

Treatment of 9-Hole Scores Under the World Handicap System™

What happens when a 9-hole score is posted for handicap purposes?

Beginning in 2024, when a 9-hole score is posted, the WHS™ will automatically calculate an 18-hole Score Differential for the round, based on the player's 9-hole Score Differential and expected Score Differential based on their current Handicap Index®, allowing the 9-hole round to be considered in the player's Handicap Index calculation right away.

Score Differential
from 9 holes played

+

Expected 9-hole
Score Differential

=

18-hole
Score Differential

This new method allows the Handicap Index of all players, whether they played a 9- or 18-hole round, to be updated the day after a score is posted.

What is an "Expected Score"?

An expected score is the score a player is expected to achieve over a specified number of holes on a course of standard difficulty. It is based on the average Score Differential of players with a given Handicap Index and a normal distribution of scores.

By using expected score to convert a 9-hole score into an 18-hole Score Differential, good 9-hole rounds (relative to the player's ability) will result in good 18-hole Score Differentials, average 9-hole rounds will result in average 18-hole Score Differentials, and so on.

Can I see an example?

A player with a Handicap Index of 14.0 posts a 9-hole score of 41. Based on the Course Rating™ and Slope Rating™ of the tees played, this results in a 9-hole Score Differential of 7.2. That value is then added to the player's expected 9-hole Score Differential to determine an 18-hole Score Differential of 15.7, which will be entered into the player's scoring record immediately.

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT
Yardage	393	133	257	378	155	416	357	3030		
Par	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	35		
Stroke Index	5 *	17			15	3 *	13			
<i>Player A</i>	4	4			5	4	5	3	41	

9-hole Score
Differential
7.2

+

Expected 9-hole
Score Differential
(for 14.0 Handicap
Index player)

=

18-hole
Score Differential
15.7

What are the benefits of this change?

- This change benefits the many players who regularly play and post 9-hole rounds because it is more responsive. Players will no longer have to wait for another 9-hole score to be posted for an 18-hole Score Differential to be calculated.
- This change provides a better indicator of how a player will normally perform over 18 holes on a given day when compared to combining 9-hole scores from different days and under different playing conditions.
- This new method produces a more consistent and comparable Handicap Index for those who post 9-hole scores.
 - » Prior to 2024, the order in which the 9-hole scores were combined could add volatility to the Handicap Index.
 - » It was also common for two good 9-hole scores to combine and produce an 18-hole Score Differential which was lower than any of the Score Differentials based on an 18-hole score in the player's scoring record - which resulted in a Handicap Index that may be difficult for the player to play to.