

# FAIRWAY NEWS



**AUGUST  
2025**

## A lot happening!

There's been a lot happening at Sandy Golf Club this year and there's a bit more to go before the end of the year.

Internal to the Club the subsidised Moonah Links spots were snapped up continuing the Club's support for members through things like the Royal Melbourne lessons.

External to the Club Golf Australia is introducing a new digital home for golf on 2 October that will replace GolfLink, their current website and app. There will be impacts for members and competition scheduling at the time of changeover.

Also, later this year the Australian Open will be played at Royal Melbourne Golf Club from 4-7 December. Details of the impact on Sandy Golf Links is not known yet.

And then there is also...

## This Issue includes

A lot happening  
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## Register Please!

Course Management has asked that members register with the café/pro shop before they tee off.

Please take the time to let them know you are on course.



## It's that time! Membership Renewal

Annual Subscriptions (\$150) are due on or before 31 August 2025 for the membership year ending 31 August 2026.

Please contact the Treasurer if you have not received an email.

## Upcoming events

**9 August** Stableford, Captain's Trophy R3  
**16 August** JJ Meade 2-Ball Ambrose  
**23 August** Stableford, Singles Match Play R4 and Pairs Match Play R3 complete  
**30 August** Stableford  
**6 Sept** Stroke, VGL Medal  
**13 Sept** Par Club Medal  
**20 Sept** Stableford, Singles Match Play R5 and Pairs Match Play R4 complete  
**27 Sept** Stableford  
**4 Oct** Stroke, Star Medallists

*Recent Results*

- Extremely tough conditions kept scores low in the Stableford round on 7/6. So much so that the Daily Difficulty was assessed at the maximum of +3. Only one player scored 36pts and that was Bernie Bagley who took out the overall. A pair of 35pts saw wins for Cathy Dixon (Women's Division) and Craig Punshon (A Grade). Peter McLeod (34pts B Grade) and Vlad Dolnikov (28pts C Grade) were the other winners.
- There was slight uptick in the scoring on 14/6. Ian Nicholson took the overall honours with 38pts. Matthew Farrelly (37pts) was next best and won A Grade. Sarah Adam-Gedge (36pts Women's Division), Rod Bridger (35pts B Grade) and in an almost perfect progression Chris Taylor (33pts C Grade) were the other winners.
- Jeremy Matthews 44pts set a hot pace on 21/6 and won the overall. Dale Barratt also topped 40pts and his 41pts won A Grade. Angela Stein (37pts Women's Division), John Bris (39pts B Grade) and Thomas Sneyd (36pts C Grade) were the other winners. Allister Lahood scored an eagle on 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Thomas Sneyd went one better and won the overall on 28/6 with a phenomenal 46pts. Angela Stein(36pts) also backed up her previous week's good form by taking out the Women's Division for the second week in a row on a countback from Ruth Branagh. Timothy Strickland (39pts) and Ben Akdag(35pts) won A and B Grade respectively. It was great to see Jason Maynard(34pts) get the chocolates in C Grade after a long battle with health issues.

**THE PRESIDENT'S BLOG**

In the words of Led Zeppelin (I'm hoping that everyone remembers who they are) ..."There's a feeling I get when I look to the west"... and that look to the west is in hopeful anticipation of our weather patterns changing for the better and we start to get the welcome warmth of some Spring sunshine.



Nevertheless, our Sandringham fraternity keep backing up on a weekly basis for their golf fix, despite the vagaries of Melbourne's winter gloom...well done to everyone.

But, back on one of my hobby horses. Not personally being a very good bunker exponent and last Saturday having suffered the "joy" of failing to get out of a bunker due to a large unraked footprint, I once again implore all members to take advantage of the equipment where supplied (A RAKE) to leave the bunker in a state that is fit to play for those following.

The course is still paying well; however, I personally feel that it is starting to show signs of wear and tear and probably is as a result of the weather.

Having been away for the major portion of the last 2 months I have to excuse myself of not having a lot to report on, so I'll sign off, but let's not forget:

**The secret of playing good golf is to hit the ball hard, straight, and not too often!**

(I wondered what I was doing wrong!!)

Regards

Rob

### Recent Results (cont.)

- The Stroke Round on 5/7 saw Adam Canwell win the overall with a net 60. Close behind were Jason Gowie (net 61 A Grade), former Club Captain Colin Burge (net 61C Grade) and Michael Cripps (net 62 B Grade). Glenda McDade foiled Angela Stein's bid for 3 Women's Divisions in a row when she got over the line on a countback after both had scored a net 70. Eagles were scored by Andy Moratis (1<sup>st</sup> hole) and Sean Paterson (4<sup>th</sup> hole).
- Visitor Steve Savas equalled the Saturday best Stableford score on the new course with a hot 49pts on 12/7 to win the overall. Steven Crutchfield also played brilliantly and his 44pts won C Grade. Dale Gilkes also scored over 40pts and her 41pts won the Women's Division. Allesio Caneschi (39pts B Grade) and Guy Robertson (38pts A Grade) rounded out the week's winners
- The Par round on 19/7 was played in difficult conditions with a strong and blustery north/northwest wind. Only 2 players returned +scores. John McCarthy's +4 topped the field and won the Overall and the Club Medal. Peter Russell's excellent +3 won B Grade. Other winners were Dale Barratt (A Grade Sq) who beat Michael Kent on a countback, Nick Harridge (C Grade -3) and Sarah Adam-Gedge (Women's Division -4).
- The older part of the Sneyd family got the win on 26/7. Michael's (father to Thomas) excellent 43pts won the overall. Tony Turpin's 39pts was next best and won B Grade. Matt Scott (37pts A Grade) and Barry Russell (35pts C Grade) were the other winners.
- Visitor Steve Tomadin's net 60 won the Overall on 2/8. Colin Hunter's net 61 won the VGL Medal and B Grade. Other winners were Michael Kent (net 61 A Grade), Andrew Steggall (net 65 C Grade) and Lynda Douth (net 64 Women's Division).

### CAPTAIN'S CORNER

It's a bit early to call it spring, but the wattle and blossoms are out so that is close enough for me to start feeling happy about the onset of a new golfing season.



The match play competitions are nearing the final rounds and this year there have been quite a few forfeits as we are not allowing extensions to deadlines. Please make sure you schedule your matches early to maximise your chances of completing your match. We will also see the mixed pennant start in a few weeks and this will be an expanded format over last year as more clubs have joined.

Royal Melbourne will be hosting the Australian Open in early December and we expect to see some disruption to normal activities at the Sandy Golf Links. We are yet to be advised of the level of disruption, but this will be communicated to members once we know the details.

Another disruption to golf this year will be the launch of the new handicapping app by Golf Australia in September / October. We will see a 2-week outage of scores submitted for handicapping, but the club expects to continue with most competitions either with paper cards or via MiScore. Communications regarding the change start in the next few weeks.

Golf continues to change, rules get modified, champions come and go, and Presidential golf balls magically get found next to bunkers. But one rule remains the same. A bad day on the course is always better than a good day in the office.

Happy golfing.

Michael Kent



## News and Notes

### VGL Men's Team Event 31 August

The VGL conducts an annual Stableford team event for 4 players with prizes for team (best 3 score total) and individual. This year's event will be held at Melbourne Airport Golf Course on 31 August. Entries are \$180 and close on 25 August. Check the VGL website for details.

Note: The Club will reimburse members who enter VGL competitions. Contact

[Treasurer@sandringhamgolfclub.org.au](mailto:Treasurer@sandringhamgolfclub.org.au)

### Stand Alone Sunday Competition Now Running

The stand-alone Sunday competition is up and running and is averaging around 30 entries over the last 5 weeks. Prizes are 1st place \$60, 2nd \$40, 3rd \$20. No NTP.

### Do you know? Seniors/Concession Rates

Seniors and concession holders pay \$15 less for 18 holes all day Mondays and after 1pm Tues to Friday (except public holidays). Proof of age/concession status need to be supplied to the Pro Shop so it can be flagged in Quick18.

### SGC Bag Tags Available

Yellow SGC Bag Tags are available from the Pro Shop at no cost. Just ask the staff.

### How do you know who the members are when you book in Quick18?

The Club is asking members to edit their surnames in their Quick18 account by prefixing the surname with SGC. This idea helps new and existing members to identify fellow members when booking rounds.

### Club apparel

The Club has Men's and Women's Polos and Caps for sale. See April 2024 issue for pictures of these items or admire from afar fellow member who wear them with pride. To inquire or purchase Email:

[memberservices@sandringhamgolfclub.org.au](mailto:memberservices@sandringhamgolfclub.org.au)

## Competition News

### Match Play Competitions

#### John Pittard Singles Match Play

Unfortunately, the Pittard Match Play has been impacted by injuries and scheduling issues meaning some matches were forfeited or not completed on time. All 2<sup>nd</sup> round matches have been decided and there are two 3<sup>rd</sup> round matches that need to **be completed by 23 August**.

#### Ian Fraser Pairs Match Play

The match ups for Round 3 have been set after the completion of Round 2. Round 3 is due to **be completed by 23 August**.

**See later for match play draws.**

### LG McDonald Trophy

Congratulations to Chris Labour who won the LG McDonald Trophy on 2 August with a net 73.

### Founders Shield (Eclectic)

The Founders Shield is awarded to the highest Eclectic score in Saturday Stableford rounds from 1 January to the last round in September. An eclectic counts the best Stableford score on each hole. It basically tells you what you would score if you added all your best results over the period on each of the 18 holes.

With 5 Stableford rounds to go Thomas Sneyd (62pts) leads by 1pt from Peter McLeod with Alister Lahood and Gavin Kinnaird 2pts further back.

### Captain's Trophy

The Captain's Trophy is awarded to the highest aggregate score over three stipulated Stableford rounds. Monique Quinn and Sarah Adam-Gedge both on 69pts hold a 4pt lead over Bernie Bagley with the final round to be played on 9 August.



## Wednesday Whispers from the News' ace rolling reporter

- Mine host of the All Nations Hotel Bob Okane generously supplied playing partners with promotional badged umbrellas. All was going well until the 9th when after playing their drive Roly Spencer noticed his umbrella was missing. Thinking his teammates had played a trick on old Rol, after completing the hole he asked for the umbrella to be returned. Pleading innocence, the group spent 5 Minutes looking for the Umbrella and here is a picture of the Umbrella being retrieved from down near the driving range. Talk about spreading the All Nations word.
- Congratulations to Tom Tomlin with an Eagle 2 on the 18<sup>th</sup> on 11 June. A perfectly judged 9 iron from 110 metres out, one hop and straight into hole.
- On a recent Wednesday Tim Nash was looking for a wayward shot on the 4th hole and came across a Callaway Triple Track with the initials GM in Red. On the 5th hole Tim was in the scrub again and found another Callaway Triple Track with the initials GM in Red. Running out of Balls on the 6th hole Tim used one of the GM balls and was again amiss but **lo and behold** when he found the ball there was another GM ball within 4 feet causing all sorts of confusion.
- So for all the Geoffs, Garys (Garrys) or Graemes out there we know where the balls were lost! Or was it Graeme Marsh or even Greg Norman known as GM golf.



### Editor's Notes

1. The umbrella may have been a canny piece of product placement by the afore mentioned Bob but getting the story into Fairway News takes it to the next level!
2. You are only allowed 3 minutes to look for a lost ball. The R&A has been contacted to rule on whether 5 minutes looking for an umbrella breaches the Rules of Golf.
3. To help our rolling reporter in he and his playing partner's quest to find the wayward GM here is a list of SGC members with the initials GM. (Thanks to GT)

Geoff	Machirus	Graeme	Moncrieff
Geoff	Maynard	Gary	Mortlock
Glenda	McDade	Geoff	Moule
Garry	McDavitt		

## Walk off Hole in One – Pat Maginness

Congratulations to Pat Maginness who scored his second ever hole-in-one on the 9<sup>th</sup> hole on 12 July. This was no ordinary ace as it came on the last hole of a pairs match play round with the result of the match still in the balance. Leading 1 up Pat and his partner John McCarthy had just watched both their opponents (Tom Tomlin and James Mackie) find the green off the tee with Tom in great shape for a birdie only a couple of metres away from the pin. Pat stepped up and hit an easy hybrid, fading off the bunker and running up the green to the back left pin position. Tom was the only one in the group to feel the ball had gone in but sure enough it was at the bottom of the cup. Some way to end a match!



## And then there's this!

Not so lucky was Cris Payne who on the same day hit his tee shot way left on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Cris being the proper golfer he is promptly teed up a provisional ball and holed his 3<sup>rd</sup> shot for a par! This would have been Cris' 3<sup>rd</sup> hole in one had it come one shot earlier.

## State of play with Holes in One in SGC competitions since the new course opened.

	Date	Name	Hole	Hole	No. of Holes in One
1	9 January 2021	Helen Ansems	16 <sup>th</sup>	2	2
2	16 January 2021	Kevin Murran	16 <sup>th</sup>	7	2
3	7 July 2021	Neil Evans	11 <sup>th</sup>	9	4
4	26 March 2022	Andrew Kenny	11 <sup>th</sup>	11	5
5	17 September 2022	Anna Puchalski	7 <sup>th</sup>	12	1
6	15 October 2022	Colin Hunter	16 <sup>th</sup>	14	0
7	5 August 2023	Ruth Branagh	11 <sup>th</sup>	16	4
8	7 October 2023	Cris Payne	9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>
9	10 February 2024	Tony Morgan	16 <sup>th</sup>	Some things to note here. The 11 <sup>th</sup> has had 5 holes in one whilst the 14 <sup>th</sup> is yet to have any. There have been 5 holes in one in 2025 which is equal most in any year and we are still only in August.	
10	7 May 2024	Colin Hockley	2 <sup>nd</sup>		
11	11 May 2024	Damien Munro	11 <sup>th</sup>		
12	6 September 2024	Tom Tomlin	11 <sup>th</sup>		
13	24 September 2024	Mark Smith	9 <sup>th</sup>		
14	4 January 2025	Andrew Rumbelow	7 <sup>th</sup>		
15	9 March 2025	Dale Barratt	12 <sup>th</sup>		
16	18 March 2025	Mark Smith	9 <sup>th</sup>		
17	17 May 2025	Andrew Dempster(Vis)	2 <sup>nd</sup>		
18	12 July 2025	Pat Maginness	9 <sup>th</sup>		



## Massive Flood at Augusta National

Heavy early summer rains caused havoc at the iconic Augusta National Golf course home of the Masters.

As can be seen in the picture the famous Rae's Creek overflowed and appeared to cause significant damage. However, it appears the flood occurred when the site was already under construction for some off-season upgrades and this may have made it look worse than it was.



Augusta prides itself in presenting the course in pristine condition for the Masters going so far as (allegedly) to touch up bare spots with green paint and colour the water to achieve that Master's look. The Club also traditionally closes in May and doesn't reopen until the second Monday of October which seems a bit odd as the northern hemisphere summer is usually prime golfing time.

## Seasonal or Sinister

Members may have noticed a recent reduction around the course of the little corellas. The corellas and the galahs have wrought considerable damage on the fairways this year – probably the worse for some years. The recent lack of corella numbers may be due to seasonal factors as winter progresses and food sources change however there may be a more sinister reason.

In the middle of July around 200 little corellas were found dead and dying in Springvale South – in some cases birds were falling out of the sky onto passing traffic. Residents (myself included) around Parkdale/Moorabbin Airport have noticed a marked reduction in the birds since the incident and it's possible/likely that these birds also visited Sandy Golf Links at times.



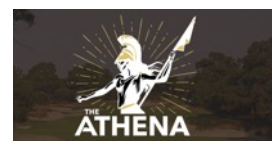
Whilst it may be beneficial to the course (although the galahs are still tearing up the fairways) this event was tragic and unnecessary. It is hoped that nobody took to heart the song of American satirist song writer Tom Lehrer who died recently at 97. One of Lehrer's most famous songs was "Poisoning Pigeons in the Park"!



*Footnote:* Lehrer was a classically trained pianist and prolific song writer and performer in the 1950s/1960s but then retreated from that career and spent most of his life teaching mathematics at college in the US. Some of his best known songs are: *We'll All Go Together When we Go*, *The Vatican Rag*, *Werner Von Braun*, *The Elements*. Wickedly clever and funny word play for the most part.

## That's the way to do it – Sandy's link to a major champion.

Back in February 2022 Sandy Golf Links was the venue for the second *Athena Golf Tournament* a hybrid event for Australia's best young female golfers. One of the contestants that day was a young Grace Kim.



In July this year Grace won the Evian, one of the LPGA's five major tournaments with an astonishing finish. On the Par 5 18<sup>th</sup> hole Grace went eagle (to tie the lead), birdie (first play-off hole), eagle (second play-off hole) to win the tournament.

The birdie on the first playoff hole had to be seen to be believed as Grace had put her second in the penalty area to the right of the green. After her penalty drop Grace holed her chip shot(r) across water to record a remarkable birdie. Her opponent Jeeno Thitikul holed a gutsy putt for birdie as well but couldn't match Grace's eagle on the next hole.



Others who competed at Sandy that day have also had great success. Cassie Porter plays on the LPGA Tour and has won on the Epson Tour (the feeder tour for the LPGA). Karis Davidson is on the LPGA Tour where she made 8 cuts in 11 starts in her debut year of 2022 and after struggling physically and mentally with touring golf, she took some time off and is playing well on her return to the tour in 2025. Kelsey Bennett and Kirsten Rudgley (who won the 2022 event) are both playing on the Ladies European Tour.

## Last of the Women's Majors

In the recently completed British Women's Open another young Australian golfer who's been seen at Sandy Steph Kyriacou finished tied for 8<sup>th</sup>. Kyriacou had an ace in the second round and then helped her playing partner Mimi Rhodes score an ace in the final round when Rhodes' ball kissed off Kyriacou's ball and into the cup on the 8<sup>th</sup> hole.

Minjee Lee finished tied 13<sup>th</sup> and completed a great year for Australian women golfers in the majors by winning the *ANNIKA Major Award* for the best performance across the five majors – to qualify you must have won one of the five. Minjee of course won the Women's PGA earlier this year (r).



## Mixed Pennant Season Commences 31 August

SGC's Mixed Pennant team will take to the course starting on Sunday 31 August. The team will play six home and away matches against Brighton, Tirhatuan and Australasian Golf Clubs.

The home matches are on 31 August, 5 October and 12 October commencing at around 8.40am if you feel like giving the team some support.

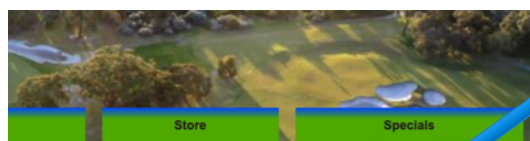
Good luck for the season to the team



## A tip for viewing the Saturday booking page – before and after the Wednesday night mayhem!

The new arrangements for Saturday play with bookings open for 9-hole play on the back nine up until 9am have made the booking sheet for Saturdays a bit confusing to look at. The default view at the time of booking has extra rows for the 9-hole slots and after the event when the back nine spots are not fully booked it does not show who has booked the 18-hole spots (see below). Note if there is an 18-hole vacancy they will appear but if you want to see who is playing and when it does not provide this as the default view. Below is a way to show 18 hole rounds only.

<div> <div>Jul 21 Mon</div> <div>Jul 22 Tue</div> <div>Jul 23 Wed</div> <div>Jul 24 Thu</div> <div>Jul 25 Fri</div> <div><b>Jul 26 Sat</b></div> <div>Jul 27 Sun</div> <div>Next</div> </div>							
Tee Time	Course	Booked Players	Players	9 Holes	9 holes Conc/Seniors	18 Holes	18 holes Conc/Seniors
7:32AM	Back 9	Ades, Daniel x 2	1 or 2 players	\$42.00 Select	N/A Rate not available for date selected	N/A Rate not available for date selected	N/A Rate not available for date selected
7:40AM	Back 9	Grivas, John WONG, ALLEN	1 or 2 players	\$42.00 Select	N/A Rate not available for date selected	N/A Rate not available for date selected	N/A Rate not available for date selected



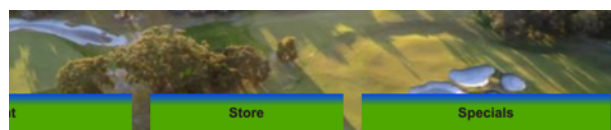
Tee Time Search:

Date: 26/07/2025

Courses: [All]

Time: Any Players: Any

Search Tee Times



Tee Time Search:

Date: 26/07/2025

Course: [All]  
Sandy Golf Links  
Back 9

Time: Any Players: Any

Search Tee Times

The drop-down menu(r) will show you options for *All*, *Sandy Golf Links* and *Back 9*. Click on the *Sandy Golf Links* and only the 18-hole spots and bookings will appear (below).

<div> <div>Jul 21 Mon</div> <div>Jul 22 Tue</div> <div>Jul 23 Wed</div> <div>Jul 24 Thu</div> <div>Jul 25 Fri</div> <div><b>Jul 26 Sat</b></div> <div>Jul 27 Sun</div> <div>Next</div> </div>							
Tee Time	Course	Booked Players	Players	9 Holes	9 holes Conc/Seniors	18 Holes	18 holes Conc/Seniors
7:32AM	Sandy Golf Links	SGC Mallen, David SGC Ford, Clayton SGC Lefebvre, James x 2		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
7:40AM	Sandy Golf Links	SGC McCarthy, John x 3 SGC Kinch, Mary		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

## Match Play Competition Status

### John Pittard Singles Round 2 Results

Matt Scott def Ash Nugawela (forfeit)	Mark Brooks def Don Tasevski (4 and 3)
Dan Harrison def Craig Brenner (1 up)	George Andreetta def Mark Johnson (Playoff)
Liz Tanzimat def Jenni Clarke (6 and 5)	Dale Gilkes def Michael Sneyd (1 up)
Geoff Maynard vs Tim Noonan (unplayed)	Ben Akdag def Paul Lennon (7 and 6)

### Round 3 Match Ups (due to be completed by 23 August)

Matt Scott vs Dan Harrison	Mark Brooks vs George Andreetta
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Due to scheduling issues both Liz Tanzimat and Ben Akdag are through to the semi-finals. Liz will play the winner of Matt vs Dan and Ben will play the winner of Mark vs George.

### Ian Fraser Pairs Round 2 Results

Ruth Branagh/John White	def (play-off)	Michael Kent/Tom Sneyd
Rod Bridger/Jeremy Matthews	def (1 up)	Dan Harrison/Andrew Ball
Cathy Dixon/Jenni Clarke	def (4 and 2)	Mark Johnson/Guy Robertson
Linda Best/Sarah Adam-Gedge	def (4 and 2)	Fiona Reynolds/Ruth McDonald
Don Tasevski/Gary Gibb	def (1 up)	Craig Brenner/George Andreetta
John McCarthy/Pat Maginness	def (2 up)	James Mackie/Tom Tomlin
Michael Sneyd/Matt Scott	def (3 and 2)	Jeremy Williams/Bruno Di Stanislo
Jamie Staib/Tom Rogacki	def (2 up)	Ash Nugawela/Liam O'Connor

### Ian Fraser Pairs Round 3 Match Ups (due to be completed by 23 August)

Ruth Branagh/John White	vs	Rod Bridger/Jeremy Matthews
Linda Best/Sarah Adam-Gedge	vs	Cathy Dixon/Jenni Clarke
John McCarthy/Pat Maginness	vs	Don Tasevski/Gary Gibb
Michael Sneyd/Matt Scott	vs	Jamie Staib/Tom Rogacki

### Fairway News Contributions and Feedback

Fairway News is always looking for contributions so if you have any comments, suggestions, photos have a Sandy golf story to tell or fancy a bit of creative writing please send it along to [newsletter@sandringhamgolfclub.org.au](mailto:newsletter@sandringhamgolfclub.org.au)

# The Fairway News Golf History Section

## 1. A history of golf handicapping

***“A handicap is intended to reflect a player’s potential not their average play.”***



1687

### Handicap by mutual agreement.

One of the earliest mentions of handicaps appears in the diary of an Edinburgh University medical student called Thomas Kincaid and references the best way to give strokes to prevent an opponent gaining too much advantage. He wrote:

*“At golf, whether it is better to give a man two holes of three, laying equal strokes, or to lay three strokes to his one and play equal for so much every hole.”*

Some handicap phrases you don't hear any more:

*“Half one”* - one stroke every two holes. *“third one”* - a shot every three holes, *“one more”* - a shot a hole, and *“two more”* - two strokes a hole.



1875

### Handicap by conclave

At a tournament in 1875 it appears the handicaps were decided in a town hall style meeting

*“The allowance given to each player was arranged in full conclave, and all had an opportunity of objecting to the smallness of their own allowance, either personally or by representatives, or also of demurring the contrary allowance; and any difference of opinion was settled by the vote of all present. The nearness of the (result) . . . demonstrates the advantage of settling handicaps by general consent, rather than leaving it to one or two.”*



1880s

### Handicap by average

By the early 1880s many clubs had started to use an average of a player's best three scores over the year to calculate a handicap for them. This letter of October 29, 1881, sets the tone for complaints about handicaps down the years:

*Sir: I greatly fear that the system of handicapping is such as to render it highly improbable that any but the best players will win.*

Another letter, published on September 10, 1887, proposed the idea of a centralized handicap authority for each country to establish scratch scores for courses and fix handicaps:

*I cannot but think it might be now desirable that there should be a central authority on golf, both in England and Scotland, more or less such as there is on curling in Scotland. A paid secretary for each would compile the handicaps of the various clubs . . . and would issue these at certain intervals.*

Who would have thought curling would have been ahead of golf?







*Early to  
mid 1900s*

### *Centralisation and standardisation*

One of the first steps towards achieving some comparability across clubs, golfers and courses was made by the Ladies Golf Union (LGU) in the UK. Led by Islette Pearson in the 1890s the LGU assigned course ratings to member courses instead of relying on them to determine their own standards and after 8 to ten years a reliable system was in place.

In the USA there was one central golfing authority – the USGA. This made it easier to centralise and standardise approaches to handicapping and starting in 1911 the USGA did just that.

The biggest development was a "par rating" system that assessed the average good score of a scratch golfer on every course, which made the handicap more portable. Having initially allowed clubs to determine their own par ratings, the USGA quickly changed their minds and began assigning ratings.

In the UK there were separate golf associations, and it wasn't until 1924 that they got together and acted to develop a "Standard Scratch Score and Handicapping Scheme" which was introduced in 1926.

*Note: the UK golf associations organisation come with the unlikely acronym CONGU – Council of National Golf Unions!*



*Late 20<sup>th</sup> and  
early 21<sup>st</sup>  
century*

### *Refinement and improving comparability and portability*

According to Wikipedia by the early 21st century, there were six major recognized handicapping systems in operation around the world: USGA Handicap System, EGA Handicap System (Europe), CONGU Unified Handicap System, Golf Australia Handicap System, South African Handicap System, and Argentinian Handicap System. All were grappling with common issues such as course ratings, standard scratch scores, how many scores to count and equitable score control (limiting the maximum score on each hole for handicapping purposes – e.g. no score more than a net double bogie would count).

The core of the Australian system in the late 1990s and 2000s was if the player's net score (gross score minus handicap) beat the competition standard scratch (CSS) of the day, their handicap would be cut. If it did not beat CSS and was not within a "buffer zone" of strokes above it, the player's handicap would go up by 0.1 of a shot. Australia's GOLF Link introduced in the 1990s was the world's first computerised handicapping system and contained two key characteristics that set it apart from other world handicapping systems at the time:

- It used a Calculated Course Rating (CCR) to determine how difficult the course was on the day, and upon which handicap adjustment was made.
- It utilized a 'swipe' card that enabled a player to access their handicap from any GOLF Link terminal in Australia.

In 1987 the Slope Rating System became part of the USGA Handicap System. It meant that a player would receive a different number of handicap strokes at different courses depending on their relative difficulty.



## World Handicap System

In February 2018 after a number of years in development the R&A and the USGA announced that the World Handicap System (WHS) would be launched in 2020

The WHS is based on the USGA Course and Slope Rating system and largely follows the USGA Handicap System while also incorporating features from the six major existing handicap systems. For example, 8 differentials (like the Golf Australia system) are used after net double bogey adjustments (like the CONGU and EGA systems) for handicap calculations, and the WHS course/playing handicap includes a course rating adjustment (like the EGA system).

Over time we are becoming more familiar with other elements of the system: the slow and hard caps, the exceptional score rule, expected score for holes not played, the ability to submit 9-hole and non-competition scores.

Gone are the days of a Club Handicap Committee sitting around deciding whose handicaps should change and that's a good thing.

### How's the World Handicap System been received?

***"WHS is stupidity hidden by complexity."***

In our little club land in Australia apart from some changes to existing handicaps at the time of introduction we probably didn't notice much difference. A lot of the concepts were already familiar. Not so in other countries.

In England in particular the changes were not that well received by some. A BBC article earlier this year on the status of the introduction highlighted some of the issues identified by English golfers:

- The ability to put in non-competition cards was enabling people to game the system – only putting in bad scores etc.
- Low handicappers had no chance of winning club competitions anymore.
- The maximum handicap was too high (54 in England apparently?)

The view seems to be that these issues have been exacerbated by the influx of new players to golf during and post Covid and that they can be addressed by local associations or clubs e.g. like we do at Sandy run competitions in Divisions and using the "Low GA Handicap" for handicaps in VGL pennant. Maybe it's just a case of golfers wanting to have something to whinge about rather than their own play!

In summary any handicap system must balance the needs of a wide range of golfers and to have their trust. The goal of most players is to play better golf which automatically means your handicap will come down whilst there are always some who will try and finesse the system to give themselves the best chance to win competitions and prizes in their local competitions and other more prestigious events.

Sources: Wikipedia, Pope of Slope website, USGA, Golf Monthly, BBC Sport, Golf Australia. The Pope of Slope site has copies of historical letters which gives a good flavour of the development of the handicap system particularly in the USA.

# The Fairway News Golf History Section

## 2. Where does Stableford Come from? And who won the first ever Stableford event?

Here at Sandy Golf Club, we play a lot of Stableford events, and this is probably true of most golf clubs here in Australia and the UK. Probably less so in the USA where the weekly club competition seems to have second place to money games.

But where did Stableford come from. The answer is the gentleman sitting back in the armchair reading the newspaper.

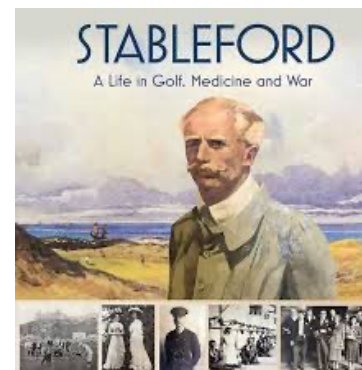


This gentleman glories in the name of Dr Frank Barney Gorton Stableford (1870–1959) and no he was not an armchair boffin dreaming up mathematical theorem to solve some academic problem. He was a man of action and an excellent golfer – a handicap of +1 in 1907 and club champion at Royal Porthcawl where the women's British Open has just been played. Dr Frank (Dr Stableford sounds a bit stagey!) served as a surgeon in the medical corps in the British Army in South Africa and during the First World War.

His scoring system was born out of frustration with the bogey system of scoring at that time, where the player played against the bogey (or par) for the hole. The strong winds at his home course made nonsense of this system when players were unable to reach the long par-4s in regulation. He was also wanted to deter golfers from giving up on their round after just one or two bad holes.

It took over thirty years for the system to be fully developed as he first informally tried an early version at the Glamorganshire Golf Club, Penarth, Wales, in 1898. The first recognised full Stableford competition did not take place until 1932 at Wallasey Golf Club in Wallasey, England where Dr Frank was a member.

Part of the reason why it took so long was that for Stableford to work you need a stroke index for each hole and as in the previous section a standardised approach to hole and course ratings had a long gestation.



Originally the system was met with scepticism as golfers thought it was much too complicated but once it was used in competition all doubts were erased.

The first Stableford competition was held on 16th May 1932, and the winner was a Mr Frederick Lister with a fitting score of 36 points.

***“I doubt whether any single man did more to increase the pleasure of the humble club golfer”***

***(Henry Longhurst)***

Sources: Wikipedia, Wallasey Golf Club, Bardwell Valley Golf Club. The lower image is the cover of a book about Stableford's life (\$31.64 on Amazon if anyone's interested!).