

# Exceptional Score Reduction under the World Handicap System™

## What is an exceptional score reduction?

**Exceptional score reduction (ESR)** is a safeguard built into the Handicap Index® calculation.

A good score will usually lower a player's Handicap Index. However, if the score qualifies as exceptional, an additional reduction is applied to better reflect the player's demonstrated ability.

## When does an ESR apply?

If a Score Differential™ is 7.0 strokes or better than your Handicap Index at the time of play.

There are two levels of reductions:

- **7.0 - 9.9 strokes better** ➡ **-1.0** applied to each Score Differential in your scoring record\*.
- **10.0 strokes or better** ➡ **-2.0** applied to each Score Differential in your scoring record\*.

\*The scoring record is the score that triggered the ESR + previous 19 posted scores (total of 20 scores). If fewer scores exist, the reduction applies to all available scores.

## Can I see an example?

A player with a Handicap Index of 9.7 posts an exceptional score on November 5. Let's see the impact:

Posted New Score		ESR Applied		Summary
Date Played	Score Diff.	ESR	Score Diff. (reduced)	
Nov. 5	2.1	-1.0	1.1	Handicap Index at time of play: 9.7 Triggering Score Differential: 2.1 Difference: 7.6 strokes better - 1.0 ESR applies  Handicap Index after revision: 7.6 (Without the ESR, the H.I. would have been 8.6)
Oct. 29	14.8	-1.0	13.8	
Oct. 16	9.7	-1.0	8.7	
Sept. 21	11.3	-1.0	10.3	
...	...	...	...	
Apr. 28	8.3	-1.0	7.3	

*Illustrative only - (...) represents scores 5-19 in the scoring record*

## What else should I know?

- Any ESR is clearly marked in the scoring record - typically denoted with an "E".
- While uncommon, multiple exceptional scores will lead to cumulative reductions.
- Future Score Differentials won't be reduced (unless they also qualify as exceptional) - allowing the impact of the ESR to fade over time.

For more information or to learn more about the WHS,  
visit [usga.org/whs](https://usga.org/whs)

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