

Summary of Key Changes – 2023 Inter-Club Competitions & Championships

INTER-CLUB COMPETITIONS

Introduction

Changes to Inter-Club competitions for 2023 follow consideration by the Championship Committee of feedback submitted by clubs (both directly to Golf Ireland and through a Survey conducted in November 2022 in which 249 clubs participated) on a range of issues, as well as a continual review of competition operations over the previous two years. The results of the survey are contained in Appendix 1 to this document.

An additional and wide-ranging three-year review of the inter-club suite will follow throughout 2023 which will be finalised after the conclusion of the 2023 season. Arising from the interim survey and the Championship Committee's continual review of competitions operations, there are a number of significant changes being introduced for next year's competitions:

a) General Requirements:

Following a significant amount of feedback, the Championship Committee have approved a streamlining of the eligibility requirements for inter-club competitions with a view to ensuring participation in the events is made as straightforward as possible. This relates specifically to the following:

- *The streamlining of handicapping requirements so that the player's lowest handicap index achieved in 2022 will be used to determine (where applicable) eligibility, handicap order, matching with partners in foursomes and four-balls, and shots to be given/received in all matches.*
- *The removal of the requirement for teams to play in handicap order in a number of events (AIG Women's Senior Cup, AIG Women's Senior Foursomes, AIG Women's Junior Foursomes and AIG Women's Revive Active Four-Ball). In addition, the requirements to play in handicap order in the Boys' Fred Daly Trophy have been significantly eased where matches are split between two clubs (e.g. three home/two away).*

b) Limitations on shots

Guided by the feedback from the survey, the number of shots that can be given/received will be further limited in the AIG Intermediate, Minor and Challenge Cups as well as the Revive Active Women's Four-Ball and the Fred Perry Trophy.

c) Widening of handicap bands in AIG Jimmy Bruen and Pierce Purcell Shields and merging of Men's Four-Ball and AIG Pierce Purcell Shield

For 2023, and on a trial basis, the AIG Pierce Purcell Shield will also incorporate the handicap cohort previously playing in the Men's Four-Ball, with the two competitions merged. Analysis of the past two years of data shows a significant amount of crossover in the players playing in Pierce Purcell and/or Men's Four-Ball and/or Fred Perry Trophy. Given challenges in the calendar, and prior to a full review of inter-club competitions in 2023, this measure will address fixture congestion while continuing to cater for these cohorts of players and ensure as many clubs as possible can be competitive in this competition.

In addition, the feedback from the survey indicated 70% of clubs have experienced difficulty in fielding competitive teams in inter-club competition. As part of this restructuring, the handicap eligibility bands for both the AIG Jimmy Bruen Shield and AIG Pierce Purcell Shield will be significantly widened and will, between them, take in handicap ranges that respectively stretch from 3.5-12.5 and 12.5-21.5. The AIG Jimmy Bruen Shield will remain a gross competition while shots (within a capped range) will apply in the AIG Pierce Purcell Shield, a measure that will ensure that the small cohort of clubs that has previously competed in the Men's Four-Ball but not the Pierce Purcell Shield will remain fully competitive in this event. Again, the changes to these bands is being introduced on a trial basis in 2023.

The full Competition Regulations will be published online at the end of January, and will also be published in the Golf Ireland Handbook, which will be distributed to all affiliated clubs in the first quarter of 2023. The Handbook will also be available to view online in the ClubHub on www.golfireland.ie.

Event / Regulation	Change	Background	Relevant Survey Data
General Eligibility (Regulation 1)	<p>It will now be a requirement that to be eligible to represent a club in any Inter-Club competition, a player must have been a member of that club on 30 April in the year of the event (irrespective of what 'membership year' this date falls in).</p>	<p>This reintroduces a provision previously covering inter-club competitions to ensure player pools available to clubs remain the same throughout the season.</p>	
Honorary Membership (Regulation 5)	<p>There are a number of competitions in which there are restrictions on Honorary Members representing a club. These will continue to apply in those applicable competitions (e.g. all Women's Competitions, Men's Senior Cup and Barton Shield, underage inter-club events). However, one regulation will apply to all of these competitions, which will require honorary members representing their club in any of these applicable competitions to have been a fee-paying member for not less than two years prior to conferral of honorary membership. As was the case last year, there will be no restrictions on honorary members playing in any other competitions.</p>	<p>Honorary Membership has been dealt with in different ways in different competitions – this introduces a single regulation for the applicable competitions.</p>	
Regulation F-1 (applying to all Women's Competitions)	<p>This states that a player must only represent one club in all singles inter-club competitions and one club in all foursomes competitions. This regulation will continue to apply in 2023; however, if a player who represents a club in one of the singles competitions wishes to play for another club in a singles competition where her first club has not entered, they will be permitted to do so.</p>	<p>For example, Player A represents Club A in the AIG Intermediate Cup. Normally she would be banned from representing another club in the AIG Junior Cup. However, her club has not entered the AIG Junior Cup, so under this new provision she would now be able to represent Club B, where she is also a member, in the AIG Junior Cup.</p> <p>This removes the unintended consequence of reduced playing opportunities for players who find themselves in this situation.</p>	
AIG Women's Senior Cup	<p>Changes to requirements on the Team Sheet: It will no longer be required to play teams in handicap order.</p>	<p>This will reduce the administrative requirements that may lead to disqualifications, as well as giving team captains strategic input into their line-up.</p>	<p>60% of Clubs surveyed favoured team captains having discretion over the Order of Play in general.</p>
AIG Women's Senior Foursomes	<p>Changes to eligibility requirements: To be eligible, a player must have 20 scores on their record by 31 Dec 2022. The player's lowest handicap index during the previous calendar year (2022) will be their handicap index for all purposes (eligibility, matching with partners, etc). Current Handicap Index will NOT be used in any of these respects.</p>	<p>As the World Handicap System continues to evolve, Golf Ireland continues to review the eligibility requirements and has decided that from 2023, this competition will require players to have a fully developed handicap record achieved. In addition, a full year's handicap data will be used to determine a player's handicap index – not just for eligibility purposes but for ALL applicable purposes in that competition.</p>	<p>55% of Clubs responding favoured streamlining the handicap requirements.</p> <p>The Championship Committee have also taken the feedback of Competition Convenors into account in making this change.</p>

Event / Regulation	Change	Background	Relevant Survey Data
AIG Women's Senior Foursomes (contd)	Changes to requirements on the Team Sheet: It will no longer be required to play teams in handicap order.	This will reduce the administrative requirements that may lead to disqualifications, as well as giving team captains strategic input into their line-up.	60% of Clubs surveyed favoured team captains having discretion over the Order of Play in general.
AIG Women's Junior Cup	Changes to eligibility requirements: To be eligible, a player must have 20 scores on their handicap record by 31 December 2022. The player's lowest handicap index during the previous calendar year (2022) will be their handicap index for all purposes (eligibility, matching with partners, etc). Current Handicap Index will NOT be used in any of these respects	As the World Handicap System continues to evolve, Golf Ireland continues to review the eligibility requirements and has decided that from 2023, this competition will require players to have a fully developed handicap record achieved. In addition, a full year's handicap data will be used to determine a player's handicap index – not just for eligibility purposes but for ALL applicable purposes in that competition.	55% of Clubs responding favoured streamlining the handicap requirements. The Championship Committee have also taken the feedback of Competition Convenors into account in making this change.
	Team Sheet Requirements: The team sheet will continue to require teams be played in order of handicap (but the handicap index used for this purpose will be the lowest during the calendar year 2022).		While 60% of clubs generally favoured no enforced Order of Play on team sheets, a majority of clubs favoured the retention of playing in handicap order when asked to consider this specific competition.
AIG Women's Junior Foursomes	Changes to eligibility requirements: To be eligible, a player must have 20 scores on their handicap record by 31 December 2022. The player's lowest handicap index during the previous calendar year (2022) will be their handicap index for all purposes (eligibility, matching with partners, etc). Current Handicap Index will NOT be used in any of these respects	As the World Handicap System continues to evolve, Golf Ireland continues to review the eligibility requirements and has decided that from 2023, this competition will require players to have a fully developed handicap record achieved. In addition, a full year's handicap data will be used to determine a player's handicap index – not just for eligibility purposes but for ALL applicable purposes in that competition.	55% of Clubs responding favoured streamlining the handicap requirements. The Championship Committee have also taken the feedback of Competition Convenors into account in making this change.
	Changes to requirements on the Team Sheet: It will no longer be required to play teams in handicap order.	This will reduce the administrative requirements that may lead to disqualifications, as well as giving team captains strategic input into their line-up.	60% of Clubs surveyed favoured team captains having discretion over the Order of Play in general.
AIG Women's Intermediate Cup	Changes to eligibility requirements: To be eligible, a player must have 20 scores on their handicap record by 31 December 2022. The player's lowest handicap index during the previous calendar year (2022) will be their handicap index for all purposes (eligibility, matching with partners, etc). Current Handicap Index will NOT be used in any of these respects. As was the case last year, players must be no lower than 13.0 during the period in question.	As the World Handicap System continues to evolve, Golf Ireland continues to review the eligibility requirements and has decided that from 2023, this competition will require players to have a fully developed handicap record achieved. In addition, a full year's handicap data will be used to determine a player's handicap index – not just for eligibility purposes but for ALL applicable purposes in that competition.	55% of Clubs responding favoured streamlining the handicap requirements. The Championship Committee have also taken the feedback of Competition Convenors into account in making this change.
	Limitations on the number of shots that can be given/received: While the eligibility handicap criteria will remain the same as above, the	Rationale – A recurring trend in feedback from teams participating in the All-Ireland Finals indicated that the regulations enabled the giving/receiving of too many shots in	The survey feedback suggested a limited intervention was called for in balancing the polar opinions of those who felt

Event / Regulation	Change	Background	Relevant Survey Data
AIG Women's Intermediate Cup (contd.)	<p>number of shots given or received will be limited further by the imposition of a maximum playing handicap, which will be 20. This means that any player whose lowest handicap index during 2022 gives them a playing handicap of more than 20 for the course on which the match will be played is still eligible to play but must drop down in playing handicap to 20.</p>	<p>the matches. The imposition of a maximum playing handicap for this competition will go some way to addressing this by reducing the maximum possible number of shots that could be given or received.</p>	<p>shots should apply and those who felt shots should be removed completely.</p> <p>45% of Clubs surveyed believed shots should apply while 30% felt they should be removed entirely. The remaining 25% felt that shots should be allowed, but on a more limited basis than currently.</p>
	<p>The team sheet will continue to require teams be played in order of handicap (but the handicap index used for this purpose will be the lowest during the calendar year 2022).</p>		<p>While 60% of clubs generally favoured no enforced Order of Play on team sheets, a majority of clubs favoured the retention of playing in handicap order when asked to consider this specific competition.</p>
AIG Women's Minor Cup	<p>Changes to eligibility requirements: To be eligible, a player must have 20 scores on their handicap record by 31 December 2022. The player's lowest handicap index during the previous calendar year (2022) will be their handicap index for all purposes (eligibility, matching with partners, etc). Current Handicap Index will NOT be used in any of these respects. As was the case last year, players must be no lower than 21.0 during the period in question.</p>	<p>As the World Handicap System continues to evolve, Golf Ireland continues to review the eligibility requirements and has decided that from 2023, this competition will require players to have a fully developed handicap record achieved. In addition, a full year's handicap data will be used to determine a player's handicap index – not just for eligibility purposes but for ALL applicable purposes in that competition.</p>	<p>55% of Clubs responding favoured streamlining the handicap requirements.</p> <p>The Championship Committee have also taken the feedback of Competition Convenors into account in making this change.</p>
	<p>Limitations on the number of shots that can be given/received: While the eligibility handicap criteria will remain the same as above, the number of shots given or received will be limited further by the imposition of a maximum playing handicap, which will be 28. This means that any player whose lowest handicap index during 2022 gives them a playing handicap of more than 28 for the course on which the match will be played is still eligible to play but must drop down in playing handicap to 28.</p>	<p>Rationale – A recurring trend in feedback from teams participating in the All-Ireland Finals indicated that the regulations enabled the giving/receiving of too many shots in the matches. The imposition of a maximum playing handicap for this competition will go some way to addressing this by reducing the maximum possible number of shots that could be given or received.</p>	<p>The survey feedback suggested a limited intervention was called for in balancing the polar opinions of those who felt shots should apply and those who felt shots should be removed completely.</p> <p>45% of Clubs surveyed believed shots should apply while 30% felt they should be removed entirely. The remaining 25% felt that shots should be allowed, but on a more limited basis than currently.</p>
	<p>The team sheet will continue to require teams be played in order of handicap (but the handicap index used for this purpose will be the lowest during the calendar year 2022).</p>		<p>While 60% of clubs generally favoured no enforced Order of Play on team sheets, a majority of clubs favoured the retention of playing in handicap order when asked to consider this specific competition.</p>
AIG Women's Challenge Cup	<p>Changes to eligibility requirements: To be eligible, a player must have 20 scores on their handicap record by 31 December 2022. The player's lowest handicap index during the</p>	<p>As the World Handicap System continues to evolve, Golf Ireland continues to review the eligibility requirements and has decided that from 2023, this competition will require players to have a fully</p>	<p>55% of Clubs responding favoured streamlining the handicap requirements.</p> <p>The Championship Committee have also taken</p>

Event / Regulation	Change	Background	Relevant Survey Data
AIG Women's Challenge Cup (contd)	<p>previous calendar year (2022) will be their handicap index for all purposes (eligibility, matching with partners, etc). Current Handicap Index will NOT be used in any of these respects. As was the case last year, players must be no lower than 28.0 during the period in question.</p>	<p>developed handicap record achieved. In addition, a full year's handicap data will be used to determine a player's handicap index – not just for eligibility purposes but for ALL applicable purposes in that competition.</p>	<p>the feedback of Competition Convenors into account in making this change.</p>
	<p>Limitations on the number of shots that can be given/received: While the eligibility handicap criteria will remain the same as above, the number of shots given or received will be limited further by the imposition of a maximum playing handicap, which will be 36. This means that any player whose lowest handicap index during 2022 gives them a playing handicap of more than 36 for the course on which the match will be played is still eligible to play but must drop down in playing handicap to 36.</p>	<p>Rationale – A recurring trend in feedback from teams participating in the All-Ireland Finals indicated that the regulations enabled the giving/receiving of too many shots in the matches. The imposition of a maximum playing handicap for this competition will go some way to addressing this by reducing the maximum possible number of shots that could be given or received.</p>	<p>The survey feedback suggested a limited intervention was called for in balancing the polar opinions of those who felt shots should apply and those who felt shots should be removed completely.</p> <p>45% of Clubs surveyed believed shots should apply while 30% felt they should be removed entirely. The remaining 25% felt that shots should be allowed, but on a more limited basis than currently.</p>
	<p>The team sheet will continue to require teams be played in order of handicap (but the handicap index used for this purpose will be the lowest during the calendar year 2022).</p>	<p>While 60% of clubs generally favoured no enforced Order of Play on team sheets, a majority of clubs favoured the retention of playing in handicap order when asked to consider this specific competition.</p>	

Revive Active Women's Four-Ball	<p>Changes to eligibility requirements: To be eligible, a player must have 20 scores on their handicap record by 31 December 2022. The player's lowest handicap index during the previous calendar year (2022) will be their handicap index for all purposes (eligibility, matching with partners, etc).</p>	<p>Golf Ireland continues to review the eligibility requirements and has decided that from 2023, this competition will require players to have a fully developed handicap record achieved. In addition, a full year's handicap data will be used to determine a player's handicap index – not just for eligibility purposes but for ALL applicable purposes in that competition.</p>	<p>55% of Clubs responding favoured streamlining the handicap requirements.</p> <p>The Championship Committee have also taken the feedback of Competition Convenors into account in making this change.</p>
	<p>Changes to requirements on the Team Sheet: It will no longer be required to play teams in handicap order.</p>	<p>This will reduce the administrative requirements that may lead to disqualifications, as well as giving team captains strategic input.</p>	<p>60% of Clubs surveyed favoured team captains having discretion over the Order of Play in general.</p>
	<p>Limitations on the minimum and maximum combined handicap indexes: While it will continue to be the case that a pair can be no lower than 19.0 combined, a pair can now be no higher than 36.0 when their two handicaps are combined (this is a reduction from 46.0).</p>	<p>Rationale – A recurring trend in feedback from teams participating in the All-Ireland Finals indicated that the regulations enabled the giving/receiving of too many shots in the matches. The imposition of a maximum playing handicap for this competition will go some way to addressing this by reducing the maximum possible number of shots that could be given or received.</p>	<p>The feedback suggested a limited intervention was called for in balancing the polar opinions of those who felt shots should apply and those who felt shots should be removed completely.</p> <p>45% of Clubs surveyed believed shots should apply while 30% felt they should be removed entirely. The remaining 25% felt that shots should be allowed, but on a more limited basis than currently.</p>

Event / Regulation	Change	Background	Relevant Survey Data
AIG Men's Junior Cup	<p>Changes to eligibility requirements: To be eligible, a player must have 20 scores on their handicap record by 31 December 2022. The player's lowest handicap index during the previous calendar year (2022) will be their handicap index for all purposes (eligibility, matching with partners, etc).</p>	<p>As the World Handicap System continues to evolve, Golf Ireland continues to review the eligibility requirements and has decided that from 2023, this competition will require players to have a fully developed handicap record achieved. In addition, a full year's handicap data will be used to determine a player's handicap index – not just for eligibility purposes but for ALL applicable purposes in that competition.</p>	<p>55% of Clubs responding favoured streamlining the handicap requirements.</p> <p>The Championship Committee have also taken the feedback of Competition Convenors into account in making this change.</p>
AIG Men's Jimmy Bruen Shield	<p>Changes to eligibility requirements: To be eligible, a player must have 20 scores on their handicap record by 31 December 2022. The player's lowest handicap index during the previous calendar year (2022) will be their handicap index for all purposes (eligibility, matching with partners, etc).</p>	<p>As the World Handicap System continues to evolve, Golf Ireland continues to review the eligibility requirements and has decided that from 2023, this competition will require players to have a fully developed handicap record achieved. In addition, a full year's handicap data will be used to determine a player's handicap index – not just for eligibility purposes but for ALL applicable purposes in that competition.</p>	<p>55% of Clubs responding favoured streamlining the handicap requirements.</p> <p>The Championship Committee have also taken the feedback of Competition Convenors into account in making this change.</p>
	<p>Changes to handicap range: While the lowest individual handicap index will remain 3.5, the lowest index for a pair will be increased from 14.0 to 16.0.</p>	<p>This change is intended to enable more clubs to be competitive by widening the pool of players applicable in this event. The effect of this change is to make the band for this event 3.5 – 12.5, with players with handicaps higher than 12.5 also able to compete (as it is a gross match play competition).</p>	<p>71% of clubs surveyed are having challenges in fielding teams for inter-club matches at least some of the time. This forms part, but not all, of the basis for this change.</p>
AIG Men's Pierce Purcell Shield	<p>Changes to eligibility requirements: To be eligible, a player must have 20 scores on their handicap record by 31 December 2022. The player's lowest handicap index during the previous calendar year (2022) will be their handicap index for all purposes (eligibility, matching with partners, etc).</p>	<p>As the World Handicap System continues to evolve, Golf Ireland continues to review the eligibility requirements and has decided that from 2023, this competition will require players to have a fully developed handicap record achieved. In addition, a full year's handicap data will be used to determine a player's handicap index – not just for eligibility purposes but for ALL applicable purposes in that competition.</p>	<p>55% of Clubs responding favoured streamlining the handicap requirements.</p> <p>The Championship Committee have also taken the feedback of Competition Convenors into account in making this change.</p>
	<p>Changes to handicap range:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lowest individual handicap index will increase from 10.5 to 12.5. The lowest combined handicap index for a pair will remain 25.0. A new highest combined handicap index for a pair will be set at 34.0. Shots will be given/received based on playing handicaps calculated from combined course handicaps. If a pair exceeds 34.0, they will still be able to play but their combined handicap index will drop down to 34.0. 	<p>This change is intended to enable more clubs to be competitive by widening the pool of players applicable in this event. The effect of this change is to make the band for this event 12.5 – 21.5, with players with handicaps higher than 21.5 also able to compete (but using the dropdown rule). The change will also extend the eligibility to ensure the accommodation of the cohort previously eligible for the Men's Four-Ball.</p> <p>The format will remain foursomes.</p> <p>This change is being introduced on a trial basis.</p>	<p>71% of clubs surveyed are having challenges in fielding teams for inter-club matches at least some of the time. This forms part, but not all, of the basis for this change.</p>

Event / Regulation	Change	Background	Relevant Survey Data
Men's Four-Ball	Discontinued in 2023	The above change to the AIG Pierce Purcell Shield effectively merges the Men's Four-Ball and Pierce Purcell competitions. Analysis of the past two years of data shows a significant amount of crossover in the players playing in Pierce Purcell, Men's Four-Ball and Fred Perry Trophy. Given the congestion in the calendar, and prior to a full review of inter-club competitions in 2023, this is seen as a measure to temporarily alleviate congestion while continuing to cater for these cohorts of players and ensure as many clubs as possible can be competitive in this competition.	71% of clubs surveyed are having challenges in fielding teams for inter-club matches at least some of the time. This forms part, but not all, of the basis for this change.
AIG Men's Fred Perry Trophy	Changes to eligibility requirements: To be eligible, a player must have 20 scores on their handicap record by 31 December 2022. The player's lowest handicap index during the previous calendar year (2022) will be their handicap index for all purposes (eligibility, matching with partners, etc).	As the World Handicap System continues to evolve, Golf Ireland continues to review the eligibility requirements and has decided that from 2023, this competition will require players to have a fully developed handicap record achieved. In addition, a full year's handicap data will be used to determine a player's handicap index – not just for eligibility purposes but for ALL applicable purposes in that competition.	55% of Clubs responding favoured streamlining the handicap requirements. The Championship Committee have also taken the feedback of Competition Convenors into account in making this change.
AIG Men's Fred Perry Trophy	Limitations on the minimum and maximum combined handicap indexes: The highest individual handicap index for a player is reduced from 28.0 to 24.0. Players above 24.0 can still play, but must drop down in handicap to 24.0. The highest combined handicap index for a pair is reduced from 42.0 to 36.0. No dropping down is allowed to ensure a pair is 36.0 (other than for a player to drop down to play off 24.0).	Rationale – A recurring trend in feedback from teams participating in the All-Ireland Finals indicated that the regulations enabled the giving/receiving of too many shots in the matches. The imposition of a maximum playing handicap for this competition will go some way to addressing this by reducing the maximum possible number of shots that could be given or received.	The survey feedback suggested a limited intervention was called for in balancing the polar opinions of those who felt shots should apply and those who felt shots should be removed completely. 45% of Clubs surveyed believed shots should apply while 30% felt they should be removed entirely. The remaining 25% felt that shots should be allowed, but on a more limited basis than currently.
Boys' Fred Daly Trophy	Change to order of play provision for matches split between two venues: It will no longer be required that the lowest three players play at the venue drawn at home. However, whichever players are selected for home and away matches must play in handicap order at the venue.	Arising from feedback in 2022, the change will provide clubs with more flexibility in terms of how they field their teams.	
Girls' Inter-Club	New provision requiring players to play for their Home Club: A player must compete for her Home Club (the club which controls and administers her handicap) should that club require	This addition aligns the provisions of the Girls' Inter-Club with those of the three underage Boys Inter-Club competitions.	

Event / Regulation	Change	Background	Relevant Survey Data
Girls' Inter-Club (contd)	<p>her to do so. If her Home Club does not require her to compete, a player may only compete for another club under one of the following scenarios: a) Her Home Club has not entered the tournament; b) The Player receives written permission bearing her Home Club's letterhead and signed by a Club Official confirming that such written permission is authorised by the Club. If required, a copy of the written permission from her Home Club must be forwarded to the opposing Team Captain and relevant Regional Office within four days of any request.</p>		

Event / Regulation	Change	Background	Relevant Survey Data
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CHAMPIONSHIPS

General applying to all Men's and Women's Bridgestone Events – Balloting and Handicap Indexes based predominantly on General Play Scores	<p>Players with more than four General Play Scores in their last 20, or with a handicap record with less than 20 scores, will be assessed to determine if their Handicap Index over-relies on General Play Scores. As a guide, a variance of up to two shots in the difference between a player's average score in General Play and their average score in Competition is acceptable.</p>	<p>This regulation will <u>not</u> mean players who wish to play in Championships will not be allowed to return General Play Scores, nor will it limit the number of General Play scores a player can return. Rather, it will ensure insofar as possible that where Handicap Index is used to determine qualification for Championship fields, a balance that includes scores in Competition will make up the Handicap Indexes of players who make the field.</p> <p>Further information on the application of this in Appendix 2.</p>	
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AIG Irish Men's Amateur Close	<p>Change in format from 36 holes of Stroke Play Qualifying followed by 6 rounds of Match Play to 72 holes of Stroke Play</p>	<p><i>Rationale – Following a High Performance Review and consultation with elite players, it has been agreed to trial this form for two years.</i></p>	
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AIG Irish Women's Amateur Close	<p>- Change in format from 2 rounds of stroke play qualifying in one day followed by 5 rounds of match play to 2 rounds of qualifying over the first 2 days followed by 4 rounds of match play - Qualifying mark reduced from 32 to qualify for the Championship and 16 for the Plate to 16 to qualify for the Championship and 16 for the Plate</p>	<p><i>Rationale – Following a High Performance Review and consultation with elite players, it has been agreed to trial this form for two years.</i></p>	
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Over-18 Women's Championship Series	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's & Girls' Championships were staged together in previous years – in 2022 the four Provincial Women's Championships will be staged as 18-hole Championships over one day. The Girls' Championships will be staged as standalone events over three days – one of these will incorporate match play and the other two will be three rounds of Stroke Play. • The Irish Women's Mid-Amateur Championship, inaugurated in 2022, will be an over-18 Championship over 54 holes and will serve as the final event in the Series 	<p><i>Rationale: Following a review by the High Performance Committee, the Series has been modelled on the success of the Rose Ladies Series in the UK, and is geared in large part to increase the number of championship players in the 18-49 age cohort, as these are currently under-represented</i></p>	
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Event / Regulation	Change	Background	Relevant Survey Data
Over-18 Women's Championship Series	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to the top-16 players qualifying for the match play stages, the next eight over-60 players in score order who don't finish in the top-16 will qualify to play match play (three rounds over the final two days) for the over-60s Trophy. 	<i>Rationale – To elevate the status of the over-60 Trophy, which was presented on the basis of two rounds of qualifying last year</i>	
Irish Senior Men's Amateur Close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to the top-16 players qualifying for the match play stages, the next eight over-60 players in score order who don't finish in the top-16 will qualify to play match play (three rounds over the final two days) for the over-60s Trophy. 	<i>Rationale – To elevate the status of the over-60 Trophy, which was presented on the basis of two rounds of qualifying last year</i>	
Irish Senior Men's Amateur Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The qualifying age has been reduced from 55 to 50. 	<i>Rationale – To bring into line with the age criteria for all other Seniors Championships and to ensure inclusion on the Order of Merit.</i>	
Irish Senior and Veteran Men's Amateur Close Stroke Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new, additional 54-hole Championship staged in conjunction with the Irish Senior Women's Amateur Open, with an overall over-50s trophy and a Veterans' (over-60s) Trophy, as well as awards presented to the leading players in the categories 65-69 and 70+. 	<i>Rationale – Restructuring of the Senior Championship programme will see this event introduced as an additional event to offset the reduction of regional Seniors Championships from 4 to 2. This also takes into account the introduction of two new Championships at Veterans' Level.</i>	

APPENDIX 1

Summary of the results of the Survey of Clubs issued in November 2022

Total number of clubs providing a full response: 249

One Handicap Index or Two?

- For the competitions where a lowest handicap index has been applied, **55%** of clubs favour one handicap index being used to determine all handicapping matters (ie, eligibility, shots given/received if applicable, and handicap order if applicable). 45% of clubs favour persisting with the method used in 2022.
 - Outcome: The Championship Committee have agreed to streamline that requirement to ease the administrative burden on team captains.

Teams in Handicap Order or Any Order?

- Clubs generally favoured Team Captains having discretion to field their teams in any order, with **60%** of clubs responding to the general question favouring any order and **40%** favouring handicap order.
- However, when asked with specific regard to the inter-club competitions, there was a much more even split in responses for Women's Competitions, while the clear preference in Men's Competitions was to play in any order. Additionally, a clear majority of clubs (54-57%) favoured handicap order in the AIG Women's Junior Cup, Women's Intermediate Cup, Women's Minor Cup and Women's Challenge Cup.
 - Outcome: Handicap Order will remain a requirement for the Women's Junior Cup, Intermediate Cup, Minor Cup and Challenge Cup, and for all All-Ireland underage competitions, while teams fielded in all other All-Ireland competitions can be fielded in any order (this means that, in a change, handicap order will not be a requirement in 2023 in the Women's Senior Cup, Senior Foursomes, Junior Foursomes or Revive Active Four-Ball).

Shots applying or not?

- Clubs were divided over whether shots should continue to apply in competitions where shots are currently given/received. 51% of respondents felt that shots should either be scrapped or limited further from the current allowances. Meanwhile 49% of respondents felt shots should continue to apply in their current allowances.
- When clubs considered each competition individually, the divide in opinion continued to prevail with regard to the Women's Intermediate, Minor and Challenge Cups, as well as the Revive Active Women's Four-Ball and Men's Fred Perry Trophy. This feedback is along the same lines as the general trends.
- Clubs generally favour shots being given on the same basis as before in the case of the Mixed Foursomes and the three underage inter-club competitions in which shots are currently allowed (with all having a majority of 54%-56% in favour of same, and with only 20%-22% calling for shots to be completely disallowed in those circumstances).
- Clubs generally favour the AIG Jimmy Bruen Shield remaining off scratch.
- Clubs were evenly split with regard to the AIG Pierce Purcell Shield, with 50% wishing for the event to remain off scratch and 50% asking for shots to be allowed (35% without any stated limitation and 15% with a stated limitation).
 - Outcomes:
 - The dropdown in handicap indexes that applied in the Intermediate, Minor and Challenge Cups have now become maximum playing handicaps that can apply in a match. This, combined with the change to one handicap index applying for every aspect of the competition, will ensure a more restrictive cap on the number of shots that can be given or received in a match.
 - The Revive Active Women's Four-Ball and Fred Perry Trophy will both see changes in upper and lower handicap limits both of pairs and players, and also will introduce a cap in the difference between the handicap indexes of two players playing together as a pair. While these interventions will not remove the possibility of a high number of shots being given or received, they will reduce the possibility.
 - Part of the rationale for the change in the AIG Pierce Purcell Shield is derived from the data here.

Advice Givers, Caddies and Tie Holes

- There was no great appetite among the clubs surveyed for any changes in the provision of Advice Givers (89% in favour) or Caddies in the competitions for which they are currently

allowed (66% in favour). In addition, clubs continue to favour matches being played to a conclusion, if necessary with tie holes required (74% in favour).

- Outcome: No change is proposed on any of these issues.

Team Sizes and Fielding Teams

- Clubs were satisfied with the size of teams in each competition; however, 70% of clubs surveyed indicated that they had experienced difficulties in fielding teams at least some of the time and 17% of participating clubs frequently experiencing such difficulties.
 - Outcome: Part of the rationale for the change in the AIG Pierce Purcell Shield is derived from the data here.

Format of Competitions

- Golf Ireland continues to track the views of clubs with regard to the range of possible formats for inter-club competitions.

The five options provided in the 2022 survey were:

Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
Matches split between two venues (ie, three at home and two away)	Matches played at one venue (ie, five matches at the club drawn at home)	Matches played at a 'third venue' (ie a standalone match played at a venue neutral to the two teams)	A number of rounds played over a weekend	Matches played over two legs (ie, five at home and five away)

2022 – Overall Responses

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
Overall Responses (First Preference Vote)	71/100 43%	53/100 6%	67/100 23%	57/100 15%	51/100 14%
	1	5	2	3	4

2022 – Regional Breakdowns

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
Connacht (First Preference Vote)	84/100 56%	46/100 13%	66/100 13%	58/100 13%	48/100 6%
	1	5	2	3	4
Leinster (First Preference Vote)	85/100 58%	54/100 3%	65/100 25%	55/100 9%	43/100 5%
	1	4	2	3	5
Munster (First Preference Vote)	46/100 11%	64/100 11%	70/100 20%	78/100 49%	44/100 9%
	4	3	2	1	5
Ulster (First Preference Vote)	69/100 40%	49/100 4%	69/100 23%	48/100 2%	67/100 32%
	T1	4	T1	5	3

Comparison with 2021 Survey

In November 2021, Golf Ireland asked clubs to consider a similar range of options. The trends are broadly in line:

Overall –The option for split venues (or 3 at home and 2 away) remains consistently the most preferred option by clubs across Ireland in the results of both surveys (43% in 2022 and 38% in 2021). The options for standalone matches at neutral venues and for a number of rounds played over a weekend are the second and third preferences respectively in both surveys.

Regional Breakdown –

- Option A (3 at home and 2 away etc) is comprehensively the preferred option of a majority of clubs in Connacht and Leinster in both the 2021 and 2022 surveys. It also has the strongest overall rating in these regions. It also gathered the most first preferences in Ulster in 2022 – as was the case in 2021, although its overall rating has dropped slightly and it is virtually tied in the 2022 survey with Options C and E in that region.
- Option D is comprehensively the preferred option in Munster in both the 2021 and 2022 surveys.
- Option C is the second-most popular option in the 2022 survey in Connacht, Leinster and Munster and virtually tied as the most popular option in Ulster (along with Option A and Option E) both in terms of first preferences and overall ratings. This position is slightly different from 2021, when a range of options occupied second place in the regions.

APPENDIX 2

Balloting and Handicap Indexes based predominantly on General Play Scores

The World Handicap System facilitates and encourages the return of General Play Scores as a way of ensuring players' Handicap Indexes are as current and responsive to their ability as possible. This is a facility that is available to all golfers worldwide and without restriction, irrespective of their ability – and this will continue to be the case.

However, where Handicap Index is used to determine the ballot for a Championship field, it is important that these Handicap Indexes reflect players' demonstrated ability in Competition Play – as well as General Play.

For 2023, a new measure will be introduced, following guidance from the Handicap Operations Committee (which includes representatives from all of the handicapping authorities worldwide). This measure will be implemented in events on the Men's Bridgestone Tour and the events which Golf Ireland runs on the Women's Bridgestone Tour. It is aimed to ensure that in the event of oversubscriptions, determinations based on Handicap Index will include checks to ensure that Handicap Indexes are achieved using a balance of scores that is reflective of a player's form in Competition play.

In these competitions, and where this determination is required, it is important to note the following:

1. For eligibility purposes, there is no limit to the number of General Play Scores that a player can return – nor is there a set number of Competition Scores that a player needs to have returned.
2. Where a player has returned four or more General Play Scores in their last 20 counting rounds, or where a player has less than 20 scores on their Handicap Record, the event administrator in conjunction with Golf Ireland's Championships Department will review the player's full record to ensure that the player's Handicap Index is based proportionately on Competition Scores as well as the General Play scores returned.
3. This review will take place at the close of entries, and may mean either the relegation of a player from the Championship field to the waiting list or the withdrawal of a player's entry. The circumstances in which such a course of action would apply include:
 - a. There is a significant variance in the differentials achieved by a player in General Play and Competition and
 - b. This will have a material impact on the ballot (ie other players with Handicap Indexes which have a more proportionate basis in Competition play do not qualify for the field as a result.

The key message here is NOT that the return of General Play Scores should somehow be limited to a certain number, or banned outright. Rather, it is to ensure that players who qualify for elite Championships have a Handicap Index which sufficiently relies on scores achieved in Competition.

Every player who aims to participate in a Golf Ireland Championship on the Bridgestone Men's or Women's Tour in 2023 should check their handicap record and ensure that their handicap index does not overly rely on scores achieved in General Play. Consider the following questions:

- **Do you have four or more General Play Scores in your last 20? If so:**
 - Are your General Play Scores significantly better (ie, more than two shots better on average) than your scores recorded in Competition? OR
 - Are most of your last 20 scores General Play Scores? OR
 - Are the majority of your eight counting scores from General Play Rounds?
 - **If the answer to any of the three questions above is YES, ensure you play more Competition Rounds in advance of the deadline for entries for the next Bridgestone Tour event you wish to enter.**
- **Do you have less than 20 scores on your Handicap Record? If so:**
 - Are your General Play Scores significantly better than your scores recorded in Competition? OR

Are the majority of your counting scores from General Play Rounds?

- **If the answer to any of the two questions above is YES, ensure you play more Competition Rounds in advance of the deadline for entries for the next Bridgestone Tour event you wish to enter.**