

ASSOCIATION CROQUET HANDICAPPING SYSTEM

BRIEF HISTORY

Early 90's The handicap system went from -5 to 15. There was no index system and the members of the H&S attended tournaments, observed the players, and the handicaps were adjusted accordingly.

Mid 90's As the negatives caused some confusion it was decided to add 5 to the system ie to have a 0 to 20 system but there were still no indices.

Late 90's Queensland produced a computer program with an index system from 0 to 20 based on the UK system. It was offered to the ACA as an Australian handicapping system but it was rejected as they were looking at their own, based on the NZ and UK system combined.

NZ Handicapping System

In 2003 the NZ croquet players had handicap problems so the NZ Croquet Council set up a Review Committee to examine their current system and to make recommendations for improvement. In Dec 2004 they accepted the suggested changes which was mainly aimed at encouraging the beginners to progress through the early ranks at a faster rate to play with better players. They referred to them as "rapid improvers". This was achieved by introducing the "no loss of points" idea when a game was lost.

In Sept 2005, with the new system operating, a new card was issued to all match players and it was so successful it is still currently in use today.

The ACA Handicapping System

In August 2004 the ACA introduced the Australian Handicapping System (AHS) as a six month trial. Handicaps went from -3 to 24 with accompanying indices from 3050 to 850. In Queensland the newly appointed State Handicapper (Ernie Melville) toured the state to introduce the new system and to explain the use of the card. Generally there was a feeling of rejection particularly as the 12 to 24 went up in 'twos', meaning that a single handicap step offered two bisques instead of one. Also, the 22 and 24 handicaps were not popular, and the printing on the card was small and not easy to read.

A special computer program accompanied the AHS, designed for State Handicappers to enter all competition results, assuming the players handicaps would change automatically. Unfortunately, the program did not work as planned, and at the 2006 ACA annual dinner in Adelaide the ACA President Gary Fox admitted that the proposed "Australiawide handicap recording system" had failed, and he suggested that **"the states should do their own thing"**.

The Queensland System

Following this encouragement from the ACA President, Qld adopted the NZ system, with other suggested improvements put forward by the Qld players. Firstly a new more readable card was produced, indicating no loss of points for 4th Division players when they lost a game, and allowed a loss of only half the points for 3rd Division players.

Players were not happy giving two bisques for a single step in a handicap game. To solve the problem, the Sunshine Coast Region abandoned the handicaps and adopted their own **"step system"**, assuming one bisque per step, while the Gold Coast Region **refused to play** pennants for nearly two years (2004 to 2005). The solution came with a request from this Region to reinstate the odd number, 13, 15, 17, 19, which actually has no effect on the rise and fall of the index.

Queensland Computerised Handicapping

In 2005 a Qld programmer (Mike Finch) wrote a program to automatically change the player's handicap as the tournament results were fed in for analysis. Although it duplicated the card results, it allowed the H&S to publish a competitors ranking system on the CAQ web site for all players to see. The ranking system was updated quarterly. It was programmed to operate on the ACA or the CAQ card. Although the CAQ card has some additional information, **every index number on the ACA card is shown on the CAQ card unaltered.**

Abolition of the Qld System

In early 2008 without any consultation with the H&S Committee, the Qld handicapping system was abolished, on the unproven assumption that the 1st and 2nd Division player's handicaps would be seriously affected. This assumption was later proven to be untrue, and the Qld players were not happy with the change as the ACA card reinstated the extra bisque problem.

Comparison of the ACA and the QLD Card

To prove that the changes to the 4th and 3rd Division player's handicaps **Did Not** affect the 2nd and 1st Division handicaps, the same games were analysed over a six month period using the ACA and the Qld system. **This analysis, based on real games, proves all of the system claims.**

MAY to JULY 2008

(242 match players --- 22 tournaments --- 1055 games)

	ACA CARD	QLD CARD	
DIV 4	77	67	ACA card did not move any players to Div 3
DIV 3	72	79	<u>Qld card automatically moved 12 players to Div 3</u>
DIV 2	60	63	Qld card caused minimal effect on 2 nd and 1 st Div
DIV 1	33	33	Div 1 unchanged
TOTAL	242	242	

AUGUST to OCTOBER 2008

(270 match players --- 27 tournaments --- 597 games)

	ACA CARD	QLD CARD	
DIV 4	86	78	ACA card did not move any players to Div 3
DIV 3	79	87	<u>Qld card automatically moved 9 players to 3rd Div</u>
Div 2	68	69	Qld card caused minimal effect on 2 nd and 1 st Div
DIV 1	37	36	Div 1 had minimal changek
TOTAL	270	270	

The current Queensland Handicap Card

When new players register with the CAQ they have to be given a handicap and index so that they can be entered into the Qld computerised system. Competitive or match players need a card to record index or handicap changes after each game, however, social or non-competitive players do **not** need a card, but they are given a starting handicap of 20 – 950. When they enter a competition their handicap becomes 18 -1000, unless the club captain assigns a lower handicap to suit their ability. **The current QUEENSLAND HANDICAP CARD, is designed mainly to help and encourage the 3rd and 4th Div players, in handicap and level play tournaments.**