

THE HANDICAPPER

Decisions by
The USGA
Handicap Committee

Example of symbols: "58-1" means the first decision issued in 1958. References: "Men" and "Women" relate respectively to the USGA Golf Handicap System for Men and The Conduct of Women's Golf.

Nine-Hole Handicaps For Nine-Hole Players

USGA Handicap Decision 58-1
References: Men - Section 10-1d
Women - Section 20-1d

Q.1: What is the USGA policy concerning use of 18-hole handicaps in nine-hole events (both match and stroke play), and vice versa?

A.1: Handicaps computed under the USGA Handicap System are 18-hole handicaps, and should not be halved for nine-hole play. The reason for this is that if the two nines of an 18-hole course are not of equal playing difficulty, a player using one-half of his 18-hole handicap would be under-handicapped on the harder nine and over-handicapped on the easier nine. If the two nines are of equal playing difficulty, as probably would be the case on a nine-hole course played twice, players with 18-hole handicaps that are in odd figures (such as 11, 17, 23) would have an advantage if the fraction resulting from halving their handicaps is counted as a full stroke, or they would be at a disadvantage if the fraction is eliminated from consideration.

It is suggested that nine-hole handicaps be computed for use in nine-hole events. They should be based on the course rating (playing difficulty) of the nine holes on which the scores are made. If one nine of an 18-hole course is harder than the other, scores made on the harder nine should be handicapped on the playing difficulty of that nine. The same principle applies to 18-hole scores, where, for example, the rating of one course may be 73 and of another course 68.

A nine-hole handicap should not be doubled for 18-hole play, nor should an 18-hole handicap be halved for nine-hole play.

Q.2: If only 18-hole handicaps are available and a nine-hole match is to be played, how should the allowance between the players be determined?

A.2: Lacking information on which to assign each player a nine-hole handicap outlined in A1 above, it is suggested that the total of each player's 10 lowest 18-hole differentials (on which his 18-hole handicap has been based) be divided by 2 and the resulting figure be applied to the USGA Handicap Differential Chart. Convert fractions of .5 to the next higher whole number.

Example:

Total of player's 10 lowest 18-hole differentials	315
Divided by 2	157.5
Convert to	158
Applied to Chart gives a nine-hole handicap of	14

If the total of the 10 lowest 18-hole differentials is not available, it is suggested that all the differentials that would give the player his 18-hole handicap be averaged, the average be divided by 2, and the resulting figure applied to the USGA Handicap Differential Chart to obtain his nine-hole handicap.

Example:

Differentials for player's 18-hole handicap of 26 from 307 to 318	
Average	312.5
Divided by 2	156.25
Convert to	156
Applied to Chart gives a nine-hole handicap of	13

After each player has been assigned a nine-hole handicap, the allowances for the type of event to be played shall be determined in accordance with Section 10-2, 10-3 or 10-4 in the USGA Handicap System for Men.

For players with fewer than 25 differentials posted, follow procedure outlined in Section 6-2.

PLEASE NOTE: Regardless of how determined, a nine-hole handicap is strictly for local use and shall never be called a "USGA Handicap."

Nine-Hole Handicaps On USGA Slide Rule

Handicap Decision 58-2

References: Men - Section 6
Women - Section 16

Q: On the USGA Slide Rule Handicapper, if the figures in Columns A and B were halved, as well as the handicaps, would we have a good working system for nine-hole handicaps? If not, what figures would you suggest?

Question by: H. DUDLEY DARLING
Juniper Hill Golf Course
Northboro, Mass.

A: The USGA Slide Rule Handicapper can be used as is to obtain either 18-hole or nine-hole handicaps. For an 18-hole handicap, use the 10 lowest 18-hole differentials; and for a nine-hole handicap, use the lowest nine-hole differentials.

The rules for computing the handicap of a player with fewer than 25 differentials apply equally to 18-hole handicaps and nine-hole handicaps.

For your information, a USGA Handicap is determined by multiplying the average of the lowest 10 of a player's last 25 handicap differentials by 80%, and then adding one stroke, discarding fractions of less than .5 and converting fractions of .5 or more to the next higher whole number. This computation formula, in effect, means that in a match between two players of unequal ability, the poorer player receives a handicap equal to 80% of the difference between the 10-best-score averages of the two players.

PLEASE NOTE: An 18-hole handicap shall not be halved for nine-hole play, nor shall a nine-hole handicap be doubled for 18-hole play.

18-Hole Handicaps Requires 18-Hole Scores

Handicap Decision 58-3
Section 4

Q: May a USGA Handicap be computed from nine-hole scores?

A: No. Scores used in computing USGA Handicaps must be 18-hole scores made when the 18 holes are played in immediate succession; a nine-hole course must be played twice in immediate succession.

Women Playing off Men's Tees Require Separate Rating

Handicap Decision 58-4

References - Men: Section 18-1
Women: Section 27-1

Q: What would be an equitable adjustment for a woman shooting from men's tees and being handicapped from women's course rating? We have several women here who play with their husbands and other men and shoot from men's tees, and these ladies have asked me to get a ruling.

Question by: MRS. HERBERT STAATS,
Chairman, Course Rating Committee,
Women's Southern California
Golf Association.

A: The only equitable way to handle this is to have your Women's Association establish a separate rating for the course from men's tees. This rating, when deducted from a woman's score, will provide the proper handicap differential to be entered into her scoring record.

Status of "Penalty" Handicaps

USGA Handicap Decision 58-5
References: Men - Section 8-3b
Women - Section 18-3b

Q: It appears that lowering a handicap on a player's certificate or card as a penalty might at times allow him to enter events for which he would not otherwise be qualified. Should the penalty be reflected on the local handicap board for inter-club matches only?

Question by: GARLAND R. JONES
Chairman, Handicap Committee
Elizabeth Manor Golf & Country Club
Portsmouth, Va.

A: Such a handicap should be acceptable for all competitions unless the local committee has a rule to the contrary.