**Procedure for Monitoring and Dealing with Handicap Manipulation**

From research in Great Britain & Ireland, the R&A have identified concerns around the WHS and particularly the perception that a small minority of players are manipulating the system to improve their chances of winning amateur competitions. As a result, and in collaboration with England Golf, a campaign has been launched to address these concerns.

**Player Responsibilities**

A social media and e-newsletter campaign has been launched, directed at players, reminding them of their responsibility to follow the rules of the WHS and to act with honesty and integrity when entering both competition scores and general play scores.

**Handicap Committee Responsibilities**

Handicap Committees have been reminded about their responsibilities and asked to be vigilant in monitoring for manipulation and to take action if evidence of manipulation is found.

A number of reports are available from the WHS/England golf to help in the monitoring process and these will be reviewed on a regular basis by the NMGC Golf & Handicap Committee. Examples include:

* comparison of Competition scores and General Play scores
* General Play deleted score intents
* failure to submit General Play scores
* failure to submit a Competition score
* failure to complete a Competition round
* Handicap Review report

The following procedure will be applied if the Golf & Handicap Committee find evidence of handicap manipulation.

**Evidence of Handicap Manipulation (first time)**

The player will be invited to an informal interview to discuss/explain the evidence found.

**Evidence of Handicap Manipulation (second time)**

The player will receive an email with details of the evidence found and invited to a second interview to discuss/explain the evidence

The email will contain a warning that if this happens again, the Handicap Committee will consider disciplinary action.

**Evidence of Handicap Manipulation (third time)**

The player will receive an email with details of the evidence found and invited to a third interview to discuss/explain the evidence. If the player fails to attend the interview or fails to give a satisfactory explanation a penalty will be imposed.

**Penalties**

In accordance with the WHS Rules of Handicapping, penalty scores will be applied as follows (*ref 3 below*):

If a player is determined to have acted for the purpose of maintaining a low Handicap Index, the penalty will be to adjust the player’s HI index upwards

If a player is determined to have acted for the purpose maintaining a high Handicap Index, the penalty will be to adjust the player’s HI downwards

Further sanctions could include freezing a Handicap Index, competition bans for a set period, withdrawal of Handicap Index.

**Appeals Procedure**

The Handicap Appeals Procedure can be found on the England Golf Website (*ref 1 below*).

The New Mills Golf Club Disciplinary Policy can be found on the ClubV1 Members Hub:

Club/Documents/Club Policies

**References/Further Information**

[www.englandgolf.org](http://www.englandgolf.org)/WHS

1. *WHS Resource Centre – Handicap Appeals Procedure*

27 May 2025 (version 3)