



**ENGLISH**  
GOLF UNION



*Driving Women's golf*

# **ACTIVE/INACTIVE HANDICAPS**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

During the winter of 2007/2008 the English Golf Union conducted a series of Handicapping Seminars to launch the 2008 CONGU Unified Handicapping System (UHS). At these seminars Clubs requested a system was introduced to enable them to identify whether members of affiliated clubs had submitted qualifying scores to determine whether their handicap was a true reflection of their playing ability. It was agreed however that Lapsing, currently adopted in Scotland, was not introduced.

In 2010 with the full support of CONGU, the English Golf Union, the English Women's Golf Association and the Golfing Union of Wales introduced the Active/Inactive handicap system.

### **Key Points:**

- An Inactive handicap is still an official CONGU Handicap. It is not lost or lapsed.
- All members of affiliated Clubs with CONGU handicaps are required to submit at least 3 qualifying scores per calendar year to retain an Active handicap. To have an Active handicap at the start of 2010 a member must have returned 3 qualifying scores during 2009.
- Qualifying scores are those returned in Club qualifying competition (Home or Away), Supplementary Scores or 9 hole qualifying events. Scores returned socially or in match play competition are not acceptable.
- Exemptions are permitted for those who have had health/injury problems or have been out of the Country and prevented them from returning the required number of qualifying scores.
- A Club is permitted to adopt restrictions for those with Inactive handicaps in Club and Open competition.

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### **What is an Active/Inactive handicap?**

An Active handicap a player has returned at least 3 qualifying scores per annum. An Inactive handicap identifies that less than 3 qualifying scores have been returned.

### **What do I need to do to have an Active handicap?**

In order to have an Active handicap, a member is required to return 3 qualifying scores in the previous calendar year. These can include scores returned in Club qualifying competitions (both home and away), Supplementary Scores and 9 hole qualifying competitions. Scores returned in non-qualifying events and in social golf are not acceptable.

### **When does an Active/Inactive handicap start?**

The system was launched on January 1st 2010. Members were required to return 3 qualifying scores during 2009 in order to have an Active handicap at the start of 2010.

### **Does an Inactive handicap mean my handicap has lapsed?**

Absolutely not. An Inactive handicap is still an official CONGU handicap. You will still be entitled to receive a handicap certificate and enter events that do not require an Active handicap as an entry requirement.

### **When I submit 3 cards will I get a new handicap?**

No, having an Inactive handicap does not mean you have lost your handicap. Each qualifying score will adjust your current handicap accordingly. The Club is not permitted to issue a new handicap on the return of the 3 qualifying scores.

### **Why are 3 scores required for an Active handicap?**

The English Golf Union and English Women's Golf Association were keen to adopt the system without putting a large burden on our affiliated members. 3 qualifying scores were felt to be very easy to achieve over a 12 month period.

### **Are there any plans to increase the number of scores required?**

The English Golf Union, English Women's Golf Association and the Golfing Union of Wales will monitor the system. A decision to increase the number of qualifying scores from 3 would only be made only on request by the Golf Clubs through their respective Voting Members (County Unions).

### **What restrictions can be imposed on Inactive handicaps?**

A Club does not *have* to impose restrictions regarding inactive handicaps and entry into club competitions. *If* a Club wishes to include restrictions on Inactive handicaps it may do one of the following:

- Prohibit entry into the competition. This should be adopted for match play knockout competitions. This condition can also be adopted for qualifying competitions although it is not permissible to adopt this as a blanket condition for all Club competitions. The CONGU UHS stipulates anyone with a CONGU handicap is entitled to compete in a reasonable number of qualifying competitions per year (*see CONGU definition of Member*).
- Allow entry into all competitions (including Open days) but restrict them from winning prizes. Entry fees may be charged and any subsidiary prizes (2s sweeps) may still be won. This is considered to be the favored option amongst affiliated Clubs and of the EGU/EWGA.

### **What happens if I cannot return enough qualifying scores?**

A player will only be exempt from receiving an Inactive handicap under the following circumstances:

- Injury/Illness over a lengthy period of time that has given the member insufficient time to return 3 qualifying scores
- Golfers new to the game who are being issued with their first CONGU handicap. Once the handicap has been awarded the member shall be Active for a period of 12 months from the date of allocation
- Members who do not wish to return qualifying scores or are unable to compete at weekends will not be exempt from receiving an Inactive handicap

### **How is the Inactive status of my handicap changed?**

Once the Handicapping Committee have agreed to make the change under one of the aforementioned situations, a manual override of the Inactive status can be made. All handicapping software has this written into their software.

### **Do NR's count towards my 3 qualifying scores?**

As all medal scores are transferred into Stableford points (Clause 19.8) it lessens the damage imposed on the player's scores because of one or two bad holes. If the Committee believes that the NR is a genuine score then this may be accepted. If however, the Committee are of the opinion a player has deliberately returned an NR or bad score, then they may refuse to accept this score and keep the player's handicap Inactive until they are satisfied genuine scores have been returned.

### **I have just changed Clubs. Do my qualifying scores returned at my old Club count towards an Active handicap?**

Yes. Qualifying scores returned at any Club in the UK shall count towards an Active handicap. It is not permissible for a Club to stipulate that only home qualifying scores are permitted for an Active handicap.

### **Why is the Active/Inactive system not in the CONGU Unified Handicapping System?**

The CONGU UHS is produced every 4 years with the next edition being published on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 as such the Active/Inactive system is not included. It is hoped that the system will replace Clause 25 currently only being adopted by Scotland.

### **How will an Away Club be able to identify whether someone has an Inactive handicap?**

Handicapping certificates, master handicapping lists, results sheets, the English Central Database of Handicaps (CDH) and ISV websites will all show an Inactive handicap.

### **Can someone build a handicap by returning 3 bad scores to gain an Active handicap?**

The returning of the 3 qualifying scores will not allocate a new handicap. They adjust the existing handicap and therefore can only increase the handicap by 0.3 (3 bad rounds x 0.1). The Handicapping Committee are also permitted to refuse a score if they are of the opinion that the player walked off the course or returned a bad score deliberately in an attempt to 'build a handicap'. If this is found to be the case disciplinary action may be taken against the player in accordance with Clause 24 of the CONGU UHS.

### **I am a category 1 golfer with an Inactive handicap. How can I get an Active handicap?**

As a Category 1 player you are currently not permitted to return Supplementary or 9 hole qualifying scores for handicapping purposes. In order to have an Active handicap you are therefore required to submit 3 scores in Club (Home or Away) qualifying competitions.