapping System™ Rules of Handicapping apply to these procedures together with the following:

“Affiliated Club”	any golf club which is affiliated to Golf Ireland that is permitted to administer and manage the Handicap Index® of those players who have designated it as their Home Club in accordance with the Rules of Handicapping
“Appeal Fee”	shall mean a fee payable by a player to Golf Ireland together with a Notice of Appeal in accordance with Clause 8
“Club Disciplinary Sub Committee”	a committee appointed by the Affiliated Club to administer appeals of the withdrawal of a Handicap Index
“Club Handicap Committee”	the appointed Handicap Committee of an Affiliated Club
“Club Handicap Appeals Committee”	a committee appointed by the affiliated Club to administer appeals of an adjustment/freeze of a Handicap Index
“Club Management Committee”	the club committee dealing with club governance
“Golf Ireland”	the National Governing Body of Golf in Ireland, Carton Demesne, Maynooth, Co Kildare
“Handicapping Decision”	shall mean any decision taken in respect of a Handicap Index pursuant to Rule 7 of the Rules of Handicapping
“Handicap Index Adjustment”	the application of an adjustment to the recent 20 scores or less on a player's record
“Player”	a member of an Affiliated Club at which their Handicap Index is administered and managed.
“Regional Authority”	operating under the auspices of its Handicapping Sub Committee – with direction provided by the

National Handicapping Sub Committee/National Board.

“Regional Authority
Handicap Appeal Committee”

a committee appointed by the regional authority to administer appeals resulting from the adjustment, freeze or withdrawal of a Handicap Index.

“Rules of Handicapping”

the handicapping rules that have been formulated for the purpose of providing golfers with a fair and equitable method of calculating handicaps, as governed by the R&A and USGA.

1. HANDICAP INDEX ADJUSTMENT/FREEZE- RULE 7.1a

Where the Handicap Index of a member of an Affiliated Club (hereinafter referred to as “player”) has been adjusted or frozen by the Club Handicap Committee under Rule 7.1a of the Rules of Handicapping (World Handicap System™), the player may appeal the decision.

a) Prior to the initiation of any appeals procedure, the parties should familiarise themselves with Rule 7.1a of the Rules of Handicapping.

b) Golf Ireland recommends the following appeals procedure be made available to a player dissatisfied with the determination made by the Club Handicap Committee towards them in accordance with Rule 7.1a of the Rules of Handicapping.

c) It is recommended that the Club Handicap Appeals Committee adheres 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.

d) The Club Handicap Appeals committee must consist of members with prior handicapping experience and it is preferable that all members of the Appeal Committee have previous handicap sub-committee experience.

e) In the interests of good governance, the Club Captains/Vice Captains and Chair of the Club Management Committee should not serve on the Club Handicap Appeals committee.

f) It is recommended that the Appellant is provided with the names of the Club Handicap Appeals Committee. However, the Appellant should note that canvassing of any member of the Club Handicap Appeal Committee may result in the end of the appeal process.

g) The parties involved in this process should consult the Golf Ireland Conflict of Interest Policy.

h) The Appellant is entitled to bring a companion i.e., a family member or friend, who does not have the right to speak at the hearing.

2. HANDICAP INDEX ADJUSTMENT/FREEZE BY HOME CLUB

- a) The adjustment of a player's Handicap Index is decided by the Club Handicap Committee and, in the case of 5 shots or over, in consultation with the Regional Authority.
- b) It is recommended that if a club is considering making a significant adjustment to a player's Handicap Index, they should first discuss this with their Regional Handicap Advisor.
- c) In all cases, the player **must** be informed before the adjustment is applied, should be given the opportunity to respond (e.g., 5 working days), and should be given a full written reasoned rationale for the decision.
- d) After discussion with the player, the Club Handicap Committee may decide to uphold, amend or rescind their initial decision.

3. HANDICAP INDEX ADJUSTMENT/FREEZE - APPEAL PROCEDURE AT HOME CLUB

- a) If the player is dissatisfied with any Handicap Index adjustment/freeze made by their Home Club Handicap Committee under Rule 7.1a, the player is required to lodge a Notice of Appeal in writing, within 14 days of the adjustment/freeze being published on the player's record, setting out the grounds of the appeal in detail to the relevant Honorary Secretary of the player's Home Club. The written appeal can be sent by post or by email to the Club Honorary Secretary. Proof of email/postage is required.
- b) On receipt of a written appeal, the Club Management Committee shall appoint a Club Handicap Appeal Committee of at least three in number, subject to 1(c), who can be fairly said to have no conflict of interest in the matter. The Club Handicap Appeal Committee must always have primary regard for the Rules of Handicapping and focus on all the information/ evidence before them. Failure to appoint an Appeal Committee will result in the appeal being upheld.
- c) The Club Handicap Appeal Committee shall commence the appeal process within 14 days of receipt of the appeal by the relevant Honorary Secretary, taking into consideration the evidence submitted material/information from the Appellant and from the Club Handicap Committee.
- d) The Club Handicap Appeal Committee shall not discuss the case with any club member or Committee prior to the hearing.
- e) Both the Appellant and a representative of the Club Handicap Committee must be provided with the opportunity to present in-person and can submit any further supporting documentation/relevant information to the Club Handicap Appeals Committee.
- f) Any Handicap Index adjustment/freeze made by the Club Handicap Committee will stand pending the outcome of the appeal.
- g) The Club Handicap Appeal Committee may uphold, amend or rescind the decision of the Club Handicap Committee having due regard to the Rules of Handicapping.
- h) The Club Handicap Appeal Committee shall communicate its decision in writing/email to the Club Handicap Committee and then the Appellant, providing a full written reasoned explanation.
- i) Minutes of all oral evidence and in-person meetings must be documented and retained by the Home Club for a rolling 12-month period.
- j) Any player who, having appealed against a Handicap Index adjustment/freeze made by the Club Handicap Committee in accordance with Rule 7 of the Rules of Handicapping and having had such appeal heard by the Club Handicap Appeal Committee wishes to further appeal the decision, is required to lodge a Notice of Appeal in writing, setting out the grounds for the appeal, with the Regional Authority, within 14 days of receiving notification of the Club Handicap Appeal Committee decision (see below for Appeal Procedure at Regional Authority Level).

k) The Notice of Appeal should be submitted to the relevant Regional Manager at:

connacht@golfireland.ie

leinster@golfireland.ie

munster@golfireland.ie

ulster@golfireland.ie

4. HANDICAP INDEX WITHDRAWAL - RULE 7.1C

Where a member of an Affiliated Club (hereinafter referred to as “player”) is subject to the withdrawal of their Handicap Index by the Club Handicap Committee under Rule 7.1c of the Rules of Handicapping (World Handicap System™), the player may appeal the decision.

a) Prior to the initiation of any procedure, the parties should familiarise themselves with Rule 7 of the Rules of Handicapping.

b) Golf Ireland recommends the following procedure be made available to a player dissatisfied with the determination made by the Club towards them in accordance with Rule 7.1c of the Rules of Handicapping.

c) It is recommended that Club Handicap Appeals Committee adheres 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.

d) The withdrawal of a Handicap Index should be related solely to a breach of the Rules of Handicapping. It should not be used as a disciplinary tool.

5. HANDICAP INDEX WITHDRAWAL BY HOME CLUB

- a) Clubs should 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 deliberate or repeated breaches or where there is a single serious breach of the Rules of Handicapping.
- b) The decision to withdraw a Handicap Index is made and implemented by the Club Handicap Committee and can be upheld, amended or rescinded, depending on the outcome of the Appeal, by the Club Disciplinary Sub Committee or the Regional Authority Handicap Appeals Committee.
- c) The player **must** be informed before their Handicap Index is withdrawn, should be given the opportunity to respond and should be given a full written reasoned rationale for the decision.
- d) The player must be notified of the length of time for which their Handicap Index will be withdrawn and any additional conditions.
- e) After discussion with the player, the Club Handicap Committee may decide to uphold, amend or rescind their initial decision.
- f) The principles of natural justice must always apply when handing down a sanction of withdrawal of a Handicap Index.

6. HANDICAP INDEX WITHDRAWAL – APPEAL PROCEDURE AT HOME CLUB

- a) Any player wishing to appeal against the withdrawal of their Handicap Index by the Club Handicap Committee related solely to the Rules of Handicapping is required to lodge a Notice of Appeal in writing within 14 days of notification of the withdrawal of the Handicap Index from the Club Handicap Committee. The written appeal can be sent by post or by email to the Club Honorary Secretary. Proof of email/postage is required.
- b) 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.
- c) On receipt of a written appeal, the relevant Club Handicap Committee shall make a written submission to the relevant Club Management Committee who should then appoint a Club Disciplinary Sub Committee, subject to 4(c), who can be fairly said to have no conflict of interest, to investigate and hear the matter.
- d) The Club Disciplinary Sub Committee shall first decide if a prima facie case exists and will 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.
- e) The Club Disciplinary Sub Committee shall commence the appeals process within 14 days of receipt of the appeal by the relevant Club Honorary Secretary, taking into account the written evidence from the Appellant and the Club Handicap Committee(s) and may seek further evidence, written or oral, if necessary.
- f) The Club Disciplinary Sub Committee shall not discuss the case with any club member or Committee prior to the hearing.
- g) It is recommended that the Appellant is provided with the names of the Club Disciplinary Sub Committee. The Appellant should note that canvassing of any member of the Club Disciplinary Sub Committee may result in the end of the appeal process.
- h) Any withdrawal of a Handicap Index made by the Club Handicap Committee shall stand pending the outcome of the Club Disciplinary Sub Committee.
- i) The Club Disciplinary Sub Committee may uphold, amend or rescind the decision of the Club Handicap Committee having due regard to the Rules of Handicapping.
- j) The decision of the Club Disciplinary Sub Committee is binding. Their decision should be communicated in writing by the Honorary Secretary of the Club to the player forthwith giving a full written reasoned decision.
- k) Approved minutes of all oral evidence and meetings must be recorded and retained by the player's Home Club for a rolling 12-month period.
- l) Any player wishing to appeal against the withdrawal of their Handicap Index by the Home Club Disciplinary Sub Committee related solely to a breach of the Rules of Handicapping is required to lodge a Notice of Appeal with the Regional Authority in

writing within 14 days of notification of the withdrawal of their Handicap Index from the Club Honorary Secretary (see below for Appeal Procedure at Regional Authority Level).

m) The Notice of Appeal should be submitted to the relevant Regional Manager at:

connacht@golfireland.ie

leinster@golfireland.ie

munster@golfireland.ie

ulster@golfireland.ie

7. HANDICAP INDEX ADJUSTMENT/FREEZE/WITHDRAWAL – APPEAL PROCEDURE AT REGIONAL AUTHORITY LEVEL

Any player wishing to appeal against the adjustment/freeze/withdrawal of their Handicap Index by the Home Club Handicap Committee/Club Disciplinary Sub Committee related **solely** to the Rules of Handicapping is required to lodge a Notice of Appeal with the Regional Authority in writing within 14 days of notification of the adjustment/freeze/withdrawal of the Handicap Index from the Club Handicap Appeal Committee/ Club Honorary Secretary.

a) On receipt of a written appeal from a Player, the Regional Authority shall request a completed Golf Ireland Regional Appeals Appellant Form from the Appellant, including all relevant documentation and a Golf Ireland Regional Appeals Club Form from the Club to include all relevant documentation from the Club Handicap Committee/Club Handicap Appeals Committee/Club Disciplinary Sub Committee.

b) The Regional Authority shall appoint a Regional Authority Handicap Appeal Committee of at least three, subject to 1(c), who can be fairly said to have no conflict of interest in the matter. The Regional Authority Handicap 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/withdrawal made by the Home Club as per the determination of the Club Handicap Committee/Club Handicap Appeal Committee/Club Disciplinary Sub Committee shall stand pending the outcome of the Regional Authority Handicap Appeal Committee.

d) The Regional Authority Handicap Appeal Committee shall commence the appeals process within 14 days of receipt of the appeal by the Regional Authority, taking into consideration the written evidence from the Appellant, the Club Handicap Committee and/or relevant Club Handicap Appeal Committee/Club Disciplinary Sub Committee, and shall seek such further evidence, written or oral, as it sees fit.

e) The Regional Authority Handicap Appeal Committee may uphold, amend or rescind the decision of the Club Handicap Committee/Club Handicap Appeal Committee/Club Disciplinary Sub Committee having due regard to the Rules of Handicapping.

f) Once the Regional Authority Handicap Appeal Committee has made its decision, a written reasoned rationale for the decision shall be communicated in writing/email to the Appellant and the Club Handicap Committee/Club Honorary Secretary as soon as practicable.

g) Minutes of any oral evidence and all meetings must be documented and retained by Golf Ireland at national level for a rolling 12-month period.

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 SDSI Arbitration Rules. Please note this process will incur a fee from SDSI. Click [HERE](#) for further information.

8. REGIONAL AUTHORITY APPEAL FEES

- a) There shall be a fee of €200/sterling equivalent in respect of a Regional Authority Appeal and shall be payable by Electronic Funds Transfer.
- b) Golf Ireland's payment details are available on request by emailing Accounts@golfireland.ie.
- c) This fee shall be paid in advance and will be refunded only if the appeal is successful.
- d) A player may request a fee waiver under specific circumstances, otherwise failure to pay the appeal fee will result in automatic dismissal of the appeal. Click [HERE](#) for link to the Procedure.