

NO content was changed in these sections other than the references.

GENERAL HANDLING RULES FOR SWISS TOURNAMENTS

Approved by the Council on dd/mm/yyyy

Applied from 1st July, 2025

1. Pairing Systems

- 1.1 The pairing system used for a FIDE rated Swiss tournament should be one of the published FIDE Swiss Systems. Accelerated methods are acceptable if they were announced in advance by the organiser and are published under FIDE-Approved Accelerated Systems.
- 1.2 In derogation of the previous rule, unpublished pairing systems or accelerated methods may be permitted, provided that a detailed written description of their rules:
 - 1.2.1 be submitted in advance to the Qualification Commission (QC) and temporarily authorised by them; and
 - 1.2.2 be explicitly presented to the participants before the start of the tournament.
- 1.3 While reporting a tournament to FIDE, the Arbiter shall declare which official FIDE Swiss system and acceleration method (if any) were used, or provide the temporary authorisation(s) given by the QC as per the previous rule.
- 1.4 The Swiss Pairing Systems defined by FIDE and not deprecated (see Other FIDE-Approved Pairing Systems) pair the players in an objective, impartial and reproducible way. In any tournament where such systems are used, different arbiters, or different endorsed software programs, must be able to arrive at identical pairings.
- 1.5 It is not allowed to alter the correct pairings in favour of any player. Where it can be shown that modifications of the original pairings were made to help a player achieve a norm or a direct title, a report may be submitted to the QC to initiate disciplinary measures through the Ethics and Disciplinary Commission.

2. Initial Order

- 2.1 Before the start of the tournament, a measure of the player's strength is assigned to each player. The strength is usually represented by rating lists of the players. If one rating list is available for all participating players, then this rating list should be used. It is advisable to check all ratings supplied by players. If no reliable rating is known for a player, the arbiters should make an estimation of it as accurately as possible.
- 2.2 Before the first round the players are ranked in order of, respectively

- 2.2.1 Strength (rating)
 - 2.2.2 FIDE-title (GM-IM- WGM-FM-WIM-CM-WFM-WCM-no title)
 - 2.2.3 Alphabetically (unless it has been previously stated that this criterion has been replaced by another one)
- 2.3 This ranking is used to determine the pairing numbers; the highest one gets #1 etc. If, for any reason, the data used to determine the rankings were not correct, they can be adjusted at any time. The pairing numbers may be reassigned accordingly to the corrections. No modification of a pairing number is allowed after the fourth round has been paired.

3. Late Entries

- 3.1 According to FIDE Tournament Rules, any prospective participant who has not arrived at the venue of a FIDE competition before the time scheduled for the drawing of lots shall be excluded from the tournament unless they show up at the venue in time before a pairing of another round. An exception may be made in the case of a registered participant who has given written notice in advance that they will be unavoidably late.
- 3.2 Where the Chief Arbiter decides to admit a latecomer:
- 3.2.1 if the player's notified time of arrival is in time for the start of the first round, the player is given a pairing number and paired in the usual way.
 - 3.2.2 if the player's notified time of arrival is in time only for the start of the second (or third) round ("Late Entry"), then the player is not paired for the rounds which they cannot play. Instead, they receive no points for unplayed rounds (unless the rules of the tournament say otherwise), and are given an appropriate pairing number and paired only when they actually arrive.
- 3.3 If there are late entries, the Pairing Numbers that were given at the start of the tournament are considered provisional. The definitive Pairing Numbers are given only when the List of Participants is closed, and corrections made accordingly in the results charts.

4. Pairing, Colour and Publishing Rules

- 4.1 Adjourned games are considered draws for pairing purposes only.
- 4.2 A player who is absent without notifying the arbiter will be considered as withdrawn, unless the absence is explained with acceptable arguments before the next pairing is published.
- 4.3 Players who withdraw from the tournament will no longer be paired.
- 4.4 Players known in advance not to play in a particular round are not paired in that round and score zero (unless the rules of the tournament say otherwise).

- 4.5 Only played games count in situations where the colour sequence is meaningful. So, for instance, a player with a colour history of BWB=W (i.e. no valid game in round-4) will be treated as if their colour history was =BWBW. WB=WB will count as =WBWB, BWW=B=W as ==BW BW and so on.
- 4.6 Two paired players, who did not play their game, may be paired together in a future round.
- 4.7 The results of a round shall be published at the usual place of communication at announced time due to the schedule of the tournament.
- 4.8 If either
 - 4.8.1 a result was written down incorrectly, or
 - 4.8.2 a game was played with the wrong colours, or
 - 4.8.3 a player's rating has to be corrected (and playing numbers possibly recomputed as in Article 3.3),

and a player communicates this to the arbiter within a given deadline after publication of results, the new information shall be used for the standings and the pairings of the next round. The deadline shall be fixed in advance according to the timetable of the tournament. If the error notification is made after the pairing but before the end of the next round, it will affect the next pairing to be done. If the error notification is made after the end of the next round, the correction will be made after the tournament for submission to rating evaluation only.

- 4.9 After a pairing is complete, sort the pairs before publishing them. The sorting criteria are (with descending priority)
 - 4.9.1 the score of the higher ranked player of the involved pair;
 - 4.9.2 the sum of the scores of both players of the involved pair;
 - 4.9.3 the rank according to the Initial Order (see Article 2) of the higher ranked player of the involved pair.
- 4.10 Once published, the pairings shall not be changed unless they are found to violate Article 2 of the Basic Rules for Swiss Systems (*Two players shall not play against each other more than once*).

DUBOV SYSTEM

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0. Preface

The Dubov Swiss Pairing System is designed to maximise the fair treatment of the players. This means that a player having more points than another player during a tournament should have a higher performance rating as well. If the average rating of all players is nearly equal, like in a round robin tournament, the goal is reached. As a Swiss System is a statistical system, this goal can only be reached approximately. The approach is the attempt to equalise the average rating of the opponents (ARO, see Article 1.6) of all players of a scoregroup. Therefore, the pairing of a round will now pair players who have a low ARO against opponents having high ratings.

1. Introductory Remarks and Definitions

1.1 Rating

- 1.1.1 Each player must have a rating.
- 1.1.2 If a player does not have a rating, a provisional one must be assigned to the player by the arbiter.

1.2 Initial Ranking List

- 1.2.1 See the Initial Order section of the General Handling Rules for Swiss Tournaments.
- 1.2.2 Each time a player's rating is introduced or modified before the pairing of the fourth round, the arbiter must re-sort the initial ranking list according to the aforementioned section.

1.3 Scoregroups and Pairing Brackets

- 1.3.1 A scoregroup is composed of all the players with the same score.
- 1.3.2 A (pairing) bracket is a group of players to be paired. It is composed of players coming from the same scoregroup (called resident players) and (possibly) of players coming from lower scoregroups (called upfloaters).

Note: Unlike other systems, there are no downfloaters in the Dubov System.

1.4 Byes

- 1.4.1 See Article 3 of the Basic Rules for Swiss Systems (*Should the number of players to be paired be odd, one player is unpaired. This player receives a pairing-allocated bye: no opponent, no colour and as many points as are rewarded for a win, unless the regulations of the tournament state otherwise.*)

1.5 Colour Differences and Colour Preferences

- 1.5.1 The colour difference of a player is the number of games played with white minus the number of games played with black by this player.

1.5.2 The colour preference (also called: **due colour**) is the colour that a player should ideally receive for the next game.

- 1) An absolute colour preference occurs when a player's colour difference is greater than +1 or less than -1, or when a player had the same colour in the two latest rounds they played. The preference is white when the colour difference is less than -1 or when the last two games were played with black. The preference is black when the colour difference is greater than +1, or when the last two games were played with white.
- 2) A strong colour preference occurs when a player's colour difference is +1 (preference for black) or -1 (preference for white).
- 3) A mild colour preference occurs when a player's colour difference is zero, the preference being to alternate the colour with respect to the previous game they played.
- 4) Players who did not play any games are considered to have a mild colour preference for black.

1.6 Average Rating of Opponents (ARO)

1.6.1 ARO is defined for each player who has played at least one game. It is given by the sum of the ratings of the opponents the player met over-the-board (*i.e. only played games are used to compute ARO*), divided by the number of such opponents, and rounded to the nearest integer number (the higher, if the division ends for 0.5).

1.6.2 ARO is computed for each player after each round as a basis for the pairings of the next round.

1.6.3 If a player has yet to play a game, their ARO is zero.

1.7 Maximum Upfloater

1.7.1 A player is said to be a maximum upfloater when they have already been upfloated a maximum number of times (MaxT).

1.7.2 MaxT is a parameter whose value depends on the number of rounds in the tournament (Rnds), and is computed with the following formula:

$$\text{MaxT} = 2 + [\text{Rnds}/5]$$

where [Rnds/5] means Rnds divided by 5 and rounded downwards.

1.8 Round-Pairing Outlook

1.8.1 The pairing of a round (called round-pairing) is complete if all the players (except at most one, who receives the pairing-allocated bye) have been paired and the absolute criteria [C1] to [C3] (see Article 3.1) have been complied with.

1.8.2 The pairing process starts with the assignment of the pairing-allocated-bye (see Article 2.1) and continues with the pairing of all the scoregroups (see Article 2.2), in descending order of score, until the round-pairing is complete.

1.8.3 If it is impossible to complete a round-pairing, the arbiter shall decide what to do.

Note: Article 2 describes the pairing procedures.

Article 3 defines all the criteria that the pairing of a bracket has to satisfy (in order of priority).

Article 5 defines the colour allocation rules that determine which players will play with White.

2. Pairing Procedures

2.1 Pairing-Allocated-Bye Assignment

The pairing-allocated-bye is assigned to the player who:

- 2.1.1 has neither received a pairing-allocated-bye, nor scored a (forfeit) win in the previous rounds (see [C2], Article 3.1.2)
- 2.1.2 allows a complete pairing of all the remaining players (see [C4], Article 3.2.1)
- 2.1.3 has the lowest score
- 2.1.4 has played the highest number of games
- 2.1.5 occupies the lowest position in the initial ranking list (see Article 1.2)

2.2 Pairing Process for a Bracket

- 2.2.1 Determine the minimum number of upfloaters needed to obtain a legal pairing of all the (remaining) resident players of the scoregroup.

Note: A pairing is legal when the criteria [C1], [C3] and [C4] (see Articles 3.1.1, 3.1.3 and 3.2.1 respectively) are complied with.

- 2.2.2 Choose the first set of upfloaters (first in the order given by Article 4.2) that, together with the (remaining) resident players of this scoregroup, produces a pairing that complies at best with all the pairing criteria ([C1] to [C10], see Articles 3.1 to 3.3).

Note: In order to choose the best set of upfloaters, consider that the ensuing bracket (residents + upfloaters) is paired better than another one if it better satisfies a quality criterion ([C5] to [C10], see Article 3.3) of higher priority.

- 2.2.3 The players of the bracket are divided in two subgroups:

- 1) **G1**

This subgroup initially contains the players who have a colour preference for White, unless all the players in the bracket have yet to play a game (*like, for instance, in the first round*). In the latter case, this subgroup contains the first half of the players of the bracket (according to the initial ranking list).

- 2) **G2**

This subgroup initially contains the remaining players of the bracket.

- 2.2.4 G1/G2 re-composition

- 1) If players from the smaller subgroup (or from G1, if their sizes are equal) must unavoidably be paired together, a number of players equal to the number of such pairs must be shifted from that subgroup into the other one. Find the **best** set of such players and proceed with the shift.

- 2) Now, if the number of players in (the possibly new) G1 is different from the number of players in (the possibly new) G2, in order to equalise the size of the two subgroups, extract the **best** set of players from the larger subgroup, and shift those players into the smaller subgroup

*Note: **Best**, in both instances, means the first set of players (first in the order given by Article 4.3) that can yield a legal pairing that complies at best with [C7] (see Article 3.3.3).*

- 2.2.5 Sort the players in (the possibly new) G1 in order of ascending ARO or, when AROs are equal, according to the initial ranking list - highest initial ranking first and so on. S1 is the subgroup resulting from such sorting.

Note: The sorting of G2 players is described in Article 4.3.

- 2.2.6 Choose T2, which is the first such transposition of G2 players (transpositions are sorted by Article 4.4) that can yield a legal pairing, according to the following generation rule: the first player of S1 is paired with the first player of T2, the second player of S1 with the second player of T2, and so on.

3. Pairing Criteria

3.1 Absolute Criteria

No pairing shall violate the following absolute criteria:

- 3.1.1 [C1] See the Basic Rules for Swiss, Article 2 (*Two players shall not play against each other more than once*).
- 3.1.2 [C2] See the Basic Rules for Swiss, Article 4 (*A player who has already received a pairing-allocated bye, or has already scored in one single round, without playing, as many points as rewarded for a win, shall not receive the pairing-allocated bye*).
- 3.1.3 [C3] Two players with the same absolute colour preference (see Article 1.5.2.1) shall not meet (see the Basic Rules for Swiss, Articles 6 and 7).

3.2 Completion Criterion

- 3.2.1 [C4] Choose the set of upfloaters in order to complete the round-pairing.

3.3 Quality Criteria

To obtain the best possible pairing for a bracket, comply as much as possible with the following criteria, given in descending priority:

- 3.3.1 [C5] Minimise the number of upfloaters.
- 3.3.2 [C6] Minimise the score differences in the pairs involving upfloaters, i.e. maximise the lowest score among the upfloaters (and then the second lowest, and so on).
- 3.3.3 [C7] Minimise the number of players who do not get their colour preference.
- 3.3.4 [C8] Unless it is the last round, minimise the number of upfloaters who are maximum upfloaters (see Article 1.7).

- 3.3.5 [C9] Unless it is the last round, minimise the number of times a maximum upfloater is upfloated.
- 3.3.6 [C10] Unless it is the last round, minimise the number of upfloaters who upfloated in the previous round.

4. Sorting Criteria

4.1 Generalities

In the articles of this section, the schema below is followed:

- 4.1.1 A pool of P players is selected.
- 4.1.2 Each player in the pool is assigned a sequence number (from #1 to #P) according to a primary sorting criterion.
- 4.1.3 In order to select a set of K such players, the sets will usually be sorted depending on the sequence numbers of their members, put in lexicographic order (exception is Article 4.2.2). For instance, with K=2, the set {#1,#2} will precede {#1,#3}, the set {#1,#P} will precede {#2,#3}, and so on.

*Note: The term **initial ranking** always refers to the definition in the Initial Order section of the General Handling Rules for Swiss Tournaments, stating that the highest ranked player is first and the lowest ranked player is last.*

4.2 Sorting the Upfloaters

4.2.1 All those players that have a lower score than the resident players of the scoregroup to be paired, are possible upfloaters and constitute the selected pool (see Article 4.1.1).

4.2.2 Main criterion

- 1) Each possible upfloater receives a sequence number, according to their score and, when scores are equal, to their initial ranking.

4.2.3 Sets of upfloaters

- 1) Because a set of upfloaters may be formed of players with different scores, all the possible sets are subdivided in containers. Sets belong to the same container if their players have the same scores.

Example: Let's assume that #1,#2,#3 have 3 points, #4 and #5 have 2.5 points, and #6 has 1.5 point, and a set of two upfloaters is needed. Then {#1,#2} {#1,#3} {#2,#3} are part of the same container; {#1,#4} {#1,#5} {#2,#4} {#2,#5} {#3,#4} {#3,#5} are part of another container; {#1,#6} {#2,#6} {#3,#6} are part of a third container; {#4,#5} are part of a fourth container; {#4,#6} {#5,#6} are part of a fifth (and last) container.

- 2) The containers are sorted along the lineThe containers are sorted along the lines described by [C6] (see Article 3.3.2).

- 3) The sets belonging to each container are sorted according to the lexicographic order of the sequence numbers they are formed of.

4.3 Sorting the Shifters

Any player in the bracket having a colour preference for White (Black) is a possible White (resp. Black) shifter. The need for shifters arises when, in order to make or complete a pairing, some players seeking a colour are shifted to the subgroup of players initially seeking the other colour.

- 4.3.1 The possible White (resp. Black) shifters constitute the selected pool (see Article 4.1.1).
- 4.3.2 White seekers are sorted in order of ascending ARO or, when AROs are equal, highest initial ranking. Black seekers are sorted according to their initial ranking.
- 4.3.3 With the list sorted as in 4.3.2, assign the sequence numbers, starting with the player in the (remaining) middle of the list or, when two players are in the (remaining) middle, to the one with a higher position in the list.

Example: If the sorted list contains seven players (in order: A, B, C, D, E, F, G), #1 goes to D (middle of the seven players), #2 to C (higher between C and E, both in the middle of the remaining six players), #3 to E (middle of the remaining five players), #4 to B, #5 to F, #6 to A, #7 to G.

Rationale: Since the system tries to equalise the ARO of the White seekers (while the Black seekers are "tools" for reaching this goal), it is statistically better to shift White seekers with AROs in the middle (their ARO is probably already equalised), and Black seekers with ratings in the middle (because ARO equalisation is usually performed better by Black seekers with extreme ratings).

4.4 Sorting G2 Players (Transpositions)

- 4.4.1 The players involved are the ones that end up in the G2 subgroup after the maneuvers described in Article 2.2.4. Such players constitute the selected pool (see Article 4.1.1).
- 4.4.2 The players in the G2 pool are assigned sequence numbers according to their initial ranking. The sorted sets of G2 players are also called Transpositions.

Note: If, for instance, players A, B, C (listed according to the initial ranking) are in G2, the different Transpositions are {A, B, C} {A, C, B} {B, A, C} {B, C, A} {C, A, B} and {C, B, A}, in that exact order.

5. Colour Allocation Rules

- 5.1 The initial-colour is the colour determined by drawing of lots before the pairing of the first round.
- 5.2 For each pair apply (with descending priority):
 - 5.2.1 When both players have yet to play a game, if the higher ranked player (*the player who has more points or, when points are equal, a higher position in the initial ranking list*) has an odd pairing number, give them the initial-colour; otherwise give them the opposite colour.

Note: Always consider the Initial Order and Late Entries sections of the General Handling Rules for Swiss Tournaments for the proper management of the pairing numbers.

5.2.2 Grant both colour preferences.

5.2.3 Grant the stronger colour preference.

5.2.4 Alternate the colours to the most recent time in which one player had white and the other black.

Note: Always consider Article 4.5 of the General Handling Rules for Swiss Tournaments.

5.2.5 Grant the colour preference of the higher ranked player (see Article 5.2.1).

BURSTEIN SYSTEM

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0. Preface

The BURSTEIN Swiss Pairing System is designed to maximise the fair treatment of players - in the sense that players having the same score should have met an average opposition as equal as possible during a tournament.

The system evaluates the strength of the opposition by means of an Index that only uses current data of the tournament, and is based on tie-break derived method(s) (Ratings are taken into account only when everything else is equal - see Articles 1.6 and 1.7). If this Index gives a nearly equal evaluation of all players in the same scoregroup, the goal is reached. Nevertheless, since a Swiss System is a more or less statistical system, this goal can only be reached approximately.

The approach is to attempt to equalise the Index of all players in a given scoregroup. Once the system is properly seeded (by pairing a number of early rounds using traditional methods - see Article 1.5), the Index becomes a good evaluator of players' strength. Henceforth, in each round, the system will try to pair players who have a high Index with players who have a low Index within the same scoregroup. Although the immediate effect of this manoeuvre is negligible (the Index is based on opponents' scores, and the players paired together often have equal scores), in the long run the desired effect is achieved (approximately, as mentioned above).

1. Introductory Remarks and Definitions

1.1 Initial Ranking List

See the Initial Order section of the General Handling Rules for Swiss Tournaments.

1.2 Scoregroups and Pairing Brackets

1.2.1 A scoregroup is composed of all the players with the same score.

1.2.2 A (pairing) bracket is a group of players to be paired. It is composed of players coming from a scoregroup (called resident players) and (possibly) of players who remained unpaired after the pairing of the previous bracket (called incoming floaters).

1.3 Byes

1.3.1 See Article 3 of the Basic Rules for Swiss Systems (*Should the number of players to be paired be odd, one player is unpaired. This player receives a pairing-allocated bye: no opponent, no colour and as many points as are rewarded for a win, unless the regulations of the tournament state otherwise*).

1.4 Colour Differences and Colour Preferences

1.4.1 The colour difference of a player is the number of games played with white minus the number of games played with black by this player.

1.4.2 The colour preference (also called: due colour) is the colour that a player should ideally receive for the next game. It can be determined for each player who has played at least one game.

- 1) An absolute colour preference occurs when a player's colour difference is greater than +1 or less than -1, or when a player had the same colour in the two last rounds they played. The preference is white when the colour difference is less than -1 or when the last two games were played with black. The preference is black when the colour difference is greater than +1, or when the last two games were played with white.
- 2) A strong colour preference occurs when a player's colour difference is +1 (preference for black) or -1 (preference for white).
- 3) A mild colour preference occurs when a player's colour difference is zero, the preference being to alternate the colour with respect to the previous game they played.
- 4) Players who did not play any games have no colour preference (the preference of their opponents is granted).

1.5 Seeding Rounds

1.5.1 In order to properly seed the system, some initial rounds, called seeding rounds, are paired following the rules of the FIDE (Dutch) System.

1.5.2 The number of seeding rounds is equal to half the number of rounds in the tournament (rounded down) or 4 (four), whichever is lower.

1.6 Opposition Evaluation

During the pairing process, the players in a bracket need to be sorted (see Articles 2.1.5, 5.2.1, 5.2.4, 4.1), by applying some or all of the methods defined here, as directed by Article 1.7.1.

1.6.1 Sorting Methods

1) Buchholz

It is the sum of the (current) scores of the opponents the player met.

2) Sonneborn-Berger

It is the sum of the products given by the points the player earned against each opponent times the (current) scores of that opponent.

Note: If the standard scoring system is used, the above means the sum of the score of the opponents a player has defeated plus half the sum of the score of the opponents with whom they have drawn.

1.6.2 Common Rules

1) Unplayed Games

If a player does not play in a round, the round shall be considered as one in which that player played against himself getting the result (win, draw, loss) that yields the same number of points as registered for the standings (and the future pairings).

Exception: if a player has a series of consecutive zero-point-byes up to the current round, each of the ones gathered in previous rounds, for the benefit of the player's actual over-the-board opponents, is considered as a draw.

2) Acceleration Methods

If virtual points are used (e.g. with the Baku Acceleration Method - see FIDE-approved Accelerated Systems), such virtual points shall be excluded from the computation of any method.

1.7 Ranking Order

After the seeding rounds (see Article 1.5), for pairings purposes only, the players in a bracket are ranked in order of, respectively:

1.7.1 (Opposition Evaluation) Index, which is a sequence of the methods seen in Article 1.6.1, to be applied in the following order (*any subsequent method is used when preceding method(s) yield equal values*):

- 1) Buchholz (see Article 1.6.1.1)
- 2) Sonneborn-Berger (see Article 1.6.1.2)

1.7.2 Pairing numbers assigned to the players according to the initial ranking list (see Article 1.1) and subsequent modifications depending on possible late entries or rating adjustments.

Note: Players' scores are not used in the pairing ranking order.

1.8 Round-Pairing Outlook

Note: *This outlook is valid after the seeding rounds (see Article 1.5) have been completed.*

1.8.1 The pairing of a round (called round-pairing) is complete if all the players (except at most one, who receives the pairing-allocated bye) have been paired and the absolute criteria [C1] to [C3] (see Article 3.1) have been complied with.

1.8.2 The pairing process starts with the assignment of the pairing-allocated-bye (see Article 2.1) and continues by pairing the top scoregroup, and then bracket by bracket until all the scoregroups, in descending order, have been used and the round-pairing is complete.

1.8.3 If it is impossible to complete a round-pairing, the arbiter shall decide what to do.

Note: Article 2 describes the pairing procedures.

Article 3 defines all the criteria that the pairing of a bracket has to satisfy (in order of priority).

Article 5 defines the colour allocation rules that determine which players will play with White.

2. Pairing Procedures

2.1 Pairing-Allocated-Bye Assignment

The pairing-allocated-bye is assigned to the player who:

- 2.1.1 has neither received a pairing-allocated-bye, nor scored a (forfeit) win in the previous rounds (see [C2], Article 3.1.2)
- 2.1.2 allows a complete pairing of all the remaining players (see [C4], Article 3.2.1)

- 2.1.3 has the lowest score
- 2.1.4 has played the highest number of games
- 2.1.5 occupies the lowest ranking (according to Article 1.7)

2.2 Pairing Process for a Bracket

2.2.1 Preparation

- 1) The pairing of a bracket is composed of pairs and outgoing floaters.
- 2) Determine the maximum number of pairs that can be obtained in the current bracket while complying with criteria from [C1] to [C5] (see Articles 3.1.1 to 3.3.1).
- 3) This automatically determines the number of outgoing floaters.

2.2.2 Operations

- 1) Choose the first pairing (as ordered according to Article 4) that complies best with all the pairing criteria ([C1] to [C8], see Articles 3.1 to 3.3).
- 2) Consider that a pairing is better than another if it better satisfies a quality criterion ([C5]-[C8], see Article 3.3) of higher priority.

3. Pairing Criteria

3.1 Absolute Criteria

No pairing shall violate the following absolute criteria:

- 3.1.1 [C1] See the Basic Rules for Swiss, Article 2 (*Two players shall not play against each other more than once*).
- 3.1.2 [C2] See the Basic Rules for Swiss, Article 4 (*A player who has already received a pairing-allocated bye, or has already scored in one single round, without playing, as many points as rewarded for a win, shall not receive the pairing-allocated bye*).
- 3.1.3 [C3] Two players with the same absolute colour preference (see Article 1.4.2.1) shall not meet (see the Basic Rules for Swiss, Articles 6 and 7).

3.2 Completion Criterion

- 3.2.1 [C4] Choose the set of outgoing floaters in order to complete the round-pairing.

3.3 Quality Criteria

To obtain the best possible pairing for a bracket, comply as much as possible with the following criteria, given in descending priority:

- 3.3.1 [C5] Maximise the number of pairs (equivalent to: minimise the number of outgoing floaters).
- 3.3.2 [C6] First maximise the number and then the scores of the incoming floaters that can be paired.
- 3.3.3 [C7] Choose the outgoing floaters so that in the following bracket [C4], [C5] and [C6] are complied with in the best possible way (*i.e., besides compliance*

with [C4] -see Article 3.2.1-, the number of pairs must be maximised, and all these floaters must be paired - or, at least, the ones with the highest scores).

3.3.4 [C8] Minimise the number of players who do not get their colour preference.

4. Order of Pairings

- 4.1 All players in the bracket shall be tagged with consecutive in-bracket sequence-numbers (BSN for short) representing their respective ranking order (according to Article 1.7) in the bracket (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, ...).
- 4.2 The bracket is then extended, adding a number of virtual players equal to the number of outgoing floaters (see [C5], Article 3.3.1). All those virtual players are assigned a BSN equal to zero, meaning that their opponent shall float.
- 4.3 In order to sort all the possible pairings, apply the following rule: a pairing precedes another if its BSN #1's opponent has a higher BSN (i.e. lower ranking) than the other's. If BSN #1's opponents are the same, then compare BSN #2's opponents; and so on.

5. Colour Allocation Rules

- 5.1 The initial-colour is the colour determined by drawing of lots before the pairing of the first round.
- 5.2 For each pair apply (with descending priority):
 - 5.2.1 When both players have yet to play a game, if the higher ranked player (according to Article 1.7) has an odd pairing number, give them the initial-colour; otherwise give them the opposite colour.

Note: Always consider sections the Initial Order and Late Entries sections of the General Handling Rules for Swiss Tournaments for the proper management of the pairing numbers.
 - 5.2.2 Grant both colour preferences.
 - 5.2.3 Grant the stronger colour preference.
 - 5.2.4 Alternate the colours to the most recent time in which one player had white and the other black.

Note: Always consider Article 4.5 of the General Handling Rules for Swiss Tournaments.
 - 5.2.5 Grant the colour preference of the higher ranked player (see Article 1.7).

OTHER FIDE-APPROVED PAIRING SYSTEMS

Approved by the Council on dd/mm/yyyy

Applied from 1st July, 2025

Use of these systems is deprecated unless for a system there is a FIDE endorsed program (see, in Appendix "Endorsement of a Software Program" , the Annex-3 "List of FIDE Endorsed Programs") with a free pairing-checker (see Article 1.5 in the same appendix) able to verify tournaments run with this system.

- C.04.4.1 Dubov System
- C.04.4.2 Burstein System
- C.04.4.3 Lim System

FIDE-APPROVED ACCELERATED SYSTEMS

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0. Preface

In Swiss tournaments with a wide range of (mostly reliable) playing strengths, the results of the first round(s) are usually quite predictable. In the first round, only a few percent of the games have a result other than "win to the stronger part". The same may happen again in round two. It can be shown that, in title tournaments, this can prevent players from achieving norms.

An accelerated pairing is a variation of Swiss pairings in which the first rounds are modified in such a way as to overcome the aforementioned weaknesses of the Swiss system, without compromising the reliability of the final rankings.

It is not appropriate to design an entirely new pairing system for acceleration, but rather design a system that works together with existing FIDE-defined pairing systems. This result is normally achieved by rearranging score brackets in some way that is not only dependent on the points that the players have scored. For instance, one of the possible methods is to add so-called "virtual points" to the score of some higher rated players (who are supposedly stronger) and henceforth build the score brackets based on the total score (real score + virtual points).

The following chapters will describe the methods that were statistically proven to accomplish the aforementioned goals. The Baku Acceleration Method is presented first, because it was the first that, through statistical analysis, was proven to be good and stable (and is also easy to explain).

Other accelerated methods may be added, as long as they can be proven, through statistical analysis, to get better results than already described methods or, if their effectiveness is comparable, to be simpler.

Unless explicitly specified otherwise, each described acceleration method is applicable to any Swiss Pairing System.

1. Baku Acceleration Method

1.1 Premise

- 1.1.1 The Baku Acceleration Method is applicable in any tournament where the standard scoring point system (one point for a win, half point for a draw) is used.

1.2 Initial Groups Division

- 1.2.1 Before the first round, the list of players to be paired (properly sorted) shall be split in two groups, GA and GB. The first group (GA) shall contain the first half of the players, rounded up to the nearest even number. The second group (GB) shall contain all the remaining players.

*Note: For instance, if there are 161 players in the tournament, the nearest even number that comprises the first half of the players (i.e. 80.5) is 82. The formula $2 * Q$ (2 times Q), where Q is the number of players divided by 4 and rounded upwards, may be helpful in computing such number - that, besides being the number of GA players, is also the pairing number of the last GA player.*

1.3 Late Entries

1.3.1 If there are entries after the first round, those players shall be accommodated in the pairing list according to the Initial Order and Late Entries sections of the General Handling Rules for Swiss Tournaments.

1.3.2 The last GA-player shall be the same as in the previous round.

Note 1: In such circumstances, the pairing number of the last GA-player may be different by the one set accordingly to Article 1.2.

Note 2: After the first round, GA may contain an odd number of players.

1.4 Virtual Points

1.4.1 The "accelerated rounds" are the ones in the first half (rounded up) of the tournament.

1.4.2 Before pairing the first half (rounded up) of the accelerated rounds, all the players in GA are assigned a number of points (called virtual points) equal to 1.

1.4.3 Such virtual points are reduced to 0.5 before pairing the remaining accelerated rounds.

Note: Consequently, no virtual points are ever given to players in GB, or to any player after the last accelerated round has been played.

Example: In a nine-round tournament, the accelerated rounds are five. The players in GA are assigned one virtual point in the first three rounds, and half virtual point in the next two rounds.

1.5 Pairing Score

1.5.1 The pairing score of a player (i.e. the value used to define the scoregroups and internally sort them) is given by the sum of their standings points and the virtual points assigned to them.