

Q.1 If our measured course has been inadvertently shortened does this affect the status of the competition being a Qualifying Competition played on the shortened course?

A.1 Clubs should endeavour to maintain their course at its measured length at all times for *Qualifying Competitions*. However, it is accepted that the placing of tees for competitions will be subject to many influencing factors, particularly the condition of teeing grounds, which may mean on some occasions the precise definition of the *Competition Tee* cannot be satisfied. This should not, of itself, render the competition *Non-Qualifying*. Such a tee placement may be regarded as temporary and the provisions of Clause 13.1 would then apply, provided that the 'Temporary' tee still meets the requirements of the *Rules of Golf*. Thus in instances where a tee(s), does not meet the precise *Competition Tee* definition, provided that the course is not shortened (or lengthened) overall by more than 100 yards (91 metres) the Competition should remain *Qualifying* and the allocated *Standard Scratch Score* will apply.

If for any reason the course has been shortened, or lengthened, by more than 100 yards (91 metres), but less than 300 yards (274 metres) overall, then the competition should be allowed to remain *Qualifying* even if the deviation is discovered after the competition has commenced. In such circumstances the allocated *Standard Scratch Score* should be reduced / increased by one as required by Clause 13.2.

It should be understood that in this context 'overall' refers to the total net change to the measured length with each reduction in hole length being subtracted from, and each increase added to the measured yardage.

Q.2 Parts of our course, including some tees get very wet in winter so we play off a shortened course with some artificially surfaced (e.g. 'Astroturf') tees. Can the club play Qualifying Competitions using this course?

A.2 Yes, provided that:

- a) The altered course has been allocated a Standard Scratch Score by the relevant Handicapping Authority
- b) All other Requirements for Competition Play Conditions are in place

Q.3 Parts of our course get very wet in winter and my club, in addition to allowing preferred lies, also allows relief for embedded balls anywhere 'through the green'. Can a club run a Qualifying Competitions when this local rule is adopted?

A.3 Yes, as such a Local Rule is allowed by Rules of Golf [(Appendix 1 Part B 4 (a) Relief for Embedded Ball; Cleaning Ball (page 131) 'when permission to take relief for an embedded ball anywhere 'through the green' would be warranted' then adopting this rule as a condition of the competition will not prevent it being a Qualifying Competition.

The Local Rule should be posted as follows:

'Through the green, a ball that is embedded in its own pitch mark in the ground may be lifted, without penalty, cleaned and dropped as near as possible to where it lay but not nearer the hole. The ball when dropped must first strike a part of the course through the green.'

Exceptions:

1. A player may not take relief under this Local Rule if the ball is embedded in sand in an area that is not closely mown.
2. A player may not take relief under this Local Rule if it is clearly unreasonable for him to make a stroke because of interference by anything other than the condition covered by this Local Rule.

Q.4 Would the introduction of a local rule permitting dropping the ball from the fairway into the 1st cut of rough, in order to protect the fairway, render its Competitions Non Qualifying?

A.4 Yes, Such a concession is not within the Rules of Golf. To make it a qualifying competition alternative solutions such as the use of preferred lies or fairway mats is required.

Q.5 Does the cutting of the rough/greens, or the watering of the greens, during a Competition render the competition Non-Qualifying?

A.5 No, Clearly the condition of parts of the course will have changed for some competitors. It would be better if the course condition were the same for all players, but sometimes, this not always possible due to course maintenance.

Q.6 Our Club uses some 'Artificially Surfaced' tees on concrete bases during the Winter which do not appear to comply with Rules of Golf Definition of a Teeing Ground. Does the use of such Tees prevent the Competition being Qualifying?

A.6 NO. Strictly according to paragraph [c] Decision 7(b) of the UHS Manual it may appear that the answer should be 'yes', unless the artificially surfaced base is at least 2 club-lengths in depth. However paragraph [d] does allow the use of a Teeing Ground that does not satisfy the requirements 'in exceptional circumstances'. When artificial tees are provided in winter to provide a durable teeing surface, because grass tees are out of play, this constitutes exceptional circumstances. Thus Medal Play Conditions still prevail, PROVIDED THAT ALL OTHER CONDITIONS ARE SATISFIED. The purpose of this decision is to help promote Qualifying Competitions in the winter.

Q.7 My Club uses Fairway Mats through the Winter Months. Does this prevent the Club playing Qualifying Competitions whilst they are in use?

A.7 NO. More and more clubs are using mats instead of preferred lies. Their use should be restricted to the same period (1st October to 30th April). The use of fairway mats requires Union/Area Authority permission. The Club must set out in the Conditions of the Competition the Local Rule for the use of Fairway Mats. This is similar to Appendix 1, Part B Specimen Local Rules; Local Rule 3c 'Preferred Lies' and 'Winter Rules'. The suggested wording is: Use of Fairway Mats: 'A ball that comes to rest on a closely mown area through the green must be lifted, placed on and played from an Astroturf mat. The Astroturf mat must be placed as near as possible to where the ball originally lay. The ball may be cleaned when lifted under this Local Rule.

If a ball when placed rolls from the Astroturf it may be replaced without penalty. If it still fails to remain on the Astroturf, the Astroturf must be moved to the nearest spot not nearer the hole where the ball, when placed on it, will remain at rest. There is no penalty should the ball move or be moved after being placed on the Astroturf and before making a stroke, including when addressing the ball or taking a practice swing.' The purpose of this decision is to help promote Qualifying Competitions in the winter.

Q.8 A number of bunkers on our course are being completely renovated; may we still run Qualifying Competitions?

A.8 YES, provided that the club has, in accordance with Decision 25/13, re-defined the bunkers being renovated as being through the green (thus removing their status as a hazard) and defined the relevant bunker areas as ground under repair. If the club does not re-define the bunkers as through the green they remain hazards, and players are required to proceed under Rule 25-1(ii).

Q.9 CONGU® directs a 3/4 handicap format in fourball betterball. Why then should a plus 4

handicap gain a shot and play off plus 3, should he not play off plus 5. Similarly a plus 2 handicap will play off plus 1, should he not play off +3?

A.9 The Council of National Golf Unions directs a 3/4 handicap format in fourball betterball as, statistically, the probability of a pairing achieving net birdie's and pars increases as the handicap of the second player gets higher (e.g. a 4&14 handicap pairing is more likely to score better than either 4&4 or a 14&14 pairings). Fractioning redresses this imbalance by giving some advantage **to the lowest handicap in the field** relative to the rest. Thus the principle is that the maximum "advantage" is given to the lowest handicap and this "advantage" tapers off until at the highest handicap it is zero. Decision 6(a) as stated maintains this principle as the example below illustrate.

Consider the following example where progressively Players A to F have lower handicaps in 4 stroke increments:

Player	Handicap	Full Handicap Allowance			3/4 Handicap Allowance		
		Gross	H'cap	Net	Gross	H'cap	Net
A	16	86	16	70	86	12	74
B	12	82	12	70	82	9	73
C	8	78	8	70	78	6	72
D	4	74	4	70	74	3	71
E	Scr-	70	0	70	70	0	70
F	-4	66	+4	70	66	+3	69

Under full handicap allowance all players return a net score of 70.

When the 3/4 handicap allowance is applied to the gross returns, the net scores result in a progressive bias in favour of the lower handicap player that can only be sustained at the "plus" handicap level by effectively increasing the handicap from +4 to +3.

The 3/4 allowance has been proved to operate satisfactorily in fourball better ball competitions. The above examples, however, clearly show the 'unfairness' of conducting a stroke, par or stableford competition by other than full handicap allowance.

Q.10 Our club has adopted a Local Rule in accordance with the provisions of the new Decision 14-3/0.5 of the Rules of Golf permitting the use of electronic distance measuring devices. Can competitions run under this Local Rule be Qualifying Competitions for handicap purposes?

A.10 Yes, providing all other conditions for running a Qualifying Competition are met, as per the Definition of Competition Play Conditions. Such competitions must be run in accordance with the Rules of Golf

Q.11 We run a 'Medford' competition (9 holes scored as stroke play and 9 holes as Stableford. The Stableford points are deducted from net stroke play score and the winner is the player with the lowest score). Can such a competition be designated a Qualifying Competition?

A.11

Directly no, but the computer program will probably not be set up to run such a competition. The results will have to be calculated manually. However, if you set the competition up as a Stableford, on the computer, and use the 18 hole Stableford scores for handicap purposes the scores are then essentially an 18 hole Stableford and are Qualifying for handicap.