



Posting Scores for Unfinished Holes & Holes Not Played

The USGA Handicap System requires players to post scores for all rounds where 13 or more holes have been played. In Match Play, holes are often conceded before they are completed or, the match can end before all the holes have been played. So, how do you post a score for those holes where you picked up your ball or those you didn't play at all because the match ended?

Unfinished Holes (see Section 4-1 of the USGA Handicap Manual)

A player who starts, but does not complete a hole or is conceded a stroke must record for handicap purposes the **most likely score** (*see definition below). On the scorecard, an "X" should precede this score. There is no limit to the number of unfinished holes a player may have in a round, provided that failure to finish a hole is not for the purpose of handicap manipulation.

Example 1: Sue and Karla are partners in a four-ball match play competition. On a hole on which neither player receives a handicap stroke, Sue lays 2, 18 feet from the hole. Karla lays 2, 25 feet from the hole. Karla holes a putt for a 3. Sue picks up on the hole, because she cannot better her partner's score. Sue records "X-4" on the scorecard because 4 is her **most likely score**.

Example 2: Alice and Barbara are playing a match. On a hole on which neither player receives a handicap stroke, Alice has holed out in 4; Barbara has a 30-foot putt for a 5. Barbara has lost the hole, and picks up. Barbara records "X-6" on the scorecard because 6 is her **most likely score**.

Example 3: Ann and Becky are playing a match. On a hole on where Ann receives a handicap stroke, Ann is one foot from the hole, lying 4 (net 3 with her handicap stroke). Becky is 10 feet from the hole, lying 3. Becky misses her put and is now lying 4. Becky concedes Ann's putt because she cannot better Ann's score. Both players record an X-5 on their cards because that is their **most likely score**.

Holes Not Played (see Section 4-2 of the USGA Handicap Manual)

If a player does not play a hole, the score recorded for that hole for handicap purposes must be **par plus any handicap strokes (using their full Course Handicap)** the player is entitled to receive on that hole. This hole score, when recorded on the scorecard, should be preceded by an "X."

Example A: Andrea beats Betty 4 and 3 in a singles match so neither of them played holes 16, 17 or 18. Betty was entitled to receive one stroke on 16 (a par 4) and 18 (a par 5). For 16, Betty would record "X-5" (4 plus 1) on her scorecard and on 18 she would record "X-6" (5 plus 1). Since she received no strokes on 17, a par 4, she would record "X-4".

NOTE: When posting for handicap purposes, the number of handicap strokes received on any hole is based on the player's full Course Handicap, rather than the number of strokes received for the match. For example, in a Singles match, Donna has CH of 20 and Cindy has a CH of 24. For scoring in the match, Donna will play as a "0" handicap and Cindy will receive 4 strokes (24-20), one stroke each on handicap holes 1 through 4. If there are any un-played holes at the end of the match, each player will use their full CH to determine how many strokes, if any, they are entitled to for those holes. **See scorecard examples on following page.**

*The **most likely score** consists of the number of strokes already taken plus, in the player's best judgment, the number of strokes the player would take to complete the hole from that position more than half the time. This number may not exceed the player's *Equitable Stroke Control* limit (see Section [4-3](#) of the Handicap Manual).



Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT
Yards	295	255	307	317	323	446	170	314	222	2649
Par	4	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	36
Handicap	11	17	7	1	13	3	5	9	15	

10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	IN	TOTAL
362	434	305	133	120	319	383	145	483	2684	5333
4	5	4	3	3	4	4	3	5	35	71
2	12	8	14	18	10	6	16	4		

Jane CH: 21	5	5	5	6/5 *	5	9	5	7	5	
Barbara CH: 20	6	4	4	6	7	8	4	7	5	
Status of Match	-1	-2	-3	-2	-1	-2	-3	-3	-3	

7			3	5	6	7	5	8		
5			4	4	6	6	5	7		
-4			+1	AS	AS	-1	-1	-2		

In the example above, Barbara and Jane begin their match on hole #13. Barbara had to give Jane one stroke in the match (21-20=1). This stroke was given on the #1 handicap hole (hole #4). The match was **dormie** after Hole #9 with Barbara 3 holes up with 3 to play. The match ended after hole #10 with Barbara winning 3 and 2 (3 holes up with 2 to play).

When Jane and Barbara post their scores to their handicap records, each will use their full Course Handicaps to determine what scores to post for holes 11 & 12 (the holes they did not play). Jane, with a CH of 21 would be entitled to one stroke on every hole plus an additional stroke on holes the #1, #2 and #3 handicap holes (holes 4, 6 and 10). Barbara is entitled to one stroke on every hole and an additional stroke on holes 4 and 10.

Since they are each entitled to one stroke on holes 11 & 12, they would both post a 6 for #11 (5+1) and a 5 for #12 (4+1). The scorecard below shows the full Course Handicap strokes for each player. The example below shows the allocation of each player's full Course Handicap.

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT
Yards	295	255	307	317	323	446	170	314	222	2649
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	IN	TOTAL
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4	5	4	3	3	4	4	3	5	35	71
2	12	8	14	18	10	6	16	4		

Jane CH: 21	5*	5*	5*	5**	5*	9**	5*	7*	5*	51
Barbara CH: 20	6*	4*	4*	6**	7*	8*	4*	7*	5*	51

7**	6*	5*	3*	5*	6*	7*	5*	8*	52	103
5**	6*	5*	4*	4*	6*	6*	5*	7*	48	99