

AOF Nationals Tournament Rules

1. TOURNAMENT FORMAT

1.1 Before the tournament starts a tournament director (TD) needs to be appointed. The TD will be in charge of running the tournament and resolving any issues/disputes that may occur.

1.2 The TD will decide on the **number of rounds** to be played as well as the **tournament system** to use based on the total number of players taking part. The following should be used as a guideline :

a) 5 or 6 players : 5 rounds as a *Single Round Robin* (everyone will play every other player once)

b) 7 to 11 players : 5 rounds using *Swiss Pairings* (see appendix A)

c) 12 players or more : 6 rounds using Swiss Pairings

1.3 The TD will also need to decide on the **tie break system** to be used to resolve ties within the final standings when players are on equal wins. If the tournament system is a round robin then the tie break system will necessarily be disc count (you simply add up all the scores from each round). If the tournament system uses swiss pairings however then the choice for tie break is between disc count or Mixed Brightwell System (MBS - see appendix B). MBS is the fairer system (it's a mix of disc count AND strength of opposition) however it's time consuming to calculate by hand and therefore is only recommended with the use of a pairings program like PAPP or Swiss Perfect. If no pairings software is used then disc count is the recommended system.

1.4 If there is an odd number of players, a fictitious player called "BYE" is added to the player list. BYE always loses by the score of 40-24 (this should already be the default setting in PAPP).

2. TIME CONTROLS

2.1 The time controls for the tournament rounds shall be decided by the TD before the start of the tournament. It should never be less than 20 minutes per player. For the final it is recommended to use at least 25 minutes per player.

2.2 If there are not enough clocks/timers for all the players then the TD will decide at each round which paired players should use the available clocks/timers.

2.3 A player cannot make a move on his opponent's time.

2.4 A player must press his clock after every single move, even when his opponent has no legal moves left (in this situation the opponent will then acknowledge that he has to pass by pressing his clock without making a move).

2.5 If a player forgets to press his clock after his move, his opponent is allowed and encouraged to tell him to do so. No spectator, apart from the TD, can warn a player that he has forgotten to press his clock.

2.6 A player forfeits the game unless he can make his final move, flip all the appropriate discs, and stop his clock before the time runs out.

If a player's time runs out, he loses the game and his opponent is awarded a win regardless of the position of the board.

Both players are then given two extra minutes. The game is then continued with the true final score standing, save that the non-defaulting player is guaranteed at least a 33-31 win. If the defaulting player runs out of time a second time, the game is scored 64-0. If the non-defaulting player runs out of time having been given two extra minutes, the player who first defaulted loses the game with a 31-33 score.

3. PLAYER CONDUCT

3.1 All players taking part in the tournament should conduct themselves in the spirit of fair play and good sportsmanship. They should have a good understanding of the rules of Othello (see the AOF pamphlet for the rules of the game), agree with the current tournament rules, and accept the TD's authority on resolving disputes.

3.2 During the course of the game, a player may not consult any notes, use any unapproved electronic device, or exchange information of any kind with another person (with the exception of the TD or their opponent)

3.3 Mobile phones should be switched off or at least set to silent mode.

3.4 A player commits himself to a move if he touches the board with his hand or with a disc, with the apparent intention of moving to a given square. In this case, provided the player has a legal move to that square, he must move to the first square he touches, and may not change his mind and move instead to a different square, even if his opponent authorises him to take back his move. The purpose of this rule is to prevent an indecisive player from distracting his opponent or obstructing his opponent's view of the board.

3.5 Once a player has committed himself to a move, he is bound to turn over all of the captured discs. He must do this using one hand only, and then use the same hand to press his clock.

3.6 If a player notices that his opponent did not flip all the appropriate discs in his last move, he should notify him before playing a new move and then press his clock so his opponent can correct the flipping error in his own time.

3.7 Only the most recent move is subject to challenge. When a player commits himself to a new move, he tacitly accepts the board position as it is, and neither he nor any official can later seek to correct a previous error.

3.8 The players should endeavour to play their moves keeping the discs clearly positioned on their respective squares so that the position is always readable. Players can rearrange slightly misplaced discs every once and a while, centering them on the squares, but only when it's their own turn as to not disturb the other player.

3.9 If in the opinion of both players, the position becomes completely unreadable, and it's no longer clear how to rearrange the discs then both clocks should be stopped so that the position can be returned to its normal state (this might require playing through the transcript to get back to the correct position).

4. FINAL STANDINGS & THE FINAL

4.1 At the end of the preliminary rounds (5 or 6 depending on the format chosen [see 1.2]) the final standings are drawn up with all players sorted by number of wins followed by tie-break [see 1.3].

4.2 The top 2 players in the final standings advance to the one-game final to decide the overall winner of the tournament.

4.3 The player who finished highest in the standings can either chose his colour for the final or chose to earn the win in case of a draw (see Appendix C for further details). This choice must be clearly stated before the start of the final.

APPENDIX A - SWISS SYSTEM / PAIRINGS

A Swiss-system tournament is a non-eliminating tournament format that features a set number of rounds of competition, but considerably fewer than that of a round-robin tournament. It is used for tournaments in which the number of entrants is considered too large for a full round-robin to be feasible, and eliminating any competitors before the end of the tournament is undesirable.

In a Swiss tournament, each competitor does not necessarily play all other entrants. Competitors are paired using a set of rules designed to ensure that each competitor plays opponents with a similar running score, but not the same opponent more than once. All competitors play in each round unless there is an odd number of players.

The pairing rules try to ensure that each player plays an equal number of games with white and black, alternate colours in each round being the most preferable, and a particular effort is made to not assign a player the same colour three times consecutively.

The Swiss pairing rules can be very complex including many different criteria each having a different priority (avoid playing the same opponent, opponents on same wins ,alternating colours, avoid playing teammates). You can tweak these rules in PAPP by changing the settings in the configuration file `papp.cfg` under "Penalités" ("penalties" in French although in this context it would be better translated as "constraints"). However we would suggest you don't try to change these settings unless you have read the PAPP documentation (which is all in French!)

APPENDIX B - THE MIXED BRIGHTWELL SYSTEM (MBS)

1. OVERVIEW

The Mixed Brightwell System (MBS) is a method of breaking ties in Othello tournaments run with the Swiss system. It is also applicable to Round Robin tournaments, where it is equivalent to disc-count. Essentially this system is a combination of Strength-of-Opposition and disc-count.

2. THE CONSTANT C

MBS depends on a constant C, which is a weighting for the relative importance of Strength-of-Opposition and disc-count. The formula to determine the constant is $C = \text{Integer}(64/N)$ where N is the number of rounds (so C=12 for 5 round and C=10 for 6 rounds). In the pairing program PAPP this constant must be set in the tournament initialisation phase (defined as "Brightwell").

3. THE BRIGHTWELL QUOTIENT (BQ)

After the end of the tournament, the tournament officials will evaluate, for each player involved in a tie, the BQ. This is calculated as follows:

- a) If any of the player's opponents have withdrawn in the course of the tournament, ignore any such games for the moment. Also, if a player has been paired against "BYE" (or has not played a round), leave out such a game.
- b) Calculate the total number of discs scored by the player in all games not covered by a) and add C times the sum of points scored in the tournament by all of the player's opponents, except those who have withdrawn.
- c) For each game against an opponent who has withdrawn, and each bye received (or unplayed round), add 32 plus (C times the player's own tournament score) to the result calculated in b). The number resulting is the player's BQ.

4. RESOLVING TIES

If two or more players have the same number of points in the tournament, ties shall be resolved by ranking the players in descending BQ order. If two or more players have the same number of points and the same BQ, ties shall be resolved by ranking the players in descending disc-count order. Further ties shall be resolved by any random equitable means (flip of an Othello disc, pulling numbered tokens from a closed bag...).

APPENDIX C - CHOICE OF COLOUR OR DRAW-WIN

The World Othello Championships have adopted this Japanese rule for one-game finals since 2013.

When a player has the option to choose his colour for the game or a draw-win he has the choice of either:

a) Deciding the colour himself and if the game is a draw his opponent shall be declared the winner.

or

b) Allowing his opponent to choose his colour and being declared the winner in the case of a draw.

When a player can choose his colour for a game, he must announce his choice to the TD and his opponent at least five minutes before the start of the game.