

Rules for FIDE Pairings



A Guide to Applying the FIDE Pairing System

Swiss Pairing

The instructions for doing Swiss Pairings using the Dutch system have now been written in such a way that you almost have to be a computer to understand them!

The basic principles of doing a Swiss draw are:

- Players do not meet more than once
- Players meet opponents with the same score or as near as possible
- Players have equal numbers of Whites and Blacks if possible (this means that colours tend to alternate)
- If you have an odd number of players then the bye comes from the lowest score group.

In this course we will try to keep doing pairings to be as simple as possible.

The full rules are available in the FIDE Handbook. See the following sections:

C.04.1 Basic rules for Swiss Systems

C.04.2 General handling rules for Swiss Tournaments

C.04.3 Swiss Systems officially recognized by FIDE

C.04.3.1. Dutch System

Whichever system is used it should be followed exactly. There should be no deviations to favour one player. Title norms may be invalidated if the draw is seen to have been altered.

This booklet takes you through a tournament.

Doing the Draw (Dutch System) – A Practical Exercise

Consider a tournament with 14 players as shown. The players are arranged in descending rating order. Players without an official FIDE Rating can either be included in the position of their national rating or placed at the bottom. This will often depend on the reliability of the information available. In this case the players indicated by * do not have FIDE ratings but have been positioned by their national rating.

When doing a manual pairing each entrant shall be given a pairing card similar to the one shown below. There are many variations of these each with advantages and disadvantages. The opponent's pin number is entered rather than the name. The colour is indicated by W for White (often written in red ink) and B for Black (in blue or black ink). Byes do not count as a colour (may be indicated by green ink).

Floats are indicated by arrows pointing in the appropriate direction. The result of the game is entered (normally 1, ½ or 0 but 3, 1, 0 is another possibility). The Total cell contains the current cumulative score.

Pin 2	Name					Title	Nat	Rating	FIDE Code
	BROWN, Ben						USA	2180	200567
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Opponent	9								
Colour	W								
Float									
Result									
Total									

In round 1 the top 7 players will be paired against the bottom 7 in order. The colour given to the top rated player may be determined by lot unless the tournament regulations specify otherwise. Colours of the top seeded players will then alternate. In this case the top seed was given black. The round 1 pairing is therefore:

Table	White	Black	Nrs	Results
1	Hood, Henry	Andrews, Alan	8 - 1	
2	Brown, Ben	Inman, Irene	2 - 9	
3	Jones, John	Colins, Calum	10 - 3	
4	Dawson, Diane	Kilpatrick, Kevin	4 - 11	
5	Lawson, Linda	Edwards, Eric	12 - 5	
6	Fox, Findlay	McLean, Martin	6 - 13	
7	Nixon, Norman	Green, Gerry	14 - 7	

This will normally be done by placing the cards in order from 1 to 7 in this case moving them to the right to indicate black and to the left to indicate white. The bottom half cards are then placed in order in the gaps provided. The pairings obtained should be marked on the cards.

The round 1 results are as shown giving the player ranking which are also shown.

Table	White	Black	Nrs	Results
1	Hood, Henry	Andrews, Alan	8 - 1	0-1
2	Brown, Ben	Inman, Irene	2 - 9	1/2
3	Jones, John	Colins, Calum	10 - 3	0-1
4	Dawson, Diane	Kilpatrick, Kevin	4 - 11	1-0
5	Lawson, Linda	Edwards, Eric	12 - 5	0-1
6	Fox, Findlay	McLean, Martin	6 - 13	1/2
7	Nixon, Norman	Green, Gerry	14 - 7	0-1

The results and totals should be marked on the cards.

The column CB in the table opposite indicates the colour balance. Players who had white show +1 those who had black show -1.

Ranking and Games after round 1 of Scotch Cup					
No.	PNo.	Name	R1	CB Score	
1.	1	Andrews, Alan	8b1	-1 1.0	
	3	Colins, Calum	10b1	-1 1.0	
	4	Dawson, Diane	11w1	1 1.0	
	5	Edwards, Eric	12b1	-1 1.0	
	7	Green, Gerry	14b1	-1 1.0	
	6.	2	Brown, Ben	9w½	1 0.5
		6	Fox, Findlay	13w½	1 0.5
9		Inman, Irene	2b½	-1 0.5	
10.	13	McLean, Martin	6b½	-1 0.5	
	8	Hood, Henry	1w0	1 0.0	
	10	Jones, John	3w0	1 0.0	
	11	Kilpatrick, Kevin	4b0	-1 0.0	
	12	Lawson, Linda	5w0	1 0.0	
	14	Nixon, Norman	7w0	1 0.0	

Round 2 Pairing

The round 1 results were not kind to the arbiter as there was a surplus of black winners.

White	pts	Black
	1	
1		
3		
		4
5		
7		
	½	
		2
		6
9		
13		
	0	
		8
		10
11		
		12
		14

Arranging the players in order firstly by points and then by pin gives this table.

We have 5 players on 1 point with four hoping for white and only one seeking black. As we have an odd number we will require a downfloat. Player 7 is the obvious candidate as he is in the largest colour group and is the lowest rated player.

Players 1 and 3 are then the 'top-half' and should be paired against 4 and 5 respectively. 5 will therefore receive the 'wrong' colour.

Player 2 is now upfloat to play 7 (highest and of appropriate colour). 13 should be the downfloat and as 9 can play 6 there is no problem with doing so here.

By the logic used above player 8 upfloats to meet 13. Players 10 and 11 are the top-half and due to meet 12 and 14. To put these in order it is necessary for player 12 to transfer colour.

The cards should be marked to show the pairing made.

Therefore the round 2 pairing is

Table	White	Black	Nrs	Results
1	Andrews, Alan	Dawson, Diane	1 - 4	
2	Colins, Calum	Edwards, Eric	3 - 5	
3	Green, Gerry	Brown, Ben	7 - 2	
4	Inman, Irene	Fox, Findlay	9 - 6	
5	McLean, Martin	Hood, Henry	13 - 8	
6	Lawson, Linda	Jones, John	12 - 10	
7	Kilpatrick, Kevin	Nixon, Norman	11 - 14	

Results for round 2 and resulting leader board are:

Table	White	Black	Nrs	Results
1	Andrews, Alan	Dawson, Diane	1 - 4	1-0
2	Colins, Calum	Edwards, Eric	3 - 5	1/2
3	Green, Gerry	Brown, Ben	7 - 2	0-1
4	Inman, Irene	Fox, Findlay	9 - 6	1/2
5	McLean, Martin	Hood, Henry	13 - 8	0-1
6	Lawson, Linda	Jones, John	12 - 10	1/2
7	Kilpatrick, Kevin	Nixon, Norman	11 - 14	1/2

The cards should be updated showing the results and new totals.

Ranking and Games after round 2 of Scotch Cup					
No.	PNo.	Name	R1	R2	CB Score
1.	1	Andrews, Alan	8b1	4w1	0 2.0
2.	2	Brown, Ben	9w½	7b1	0 1.5
	3	Colins, Calum	10b1	5w½	0 1.5
	5	Edwards, Eric	12b1	3b½	-2 1.5
5.	4	Dawson, Diane	11w1	1b0	0 1.0
	6	Fox, Findlay	13w½	9b½	0 1.0
	7	Green, Gerry	14b1	2w0	0 1.0
	8	Hood, Henry	1w0	13b1	0 1.0
	9	Inman, Irene	2b½	6w½	0 1.0
10.	10	Jones, John	3w0	12b½	0 0.5
	11	Kilpatrick, Kevin	4b0	14w½	0 0.5
	12	Lawson, Linda	5w0	10w½	2 0.5
	13	McLean, Martin	6b½	8w0	0 0.5
	14	Nixon, Norman	7w0	11b½	0 0.5

Round 3 Pairing

White	pts	Black	
	2		Again arranging the players in order firstly by points and then by pin gives this table.
		1	
	1½		Player 1 is the lone leader and we would like to upfloat player 2 to meet him but unfortunately this player had an upfloat in the previous round so we should upfloat 5 instead as he is due the appropriate colour.
2^			
		3	Players 2 and 3 can play so are paired together.
5			
	1		In the 1 point score group we have 3 players seeking white and two black. Again we need a downfloat. Player 8 is the obvious choice. But 8 has floated before. However since this was in the opposite direction it does not produce a problem. Pairing top v bottom gives 4v7 and 6v9. This is a problem as 6 has already played 9. Players 7 and 9 therefore swap positions to avoid this problem.
4			
6			
		7v	
8^			Player 11 is the highest available of the appropriate colour and therefore upfloats to meet 8.
		9	
	½		Pairing the ½ points together gives 10v13 and 14v12.
10			
		11	The cards are updated to show this.
		12	
		13v	
14			

Table	White	Black	Nrs	Results
1	Edwards, Eric	Andrews, Alan	5 - 1	
2	Brown, Ben	Colins, Calum	2 - 3	
3	Dawson, Diane	Inman, Irene	4 - 9	
4	Fox, Findlay	Green, Gerry	6 - 7	
5	Hood, Henry	Kilpatrick, Kevin	8 - 11	
6	Jones, John	McLean, Martin	10 - 13	
7	Nixon, Norman	Lawson, Linda	14 - 12	

Results and leader board for round 3 are shown.

Table	White	Black	Nrs	Results
1	Edwards, Eric	Andrews, Alan	5 - 1	0-1
2	Brown, Ben	Colins, Calum	2 - 3	1/2
3	Dawson, Diane	Inman, Irene	4 - 9	1-0
4	Fox, Findlay	Green, Gerry	6 - 7	1-0
5	Hood, Henry	Kilpatrick, Kevin	8 - 11	1-0
6	Jones, John	McLean, Martin	10 - 13	1-0
7	Nixon, Norman	Lawson, Linda	14 - 12	0-1

The cards should be updated.

Ranking and Games after round 3 of Scotch Cup						
No.	PNo.	Name	R1	R2	R3	CB Score
1.	1	Andrews, Alan	8b1	4w1	5b1	-1 3.0
2.	2	Brown, Ben	9w½	7b1	3w½	1 2.0
	3	Colins, Calum	10b1	5w½	2b½	-1 2.0
	4	Dawson, Diane	11w1	1b0	9w1	1 2.0
	6	Fox, Findlay	13w½	9b½	7w1	1 2.0
	8	Hood, Henry	1w0	13b1	11w1	1 2.0
7.	5	Edwards, Eric	12b1	3b½	1w0	-1 1.5
	10	Jones, John	3w0	12b½	13w1	1 1.5
	12	Lawson, Linda	5w0	10w½	14b1	1 1.5
10.	7	Green, Gerry	14b1	2w0	6b0	-1 1.0
	9	Inman, Irene	2b½	6w½	4b0	-1 1.0
12.	11	Kilpatrick, Kevin	4b0	14w½	8b0	-1 0.5
	13	McLean, Martin	6b½	8w0	10b0	-1 0.5
	14	Nixon, Norman	7w0	11b½	12w0	1 0.5

Round 4 Pairing

White	pts	Black	<p>Again arranging the players in order firstly by points and then by pin gives this table.</p> <p>Player 1 is still the lone leader. Player 2 floated up two rounds ago so is still prevented, therefore player 4 should be the upfloat but they have already met so 6 must upfloat.</p> <p>Player 4 should colour transfer giving 4v2 and 3v8 on the two point score group.</p> <p>The 1½ point group is relatively straightforward 5v10 with 12 downfloating. The obvious upfloat is 7 so 7v12 is a pairing.</p> <p>We now have the tricky score group (though it is possible to get the correct answer by accident!). We have three white seekers and only one black so we need a transfer. If everything else is the same this will normally be the lowest rated, in this case player 13. However because we are looking for an upfloat 11 might be considered as the best candidate and would be except for the previous upfloat. Because of this upfloat 11 is not chosen to transfer and 13 is.</p> <p>Having transferred across 13 should upfloat but this leaves 11v14 who have already met. 14 must upfloat giving 9v14 and 11v13.</p> <p>Had we incorrectly said that 14 is the only black seeker so must go up to play 11 we would get the same answer with much less work. But we would have reached the answer by a wrong method.</p>
	3		
1v			
	2		
		2-^	
3			
		4	
		6	
		8^v	
	1½		
5^			
		10	
		12	
	1		
7-v			
9			
	½		
11^			
13-v			
		14	

Table	White	Black	Nrs	Results
1	Andrews, Alan	Fox, Findlay	1 - 6	
2	Dawson, Diane	Brown, Ben	4 - 2	
3	Colins, Calum	Hood, Henry	3 - 8	
4	Edwards, Eric	Jones, John	5 - 10	
5	Green, Gerry	Lawson, Linda	7 - 12	
6	Inman, Irene	Nixon, Norman	9 - 14	
7	Kilpatrick, Kevin	McLean, Martin	11 - 13	

Round 5 Pairing

The round 4 results and leaderboard are as given

Table	White	Black	Nrs	Results
1	Andrews, Alan	Fox, Findlay	1 - 6	1/2
2	Dawson, Diane	Brown, Ben	4 - 2	1/2
3	Colins, Calum	Hood, Henry	3 - 8	1-0
4	Edwards, Eric	Jones, John	5 - 10	1-0
5	Green, Gerry	Lawson, Linda	7 - 12	1-0
6	Inman, Irene	Nixon, Norman	9 - 14	1-0
7	Kilpatrick, Kevin	McLean, Martin	11 - 13	1/2

Ranking and Games after round 4 of Scotch Cup							
No.	PNo.	Name	R1	R2	R3	R4	CB Score
1.	1	Andrews, Alan	8b1	4w1	5b1	6w½	0 3.5
2.	3	Colins, Calum	10b1	5w½	2b½	8w1	0 3.0
3.	2	Brown, Ben	9w½	7b1	3w½	4b½	0 2.5
4.	4	Dawson, Diane	11w1	1b0	9w1	2w½	2 2.5
5.	5	Edwards, Eric	12b1	3b½	1w0	10w1	0 2.5
6.	7	Fox, Findlay	13w½	9b½	7w1	1b½	0 2.5
7.	7	Green, Gerry	14b1	2w0	6b0	12w1	0 2.0
8.	8	Hood, Henry	1w0	13b1	11w1	3b0	0 2.0
9.	9	Inman, Irene	2b½	6w½	4b0	14w1	0 2.0
10.	10	Jones, John	3w0	12b½	13w1	5b0	0 1.5
11.	12	Lawson, Linda	5w0	10w½	14b1	7b0	0 1.5
12.	11	Kilpatrick, Kevin	4b0	14w½	8b0	13w½	0 1.0
13.	13	McLean, Martin	6b½	8w0	10b0	11b½	-2 1.0
14.	14	Nixon, Norman	7w0	11b½	12w0	9b0	0 0.5

Mark up the cards and do the round 5 pairing.

Round 5

Round 5 is a relatively straightforward draw. Player 9 cannot be downfloated so 7 must. This is probably the only 'tricky' bit. Everything else should fall into place.

Table	White	Black	Nrs	Results
1	Colins, Calum	Andrews, Alan	3 - 1	
2	Brown, Ben	Edwards, Eric	2 - 5	
3	Fox, Findlay	Dawson, Diane	6 - 4	
4	Hood, Henry	Inman, Irene	8 - 9	
5	Jones, John	Green, Gerry	10 - 7	
6	Lawson, Linda	Kilpatrick, Kevin	12 - 11	
7	McLean, Martin	Nixon, Norman	13 - 14	