D.II.02 Olympiad Pairing Rules

Proposal for 2008 by Almog Burstein and Werner Stubenvoll

A. Basic Pairing System

1. The basic pairing system shall be the Controlled Swiss System Pairings using Match Points for both Pairing and Scoring.

B. Odd Number of Participating Teams

2. The organizing federation shall be entitled to enter a second team ("B" team). If there is an odd number of participating teams the organizing federation has the right to enter a third team ("C" team).

3. If the "C" team is paired and plays round 1 it shall remain in the tournament to the conclusion even though a team or teams dropping out or a new team or teams arriving subsequently results in an odd number of teams still in competition.

C. Ranking of Teams for Pairing Purposes

4. The teams in the open championship are composed by four players, the teams in the women's championship are composed by four women players. One reserve player may be nominated per team.
5. Obtain a list of all teams participating and full names of all players of each team, including their board order, one month before the start of the Olympiad.
    The list of names and the order of the players can be changed only with the approval of the President of FIDE.

6. Record the FIDE rating of each team member having such a rating.

7. Assign an arbitrary rating equal to the minimum FIDE rating to team members who have no FIDE rating.

8. Rank all teams in order of the average of their 4 highest FIDE-rated players. The team with the highest average rating shall be assigned Pairing Number 1, the second highest, Pairing Number 2, etc.

9. If two or more teams have the same average rating, rank them according to

    a. the rating of the fifth player
    b. the final standing of the previous Olympiad
    c. alphabetically.

D. Number of Rounds

10. The number of rounds in both men's and women's championships in the Olympiad shall be 11.

E. Byes

11. If there is an odd number of teams a bye should be given to one team which arbitrarily would be credited with 1 match point and two game points.

   The team given the bye in the first round would be that team ranked last. For example:
   If there are 85 teams, then the team ranked as No. 85 would receive the bye in the first round.

   The team given the bye in subsequent rounds would be the last ranked team of the group with the lowest total number of match points.
   No team shall receive more than one bye.

F. Scoring unfinished games for pairing purposes

12. Unfinished games shall be considered as draws for pairing purposes.

G. Tie Breaking

13. The position of teams that finish with the same number of match points shall be determined by application of the following tie-breaking procedures in sequence, proceeding from (a) to (b) to (c) to the extent required:

   a) the sum of Sonneborn-Berger points, which are calculated as follows: match points of each opponent, excluding the opponent who scored the lowest number of match points, multiplied by the number of game points achieved against this opponent;
   b) by the sum of the match points of all the teams opponents, excluding the lowest one;
   c) by the sum of the match points of all the teams opponents;

   For tie-break purposes a bye is counted as a drawn match against the team itself, an unplayed match - if the opponent team does not appear on time – is counted as a match won by 3 - 1.

H. General Pairing Regulations

14. Assign a pairing number to each team as per Section C.

15. a) No team shall play the same opponent more than once.

b)   A team having scored without playing will not receive a bye in subsequent rounds. This is the case when a team has received a bye due to an odd number of teams or when one of the opponent teams did not appear on time.

16. The difference of the match points of two teams paired against each other should be 0 or, if this is not possible, as small as possible

17. Pairings shall be made from the top group down to, but not including, the middle group; then from the bottom group up to, but not including, the middle group, and finally the middle group. The middle group shall be defined as that group in which the median team in the standings is located. If there is an even number of teams being paired, the lower of the two middle teams shall be considered as the median team.

Example: Suppose there are 88 teams:

	place	match points
	. . .	
	43	11 points
	44	11 points
Median team ⇒	45	10 points
	46	10 points

Therefore the 10 match point group is the median group.

I. Colour allocation

18. Team pairings are made without regard of colour.

19. In the first round the colour assigned to board 1 of the team ranked number 1 shall be selected by lot. All other odd numbered teams in the top half of the ranking list shall receive the same colour in the first round on board 1 as the team ranked number 1.

20. a)   No team's board 1 colour difference will become >+2 or <-2.

     b)   No team's board 1 will receive the same colour three times in row

21. a)   If in a score group a complete pairing is only possible without applying rule 20 such a pairing will then be made.

     b)   If in a score group including floaters from higher or lower score groups a complete pairing is only possible by choosing another floater, another floater will be chosen.

22. After the team pairings have been made, colours shall be assigned based on giving priority to:

a) equalisation of colours on board 1 (regardless of who has played or is playing board 1 and regardless of what colours the particular player assigned to board 1 has had), and

b) alternation of colours on board 1.

23. If both teams have had white the same number of times on board 1 and have had opposite colours on board 1 in the immediately preceding round the colours shall be assigned to board 1 to provide alternation for each team from the colour it had in the previous round.

24. If both teams have had white the same number of times on board 1 the colours shall be assigned to board 1 to provide the lowest sequence of the same colour for both teams.

25. If both teams have had white the same number of times on board 1 and have had exactly the same sequence of colours, then priority shall be given to

   a) balancing the colour on board 1 of the team with the higher ranked team, or

   b) alternation of colour on board 1 of the higher ranked team from the last round.

26. If both teams have had white the same number of times on board 1 and have had exactly the same sequence of colours, and each team has had the same number of whites and blacks on board 1, then the colour on board 1 of the higher ranked team shall be alternated from the last round.

27. The teams ranked first in the pairing list will have the white pieces on the odd-numbered boards, the black pieces on the even-numbered boards.

J. Detailed Pairings Procedure for rounds 1 to 3

28. a) In the first two rounds, two imaginary match points shall be added, for pairing purposes only, to each of the teams in the top half – rounded to the nearest even number - of the initial list as per Section C. These imaginary points shall be deducted before making the pairings for the third round.

   b) If there is an additional team starting to play from round 2, this team will also get two imaginary match points, provided it has to be ranked in the top half if the initial list.

29. a) If there is an uneven number of teams in a group in the top half of the score groups, the weakest rated team shall be dropped to the group immediately below and paired against the strongest rated team in that group, that it has not already played.

   b) If the group from which the weakest rated team has been dropped is such that a complete pairing of all remaining teams in the group cannot be

made, then - instead of dropping the weakest rated team - the second weakest team in the group shall be dropped, etc.

30. If the weakest rated team that is dropped to the group immediately below has already played every team in the group immediately below, then it shall be moved back to its original group and the second weakest team shall be dropped, etc.

31. If every team in an odd numbered group in the top half of the score group has played every team in the group immediately below then the same procedure is followed as per rules 28, 29 and 30.

32. If there is an uneven number of teams in a group in the bottom half of the score groups, the strongest rated team shall be elevated to the group immediately above and paired against the weakest rated team in that group, that it has not already played.

33. If the group from which the strongest rated team has been elevated is such that a complete pairing of all remaining teams in the group cannot be made, then the second strongest team in the group shall be elevated, etc.

34. If the strongest rated team that is elevated to the group immediately above has already played every team in the group immediately above, then it shall be moved back to its original group and the second strongest team shall be elevated, etc.

35. If every team in an odd numbered group in the bottom half of the score groups has played every team in the group immediately above then the same procedure is followed as per rules 32, 33 and 34.

36. To the extent possible, teams in the top half of any point group shall be paired in sequence against the teams in the bottom half of the same point group.

37. For teams in the median group and higher, priority shall be given to first finding the correct pairing for the strongest team in that point group, etc.

38. For teams below the median group, priority shall be given to first finding the correct pairing for the weakest team in a given point group, then the second weakest team in that point group, etc.

39. Assuming 2N teams in a group, it is first attempted to pair the first team in the group with the N + 1 team. If that is possible, we are left with a subgroup of 2N - 2 teams. The same procedure is now applied to the subgroup. Wherever a match is not possible because the teams have already played each other, or the subgroup is unsolvable, the first team in the group (or subgroup) is matched with N + 2 (instead of N + 1), then N + 3, until 2N, and if still unsuccessful, against N-1, N-2, etc.

40. In order to illustrate this procedure, suppose there are six teams in a group, 1 through 6. There will be 15 combinations of pairing within the group, in the following descending order of priority:

    (1)   1 x 4, 2 x 5, 3 x 6

(2)   1 x 4, 2 x 6, 3 x 5
(3)   1 x 4, 2 x 3, 5 x 6
(4)   1 x 5, 2 x 4, 3 x 6
(5)   1 x 5, 2 x 6, 3 x 4
(6)   1 x 5, 2 x 3, 4 x 6
(7)   1 x 6, 2 x 4, 3 x 5
(8)   1 x 6, 2 x 5, 3 x 4
(9)   1 x 6, 2 x 3, 4 x 5
(10) 1 x 3, 2 x 5, 4 x 6
(11) 1 x 3, 2 x 6, 4 x 5
(12) 1 x 3, 2 x 4, 5 x 6
(13) 1 x 2, 3 x 5, 4 x 6
(14) 1 x 2, 3 x 6, 4 x 5
(15) 1 x 2, 3 x 4, 5 x 6

41.   In any group below the median group priority shall be given to pairing the weakest team in the group and the same logic shall apply as outlined in rule 37 but in reverse order.

42.   If the top ranked team in a group (the strongest team) has played all the other teams in the same point group, priority shall be given to pairing this team against the strongest team in the next point group below that it has not already played. This applies to teams in the median group and above.

43.   For the similar case in a group below the median group the lowest ranked team (weakest team) in that point group that has played all other teams in the same point group, priority shall be given to pairing this team against the weakest team in the next point group above that it has not already played.

44.   For teams in the median group and above if the top ranked team in a group has played all the teams in its own point group and all teams in the point group immediately below it, its opponent shall be found by selecting the highest rated team in the group next below, that it has not already played.

45.   For the similar case of teams in a group below the median group if the lowest ranked team in that point group has played all the teams in the point group immediately above it, its opponent shall be found by selecting the lowest rated team in the group next above that it has not already played.

46.   The same pattern of pairings shall be followed in the case of other teams in a given point group in the groups below the median group that have already played all other teams in their own point group as has been followed in pairing rules 42, 43, 44 and 45.

47.   Priority shall be given to making a pairing of all teams in a single group with other teams in the same group before dropping a team to the group below (if not all, not necessarily the maximum). In all such cases the same general logic as detailed above shall be followed.

K. Detailed Pairing Procedure for Rounds 4 to11.

48. After the 3rd round, teams in a score-group (including `floaters` from other score-groups) shall be arranged in the order of the tie breaking procedure as outlined in section G.

49. In each median score-group or higher, priority shall be given to pairing the highest team with the lowest team in that group that it has not already played. The second highest team shall be paired with the second lowest team, etc.

50. To illustrate the procedure, suppose there are six teams in a score-group, ordered 1 through 6 as described in rule 45. There will be 15 combinations of pairing within the group, in the following descending order of priority.

    (1)   1 x 6, 2 x 5, 3 x 4
    (2)   1 x 6, 2 x 4, 3 x 5
    (3)   1 x 6, 2 x 3, 4 x 5
    (4)   1 x 5, 2 x 6, 3 x 4
    (5)   1 x 5, 2 x 4, 3 x 6
    (6)   1 x 5, 2 x 3, 4 x 6
    (7)   1 x 4, 2 x 6, 3 x 5
    (8)   1 x 4, 2 x 5, 3 x 6
    (9)   1 x 4, 2 x 3, 5 x 6
    (10) 1 x 3, 2 x 6, 4 x 5
    (11) 1 x 3, 2 x 5, 4 x 6
    (12) 1 x 3, 2 x 4, 5 x 6
    (13) 1 x 2, 3 x 6, 4 x 5
    (14) 1 x 2, 3 x 5, 4 x 6
    (15) 1 x 2, 3 x 4, 5 x 6

51. If there is an uneven number of teams in a group, the same procedure is followed and the remaining team is floated to the next score-group (provided it is not a floater from another score-group) and is paired within this group according to the same procedure.

52. To illustrate the procedure, suppose there are 5 teams in a group. There will be 15 combinations of pairing within the group, in the following descending order of priority:

    (1)   1 x 5, 2 x 4, 3-floater
    (2)   1 x 5, 2 x 3, 4-floater
    (3)   1 x 5, 3 x 4, 2-floater
    (4)   1 x 4, 2 x 5, 3-floater
    (5)   1 x 4, 2 x 3, 5-floater
    (6)   1 x 4, 3 x 5, 2-floater
    (7)   1 x 3, 2 x 5, 4-floater
    (8)   1 x 3, 2 x 4, 5-floater
    (9)   1 x 3, 4 x 5, 2-floater
    (10) 1 x 2, 3 x 5, 4-floater
    (11) 1 x 2, 3 x 4, 5-floater
    (12) 1 x 2, 4 x 5, 3-floater
    (13) 2 x 5, 3 x 4, 1-floater
    (14) 2 x 4, 3 x 5, 1-floater

(15) 2 x 3, 4 x 5, 1-floater

[If, for example, No. 2 is a floater from an upper score-group, pairings (3), (6) & (9) are not valid].

53. If the group from which the floater has been dropped is such that a complete pairing of all remaining teams in the group cannot be made, or if the floater has already played every team in the next group, then the floater shall be moved back to its original group, trying the next possible pairing according to the order of priority. If a complete pairing of all teams in two adjacent groups cannot be made, then these two groups shall be considered as one group, and rules 45-49 shall accordingly apply.

54. In the case the median score group contains floaters coming from higher score groups and floaters coming from lower score groups they shall not be paired each other.

55. In any group below the median group priority shall be given to pairing the lowest team in the group and the same pattern of pairing shall apply as outlined in rules 46-50 but in reverse order.

K. Miscellaneous

56. The pairings are to be made by the Technical Administration Panel (TAP) as outlined in article 6.3.7 of the Chess Olympiad Regulations.

57. Only those teams who have two or more players present at 19:00 HRS the day before the start of round 1 (and the TAP has been notified of their presence) plus those teams who have given notification of their time of arrival and travel arrangements (and the TAP has been informed) shall be paired for the first round with the added provision that the travel arrangements must be such that the absent team or teams shall be able to be in the tournament room before the lapse of one hour after the start of the first round.

58. Those teams who do not show up before the lapse of one hour after the start of any round shall lose by a 0-4 score.

59. After the team pairings are officially published they shall not be changed, beside rule 20 of these regulations has been violated. In case of any change of published team pairings or individual pairings the chief arbiter has to inform all team captains concerned. To have enough time for new preparations, if necessary the start of one or more games may be postponed by the chief arbiter.

60. Rules 57, 58 or 59 may be overruled by decision of the FIDE President.

61. No protest against the pairing shall be allowed.