

2024 WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM™ REVISION

QUICK REFERENCE FOR GOLF CLUB ADMINISTRATORS



The USGA and The R&A announced key changes to the WHS™ that went into effect within the United States on **January 16, 2024**.

This resource is designed specifically for your staff and Handicap Committee to help address the questions you will most likely receive from your members and guests.

New treatment of 9-hole scores

9-hole scores are no longer combined in the order that they are received. Instead, when a 9-hole score is posted, the 9-hole Score Differential™ from the round played is added to the player's expected Score Differential over 9 holes, which is based on their Handicap Index®, to determine an 18-hole Score Differential for immediate use. For a 9-hole score to be acceptable, all 9 holes must be played on a rated tee set.

Two updates have been made to handicap allowance recommendations

1. Clarification C/1 of the *Rules of Handicapping* provides guidance on adjusting the allowance for an individual stroke play competition based on the size and makeup of the field.
2. In four-ball match play, the 90% handicap allowance is now applied to the difference in Course Handicap™ between players, rather than to each individual (see Appendix C).

For players with an uncombined 9-hole score as of January 16

The score was:

- Discarded if the round was played prior to January 1, 2024*, or
- Converted to an 18-hole Score Differential if the round was played between January 1 and January 15 of 2024.

* This did not apply to golfers who have not yet established a Handicap Index.

New Handicap Review tools are in the works

To assist your Handicap Committee with carrying out its responsibilities, new Handicap Review tools will be provided to all golf clubs beginning this spring that identifies players in need of attention and will provide a recommended Handicap Index adjustment based on scoring data.

New treatment for holes not played

When 10-17 holes are played, players are required to post their scores hole-by-hole. This is because the player's Score Differential from the holes played is added to their expected Score Differential over the number of remaining holes to create an 18-hole Score Differential for the round.

The USGA Handicap Committee Guide is within the *Rules of Handicapping*

The digital version of the [Rules of Handicapping](#) has been updated to reflect the 2024 changes. The USGA Handicap Committee Guide can be found in Section VI of the digital version.

Scores made at shorter length courses are now acceptable

The minimum length requirement for a course to obtain a Course Rating™ and Slope Rating™ has been reduced to 750 yards for 9 holes and 1,500 yards for 18 holes – meaning players can use their Handicap Index and post scores from shorter tees and par-3 courses that have been issued Ratings.

For more information

Reach out to your local Allied Golf Association. For a directory of AGAs, visit usga.org/aga. You may also find resources at usga.org/whs.

