

Q.1 Are there any circumstances under which our club can run stroke play competitions where Handicaps can be reduced but not increased? Examples would be a Five-Club competition and Winter Medals.

A.1 Absolutely not. A club committee has the authority to deprive certain competitions of their status as Qualifying Competitions provided they do so before play commences. When a competition is declared Non-Qualifying Handicaps can neither be reduced or increased. Competitors should be aware of this before play commences.

There are only two situations when Handicaps can be reduced but not increased. These are:

- A competition where application of the CSS calculation determines that the competition is Reduction Only (R/O)
- When a competition has been abandoned for any valid reason, reductions of handicap are made on the basis that the CSS is equal to the SSS.

It should be noted that a Five-Club competition is Non-Qualifying as it does not conform to the Rules of Golf.

Q.2 Why are there not more Qualifying Competitions

A.2 The spirit of the Rules is quite clear. It is that Clubs should run as many of their Competitions on a Qualifying basis as is reasonably possible. It is clearly not within the spirit of the Rules to deliberately adjust the terms and conditions of a competition, particularly open competitions, so that it is technically Non-Qualifying e.g. restricting the number of clubs to 13 or using a 3/4 handicap allowance. Our handicapping system produces fair and accurate results for frequent competitors, but suffers from lack of information about those who have a smaller record. The CSS system is meant to help to solve this problem by adjusting the scratch score to match the playing conditions. This means that clubs can continue to run Qualifying Competitions in bad weather without being unfair to any particular category of player. It is quite unacceptable to use Non-Qualifying scores for handicap adjustment as if they had been returned under Qualifying conditions. Such scores can be added to the player's record for later review, but that is all. Clubs are not permitted, under the UHS rules, to generate artificial 'reduction only' situations in this way. This practice could eventually undermine the integrity of the handicapping system.