Number of Available 9-Hole Scores	Number of Scores Used in Base Calculation	Score selection for use in Base Calculation	Graphical Example - Best scores to the left and worst scores to the right Scores used are in Red
1	1	Use Best 1	*
2	1	Drop Worst 1	**
3	2	Drop Worst 1	***
4	2	Drop Worst 2	****
5	3	Drop Worst 2	*****
6	4	Drop Worst 2	******
7	4	Drop Worst 3	*******
8	5	Drop Worst 3	********
9	5	Drop Worst 4	*********
10	6	Drop Worst 4	**********
11	7	Drop Worst 4	**********
12	7	Drop Best 1 & Worst 4	**********
13	8	Drop Best 1 & Worst 4	**********
14	8	Drop Best 1 & Worst 5	**********
15	9	Drop Best 1 & Worst 5	**********
16	10	Drop Best 1 & Worst 5	**********
17	10	Drop Best 1 & Worst 6	**********
18	11	Drop Best 1 & Worst 6	**********
19	11	Drop Best 1 & Worst 7	**********
20	12	Drop Best 1 & Worst 7	**********
21	13	Drop Best 1 & Worst 7	**********
22	13	Drop Best 1 & Worst 8	**********
23	14	Drop Best 1 & Worst 8	**********
24	14	Drop Best 1 & Worst 9	**********
25	15	Drop Best 1 & Worst 9	**********

A golf handicap requires two fundamental pieces of information. A golfer and score data from rounds played by that golfer. Generally, the first question asked is, "what scores will be used in the calculation of the handicap?" Clearly, one score is not a fair representation of a golfer's ability, nor is a score from every round the golfer ever played. The answer is somewhere in the middle. Golf Handicap Network has run algorithms against tens of thousands of golfers and millions of scores at thousands of clubs and has consistently determined that the most accurate handicap is a product of a subset of recent scores. That subset of scores is fifteen of twenty-five 9-hole scores, dropping the worst nine and one best score.

The table also reflects score selections if twenty-five 9-hole scores are not available. A legitimate argument can be made that selecting a smaller score set (say the best four of the last six) is not equitable to fifteen of twenty-five. In answer, the HGHS formula has been designed to accommodate those who are in the process of building their score set, and it should be noted that clubs can choose to accept or decline handicaps from golfers with less than 25 scores.

Common Questions

How can I tell if a golfer's handicap is not calculated using 25 scores?

- The system highlights handicaps that are calculated using five or fewer scores. Also, there is peer review in that all golfer score records are available for review by other golfers within the system.

Why use 9-hole scores instead of 18-hole scores?

- The more granular the score set the more accurate the results. 9-hole scores are more granular than 18-hole scores, meaning more information can be discerned from two 9-hole scores than from one 18-hole score. To exaggerate the point, if enough hole-by-hole data were available a more accurate handicap could be calculated dropping high and low hole scores within a round than could be using 9-hole scores, but we're not there yet.

Why twenty-five 9-hole scores and not forty or ten?

- More scores used in a calculation generates a more static (fixed) handicap, and fewer scores used in a calculation generates a more volatile handicap. Both are less representative of current play than twenty-five scores.

Why not use all scores and create a handicap from an average?

- An average score handicap is a sandbagger's dream! An average score handicap considers scores that are product of a less than sincere effort. Those scores should be eliminated when sincere effort comes into play, such as in tournaments, leagues, and competitive games. If you wish to test this, calculate an average score using your own score record and see where the median is relative to the mean.

Why drop the best score?

- We have found that a golfer can shoot a low 9-hole score within a set of twenty-five scores that is unrepresentative of their true handicap. Removing that low score from the handicap calculation generates a more accurate prediction of the next score shot.

What about course tee difficulty?

- A very powerful aspect of the HGHS is that it uses actual score data (empirical data) to calculate Tee Difficulty, which is considered during the calculation. That is why a 45 shot on a difficult set of tees may be considered a better score than a 44 shot on an easy set of tees.