



re: Summary of Israel Golf Federation Management regarding the
AEGEAN Airlines ProAm 2015 Matter

This summary is being written with a heavy heart.

The series of events described below does not bring credit on the golfing world in Israel, on the Israel Golf Federation (the Igud) nor on the members involved in the case. There is no doubt that the conduct of all those concerned caused a situation, that a case the handling of which could have been concluded within a few days, was dragged on for over a month and a half. Sore wounds were opened and damage was caused to golf in Israel generally, to the Igud and to the players involved, in particular. The *Igud HaGolf* will carefully examine its own conduct in this issue with the aim of drawing conclusions from it and applying the lessons learnt.

We call upon all those involved to relate to this summary as a final chord in this sad case and to work together for the good of golf in Israel. The Igud is the only body that can promote golf in Israel and achieve its advance and progress and internal struggles and a continuation of the leveling of mutual accusations will simply lead to all of us coming out the losers.

Golf around the world and in Israel conducts a unique system which makes it possible for players of all levels to compete on the golf course. This system is known as "handicap", which is based on mutual trust and integrity as well as on reliable and high-quality handicap management. There can be no dispute that the aspect of handicap is the life-blood of amateur golf around the world. The Israel Golf Federation, which is in charge of maintaining this system in Israel on behalf of the EGA (European Golf Association) has worked, is working and will continue to work to maintain a proper and credible handicap system in Israel.

Details of the case:

- In June 2015 11 amateurs from Israel left to play in a ProAm tournament in Greece.
- At the end of the tournament and after publication of the results, the Igud discovered that three amateurs (all members of the same team) of the 11 amateurs who participated had played off handicaps substantially higher than those to which they were entitled at that time according to the Igud's records.
- An investigation conducted by the Igud revealed that the change in handicap had been made by the handicap manager of the Igud at the request of the professional who headed that team of amateurs.
- When the parties concerned were confronted with the facts, the amateurs contended that they did not know about the change which the handicap manager had made at the request of the professional and denied that they had played off a handicap to which they were not entitled.
- The handicap manager and the professional confirmed that the changes in handicap had been made **without the knowledge of the amateurs.**
- When the details were first discovered, the Israel Golf Federation did everything in its power to persuade the parties involved to announce that they were renouncing their victory which had been obtained improperly and in that way to put an end to the case. However all this was in vain.
- Accordingly the Igud management decided on June 30 to instruct the chairmen of the Igud to send a letter to the tournament organizers and to notify them of the facts that had been discovered.



- After publication of the Igud management's decision of June 30, another meeting was held with the players involved in an attempt to persuade them to give up the victory, coupled with accepting their contentions that they did not know about the change that had been made in their handicaps and that the change that was made was under the Igud's responsibility. Again, this attempt was in vain.
- Immediately after the Igud's letter to the tournament organizers was sent, the players involved began a slanderous campaign against the Igud and the persons who head it and made critical and disparaging remarks about the handicap system in Israel.
- In the course of the case being dealt with in the various ways, a request was received from the PGA of Europe to examine the correctness of the handicaps of all the teams from Israel that had played in ProAm competitions in 2014 and 2015. The examination revealed that in all 3 ProAm tournaments in which the professional had participated, all the amateurs who went as part of the professional's team, played off handicaps significantly higher than those registered with the Igud at that time. All the aforesaid changes in handicap were made by the above-mentioned handicap manager who served, prior to his appointment to the position in the Igud in January 2015 as handicap manager at the Caesarea Club.

After the PGA of Europe's decision was taken on August 3 regarding acceptance of the self-disqualification of the team which had won the competition in Greece (and not accepting its waiver), on the grounds of doubt regarding their handicaps, the following are the conclusions and decisions of the Israel Golf Federation management:

Conclusions:

- **The Israel Golf Federation takes responsibility for its part in the series of acts that relate to the tournament in Greece described above by virtue of it being the party responsible for the issue of handicap certificates commencing from January 2015.**
- As a lesson from this case a special procedure has been specified and implementation thereof has begun in order to prevent a recurrence of situations such as this in the future.
- The conduct of the professional in this case is contrary to the rules of golf and to the rules of etiquette that apply in the game of golf.

Both the request to increase handicaps of players improperly, as well as signing a scorecard even with the clear knowledge that the players in his team played off a handicap higher than that to which they are entitled, are improper acts.

- The Igud condemns various statements that were published by ordinary members, some of which were accompanied by photographs and verbiage which it would have been better not to have been published.
- **All the actions of the chairmen of the Igud in their handling of the subject were in accordance with the decisions of the Igud's management.**



Decisions:

1. The management of the Israel Golf Federation adopts verbatim the notification by the PGA of Europe dated August 3, and as far as the Igud is concerned the winning of first place by the team in the tournament in Greece is void.
2. The Israel Golf Federation condemns the conduct of the professional throughout the entire case, both his professional behavior before and during the tournament as well as his conduct *vis-à-vis* the Igud and its organs after discovery of the matter. The Igud will send a copy of this document to the management of the PGA in Israel.
3. The Israel Golf Federation decides that, **subject to the holding of a hearing**, the handicap manager, who resigned immediately after the case was blown open, cannot serve in any official position in the Igud or be elected to any of its institutions for a period of 5 years.
4. The Igud management makes a finding that the conduct of the 3 amateur players since the facts became known *vis-à-vis* the Igud, as this behavior has received expression in a campaign of public smearing and libel, does not accord with what is expected from a member of the Igud and the management calls upon them immediately to desist from the continued slanderous campaign against the Igud and its chairmen.
5. In view of the disparities discovered in the handicap of the player Guy Benhamou as between the Igud's records and the information received from Europe (both in an examination the Igud was called upon by the PGA of Europe to conduct in regard to the ProAm competition in Turkey in February 2015 and also in the ProAm tournament in Greece in June 2015), the Igud management rules that the player will be called for a hearing prior to a decision being taken as to whether he can represent Israeli golf in the IP tournament in Spain in October, even though he won the Israel Pairs championship with Yoav Shenhav.
6. The management of the Israel Golf Federation instructs and empowers the chairman of the Igud to take steps to restore the confidence of the various bodies in Europe in the handicap system in Israel.
7. The management sees fit to reiterate and to remind all members of the Igud that **responsibility in regard to handicap is that of the player and of him alone**. Any player who plays off a handicap higher than that to which he is entitled is disqualified without reference to the reason why he played with an incorrect handicap.
8. The Igud management refers to the audit committee of the Igud with a recommendation to examine and investigate the sequence of events in the case, the conduct of all the parties involved in the issue (the chairmen of the Igud, members of the Igud management and Igud members who were involved in the case) and to submit an audit report with its recommendations by September 10, 2015.

The management of the Israel Golf Federation regards this decision as putting an end to the case and it calls upon all the parties involved in the matter to put this unfortunate event behind us. The Igud calls upon all its members to work together towards building up an accurate and reliable handicap system for all golfers in Israel in order that we can all say unequivocally – we "believe in handicap".

LET US ALL ACT FOR THE SAKE OF GOOD AND BETTER GOLF IN ISRAEL !!!

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