

Rule prior to the 2024 revision: For a 9-hole score to be acceptable for handicap purposes, a player is required to play at least 7 holes under the Rules of Golf and can apply net par for any holes not played.

Once a 9-hole score is posted, a 9-hole Score Differential™ is created, and either:

- Combined with an existing 9-hole Score Differential (if available) to produce an 18-hole Score Differential, OR
- Combined with the player's next 9-hole Score Differential to produce an 18-hole Score Differential.

Rule change for the 2024 Revision: For a 9-hole score to be acceptable for handicap purposes, a player must play all 9 holes from tees with a published 9-hole Course Rating™ and Slope Rating™.

When a player posts a 9-hole score, 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.

The player's Handicap Index is used to determine their expected Score Differential for the number of holes not played.

Expected score is defined as: The score a player is expected to achieve over a specified number of holes on a course of standard difficulty. It is calculated using the player's Handicap Index and attributes a numerical value against any hole or holes not played during a round.

Reasons for change:

- This treatment of 9-hole scores is more responsive since players will no longer have to wait for a second 9-hole score to be posted for an 18-hole Score Differential to be created and used in their Handicap Index calculation.
- It provides a better representation of how a player will normally perform over 18 holes on a given day, compared to combined 9-hole scores made on different days and under different playing conditions.
- This method produces a more consistent and comparable Handicap Index for those who post 9-hole scores. For example, prior to 2024:
 - Combining two independent 9-hole scores often results in more volatility with the Score Differentials and is highly dependent on the order in which scores were combined.
 - It is also common for two good 9-hole scores to be combined and produce an 18-hole Score Differential that is better than any of their 18-hole scores made over 18 consecutive holes. The impact of this scenario could lead to an artificially low Handicap Index for the player.