



Defining Handicap Limits in Competitions.

Clubs have 3 clear options:

- **Option 1**

No handicap entry limits: Allow all players to play off their actual handicap and have the possibility to win. This will apply to any competition format.

- **Option 2**

Set handicap entry limits: These should be limited to National/County/Elite Competitions and events that may have large fields and require a ballot. Limits must be clearly stated in the Conditions of Competition upon entry.

It is not expected that Clubs will use this option for their internal Medals/Stablefords/match play competitions.

- **Option 3**

A competition is set up without a handicap entry limit, which would allow all players to enter. However, eligibility for the main prize or trophy may be limited to a maximum (or minimum) handicap allowance, and this must be clearly stated in the Competition Conditions before play.

For example: A competition is set up with a maximum handicap which would allow all players to enter (notionally 54), and this would be stated in the Competition Conditions. The Competition Conditions would then state:

“This event is open to all players up to a maximum handicap of (54). However, eligibility for the Trophy will be limited to a maximum handicap allowance of (36). Other prizes will be awarded in divisions, as follows: Div 1 up to 15 handicap; Div 2 from 16 to 25 handicap; Div 3 from 26 to 32 handicap; Div 4 from 33 to 54 handicap.” These Divisions could be adjusted to reflect the demographic of the individual Club.

By using this format, everyone can enter the competition (as the handicap limit is (54)); and for handicap purposes, players will receive their full handicap allowance. However, the report produced for prize purposes will limit everyone to (36). In the same way, a limit of (16) to (28) could apply. But players below 16 or above 28 would then not be eligible to enter.

Should the Committee wish to use this option for a match play competition, it is important to note that all players must be allowed to play off their full CONGU handicap, with the full difference between players given (or any approved allowance for format of play). The competition may be split into divisions (say up to 20, and 21 to 54) for prize allocation. **Players must NOT be asked to compete off a handicap lower than that to which they are entitled.**

It is important to ensure that all players have the opportunity to compete in competitions, and that higher handicaps are not discriminated against. Maintaining player interest in the sport is of crucial importance; both for the declining or improving high handicap golfer. If the player is correctly handicapped, there should be no advantage to holding a Cat 5 or 6 handicap over a Cat 1 handicap. Players in Category 5 or 6 do not, of course, affect the CSS calculation in any way.

