READ THE MARKET · KEY NUMBERS

Half-Points & Key Numbers

What a half point is worth, why final margins pile up on certain numbers, and how to compare a whole-number line with a half-point line.

INSIDE

- Whole numbers push, half points do not
- Key numbers explained
- A break-even test for the half point
- Worked examples with both line types

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> A half point looks tiny. In sports where games often finish on the same few margins, it can matter more than a few cents of price. The honest way to judge it is to **write down what you believe** and test it.

1 Whole numbers push, half points do not

Line	Wins if	Pushes (stake back) if	Loses if
Ridge Wolves -4	Wolves win by 5 or more	Wolves win by exactly 4	Wolves win by 3 or fewer, or lose
Ridge Wolves -4.5	Wolves win by 5 or more	Never	Wolves win by 4 or fewer, or lose
Harbor Hawks +3	Hawks win, or lose by 2 or fewer	Hawks lose by exactly 3	Hawks lose by 4 or more
Harbor Hawks +3.5	Hawks win, or lose by 3 or fewer	Never	Hawks lose by 4 or more

The half-point line has no push. Moving between -4 and -4.5, or +3 and +3.5, changes the result only when the game ends exactly on the in-between number. Call it the **key number**.

2 Why key numbers exist

Scores come in chunks. In football, field goals are worth 3 and touchdowns worth 7, so some margins happen more than their neighbors. How much more depends on the sport, the era and the rules, so **we do not quote a figure here**. Use your own sourced data when you decide how often the key number lands.

3 A break-even test for the half point

Compare the cheaper price on the tougher line with the higher price on the friendlier line. You only need two beliefs:

- **c**: the chance you win under the *tougher* line.
- **k**: the chance the game lands exactly on the in-between number.

WORKED EXAMPLE · -4.5 AT -107 VS -4 AT -114

Assume **c = 50%**. Winning $100 risk pays $93.46 at -107 and $87.72 at -114.

-4.5 at -107: EV = 0.50 × $93.46 − 0.50 × $100 = **-$3.27** per $100.

-4 at -114: EV = 0.50 × $87.72 − (0.50 − k) × $100 = **-$6.14 + 100k**.

The two are equal when k = **2.87%**. If you believe the game ends exactly on 4 *more* often than that, -4 at -114 is the better price. If less, take -4.5 at -107.

k: chance of landing on 4	EV of -4.5 at -107	EV of -4 at -114	Better price
0%	-$3.27	-$6.14	-4.5 at -107
2%	-$3.27	-$4.14	-4.5 at -107
2.87%	**-$3.27**	**-$3.27**	**equal**
4%	-$3.27	-$2.14	-4 at -114
6%	-$3.27	-$0.14	-4 at -114
8%	-$3.27	+$1.86	-4 at -114

WORKED EXAMPLE · +3 AT -105 VS +3.5 AT -120

Here the half-point line is friendlier. Assume **c = 45%** (chance of winning under +3). The break-even chance of the game ending with the Hawks losing by exactly 3 is **6.43%**.

Formula: k = c × (profit at -105 − profit at -120) ÷ profit at -120 = 0.45 × (95.24 − 83.33) ÷ 83.33. If you think it lands on 3 more often than that, the extra half point is worth the price.

BE HONEST ABOUT WHAT YOU KNOW

c and k are beliefs. If you cannot back them with data you trust, the correct answer is to take the better price or pass, not to guess.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Whole-number lines can push; half-point lines cannot.
- The half point matters only when the game ends exactly on the key number.
- Break-even k tells you how often the key number must land to justify paying more.
- Quote your belief with data, or pass.

Test your own lines

Use the Half-Point / Alternate Line calculator.

winmorewagers.com/calculators