

Holes Not Played under the World Handicap System™

Can a score count for handicap purposes when 10-17 holes are played?

In most cases, yes—provided at least 9 holes played correspond to a 9-hole Course Rating™ and Slope Rating®, and the round was shortened for a valid reason, such as inclement weather or a match where the players stop playing after the outcome has been decided.

➔ A score must be posted using the hole-by-hole method when 10-17 holes are played.

How is an 18-hole Score Differential™ calculated for a 10-17 hole round?

An 18-hole Score Differential is calculated by combining the player's Score Differential for the holes played with an expected Score Differential for the holes not played.

Score Differential
from holes played

+

Expected Score Differential
for holes not played

=

18-hole
Score Differential

What is an expected score?

A player's expected score is based on the score a player is expected to achieve on a course of standard difficulty, over the number of holes not played. It is based on the average Score Differential of players with a given Handicap Index® and a normal distribution of scores.

An expected score can be thought of as a neutral value, with a premium placed on the player's results on the holes that were played.

Can you show an example in a scoring record?

When you play 16 holes and post a score, you'll see:

- **Your score** (e.g., 70) with **the number of holes played**
- **The 18-hole Course Rating™ and Slope Rating®** for the tees played
- **An 18-hole Score Differential**, created by combining:
 - The Score Differential from the holes you played
 - An expected Score Differential based on your Handicap Index and two holes not played
(Together, these produce an 18-hole Score Differential of 9.6 in this example)

Type	Date	Score	C.R./Slope	PCC	Diff
A	7/20/2025	86	69.2/127	—	15.8
A	7/15/2025	70 ₍₁₆₎	68.9/121	—	9.6
H	7/10/2025	85	71.5/129	—	11.8

(This graphic is for illustrative purposes and does not represent a full scoring record.)

For more information or to learn more about the WHS, visit usga.org/whs