

South West Federation Clubs' Zoom Meeting 8.3.22: Handicapping

Another informative meeting for us at which 15 member clubs were represented.

Our Chair, Tony Mayer, welcomed everyone and stressed the importance of getting handicapping right and expressed amazement that anyone would be disappointed if their handicap were reduced – it is an indication of improving play!

Notices

Before getting onto the main business here are the notices that were given out:

- We were very sad to hear that **Julie Horsley** has passed away. She was well known across the South West Federation for managing many of the SWF Short Croquet and other club Tournaments, and as Secretary of the Federation. An obituary will appear in Cygnet.
- And **Donald Gugan**, our Development Officer back in the 80's died in mid-December – again we will be presenting an obituary in Cygnet.
- Contrary to expectations, **Advantage GC** has been accepted as a valid game this year by the CA and clubs may use this format for internal competitions. The SWF will not be using it in Leagues this year but will be considering its use for next year.
- **GC Rules:** the new rules were published by the WCF today and will come into force in England on 27th March. They may be found at: <https://worldcroquet.org/croquet-information/golf-croquet/the-rules-of-golf-croquet/>
Among the changes:
 - A new term has been introduced – Annul – which means the turn never happened and provides a simple solution e.g. some occasions when a ball is played out of order
 - Winner of the toss can decide whether to go first or second

SWF Coaching 2022 – this is a long story and for reasons beyond our control and despite a really successful programme last year, we will not be able to start our coaching programme as early in the year as we had hoped.

Our aim is still to run a further Club Coaches Course and a Level 1 Coaches Course and we ask clubs to let us know if any of their members would like to attend these.

Contact Paul: paulwfrancis@icloud.com

Club Matters

Sport England are running a series of workshops for clubs considering their legal structure and wanting to improve so do check them out: <https://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com/club-matters-workshops/legal-structures-workshops/>

April Zoom

We are really pleased that **Nottingham CC** will be attending – they are a flagship club that has made huge improvements in terms of facilities, funding and working with schools; and it was all kicked off by Club Matters. Hear about what they've achieved and ask questions. We're also hoping that Beatrice McGlen, Chair of CA Exec will be present.

So, we're expecting a grand turn-out at 7.00pm on Tuesday 12th April which will be our last regular Zoom until the autumn – so let's make it a goodie.

Handicapping

Brian Fisk, CA Handicapper and member of the CA Handicapping Committee, then outlined the content of his video presentation which all handicappers and those interested in the topic are encouraged to watch. It may be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3pXni-78HKA>

Further information may be found on the handicapping pages on the CA website:

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/handicapping>

A few years ago, following the SWF series of handicapping workshops, Brian was asked to review the documents and perhaps convert these to a half day course which might be presented anywhere across the country. Covid put a stop to that but resulted in the video.

The workshop manual produced by the SWF may be found at:

<https://www.swfcroquet.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Workshop-manual-amended-201903.pdf>

Brian is happy to advise on handicapping matters but asks that queries are initially dealt with at Federation and CA Handicapper level initially.

Tony noted that the SWF is happy to send a handicapper to a club to help assess handicaps.

The family of handicappers

- Club handicappers who are appointed by the Club and have the responsibility to ensure each member of the club has the right handicap.
- Federation handicappers are appointed by the Federation, have defined responsibilities and offer support to club handicappers, aiming to ensure that handicaps are consistent across the region.
- CA handicappers are appointed by the CA and have further powers to change handicaps.
 - The CA aims to ensure there are sufficient CA handicappers in any region to provide the support and guidance needed.
- Tournament handicappers have limited roles as described in Tournament Regulations.
- CA Handicapping Committee – for support, guidance and decision making.
- CA Council / Executive would be the final arbiter if needed in any dispute or decision

Handicappers may work with AC, GC or both if their skills allow.

Club handicappers

- Club handicappers are responsible for handicaps of all club members and should be actively undertaking this role, having a good understanding of games played both on and off the card.
- They have clearly defined limits to their ability to change a player's handicap and there needs to be a very good reason to change it – much better to let the AHS do the work.
 - One good reason is where there is a rapidly improving player
 - NB: A bandit is the result of a handicapper not doing their job!
- Individual club members have the responsibility of ensuring they engage with the club handicapper in the event of any concerns.

Questions

A new club has assessed initial handicaps for players. No card games have yet been played but standards have improved during the winter. Is it possible for club handicappers to change the handicap by one step?

This is strongly discouraged. But do consider moving two steps!

What skills are expected for GC at each level – this is set out for AC but only the 3x round test is available for GC?

This is not Brian's area of knowledge – need to ask GC handicapper.

What if clubs' handicaps are internally consistent but not across clubs?

This is not easy to do – the system is devised to work on a larger scale across the country. Tournament play begins to identify these and certainly the SWF analyses League results to identify clear discrepancies.

Another possibility is to hold inter-club friendlies.

How should you handle a situation where a player does well in friendlies but not in card games? Other club members complain but evidence covers only a small number of games, mostly internal.

There appears to be insufficient evidence to justify a change so do nothing. Some players are just more relaxed in friendlies. Maybe other players should be asked what evidence they have that indicates a change is needed.

Dave Kibble suggested they are pointed in the direction of a good coach.

How should a handicapper monitor their own handicap?

They shouldn't. Get another handicapper to do it.

It was noted that if a player has a completed card with several games on it, and they win and lose about half of their games, then they are on the right handicap. This applies even if they appear to play better (or worse) than that, or get lots of extra strokes.

It was also Brian's view that it is better if high handicappers both have bisques in a game. For this you use a Base (e.g. 11½) and give each player the number of bisques for their handicap minus the base. The SWF already do this in the B League.