

CONGRESS DIRECTOR COURSE
By REG BUSCH

LESSON 4A

CONDUCTING A SWISS PAIRS EVENT

To run a Swiss Pairs you will certainly need a computer program. You just can't do it by hand, and if you lose power for any reason all is lost.

This is an ideal movement for a 1 day pairs event. The following format is one that I have found very satisfactory, but you may wish to vary it. The one disadvantage of this sort of tournament is the large amount of pre-dealing and duplication of boards that is necessary, as the whole field is playing the same set of boards at the same time. This can be reduced by dividing the field into two sections, with boards flowing through from one to the other. But this will involve two lots of prize money. My suggested format:

5 board matches - about 35 mins per round. Set tables up into little clusters of 6 tables with a central table for boards. Two sets of boards 1-5 are placed on the central table, with players taking a board and returning it when played. With 18 tables, for example, you will need six sets of boards. The formula for boards: 2 sets per 6 tables or part thereof.

You will need special pickup slips for 5 board matches. I can provide a copy of the one we have devised¹. This can be photocopied and cut into strips. I suggest putting out a single strip on each round. They are collected and gummed in line onto a sheet of paper ready for entering into the computer. Remind players to enter their pair numbers, and always check that this has been done before accepting the pickup slip.

10 to 11 rounds constitutes a good one day event. The method of scoring is matchpointed pairs across the field. The scoring programs allow you to run two independent sections if you wish.

With a smallish field, five board matches may mean too many rounds. It's not a bad idea, in a small field of mixed quality, to have no more rounds than about a third of the number of pairs. You may have to use 6 board matches.

THE DRAW:

Unlike a Swiss teams, you don't have time to score round 1 in order to print the draw for round 2. So the draw operates one round in arrears i.e. the first two rounds are drawn in advance, and the draw for round 3 is based on the progressive positions after round 1. This provides you with the leisure to check scores and enter the results into the computer without undue pressure.

How you do the draw for the first two rounds is optional. I started originally using this method: roughly seed the field from top down into groups of 8 pairs. For the first draw, I would have 1v9, 2v10 etc to 8v16. Then 17v25 and so on. The draw for the lowest group would depend on the number of pairs in that group. For round 2, I would play 1v5, 2v6 and so on. In other words, for the first two rounds, all pairs are playing pairs roughly of their own calibre. However, I found that it took a long time for the seeded pairs to filter to the top and start meeting each other. Now I tend to draw as for a Swiss Teams i.e. with say 40 pairs, 1 v 21, 2 v 22 and so on. The recommended draw may have to be varied depending on the size and quality of the field, but is probably not all that important.

Supposing you are running a 24 table event. You have made up your seeded field of 48 pairs, and will now enter the starting positions for round 1 of all pairs in turn. Thus, if you were using the 1v9 draw suggested above, you would seat your pairs 1-16 as follows: 1 1NS, 2 2EW, 3 3EW, 4 4NS, 5 5NS,

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6 6EW, 7 7EW, 8 8NS, 9 1EW, 10 2NS and so on. The NS and EW sequences used are to try to balance the field as much as possible.

A few comments: a half table is most undesirable. Who wants to sit out for 5 boards? So a standby pair is desirable. If you cannot fill a half table, you will have to proceed by entering averages for the sitout match. You may have to enter something like PHANTOM in your names file if the computer will expect full tables.

If you have a large field, it is best to paste your pickup slips on two separate pages.

¹. Webmasters Footnote. Score pickup slips can be downloaded from the Director area of the QBA website.

RULINGS:

Some more ruling problems. These are all problems that have actually occurred at the table in recent months, so they are not just theoretical problems. The bidding goes:

Problem 1:

N	E	S	W
2♣*	P	2♣!	

*Strong, game forcing.

You are called. How would you rule?

Problem 2:

At a small country congress recently, I had to rule in this situation. East, the offender, was a novice player not long out of classes.

South dealer, EW vul.

S	W	N	E
1♥	1♠	P	Dbl

I carefully explained the Law, and East changed her bid to 2H, doubled by South. result: EW +670 for a top board.

Here were the hands:

	♠10763	
	♥-	
	♦875	
	♣K107632	
♠KJ985		♠Q2
♥7		♥AJ109642
♦K104		♦Q93
♣A984		♣J
	♠A4	
	♥KQ853	
	♦AJ62	

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♣Q5

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How would you rule?

Problem 3:

The bidding goes (using written bidding):

N	S
1♣	1♥
2♣	2♠

At this stage, South quickly crosses out the 2S call and substitutes 3H. North, holding only a small doubleton in spades, now bids 3NT. This makes. Now, and not until now, you are called. North asks whether he was entitled to act on South's 2S bid. Was it authorised information or unauthorised?

Study your lawbooks and make up your minds on these three rulings. Discussion in next lesson.