

Suggested Movements for Clontarf Area, FoxBay & Glasnevin Region Virtual Bridge Clubs

Based on a target of 24 Boards, achieving good or perfect balance

Tables	Total Boards	Boards per Round	Rounds	Movement	Scoring	Winners
3	21	7	3	Clocked	MPs	2
4	24	6	4	Clocked	MPs	2
5	20	4	5	Clocked	MPs	2
6	25	5	5	Clocked	MPs	2
7	21	3	7	Clocked	MPs	2
8	24	3	8	Clocked	MPs	2
9	24	3	8	Clocked	MPs	2
10	22	2	11	Clocked	MPs	2
11	22	2	11	Clocked	MPs	2
12	24	2	12	Clocked*	MPs	2
13-16	24	4	6 (5)	Swiss	IMPs	1
17-19	21	3	7 (5)	Swiss	IMPs	1
20-23	24	3	8 (5)	Swiss	IMPs	1
24-26	27	3	9 (5)	Swiss	iMPs	1

Notes: * with 12 tables, a 6 round, 4 board per round Swiss is just about acceptable (if you expect 13 tables but only 12 get in).
 The Clocked Tournaments use a Mitchell type movement within a Barometer Pairs Event.
 For Swiss, the recommended number of rounds is shown with the minimum in brackets.
 In a Swiss movement, do not exceed the recommended number of boards or you will "Over-Swiss" it.
 For Tournaments with 3-6 Tables, consider running a Howell Movement instead of the Default Mitchell type.
 If 50 or more Tables enter a Tournament, BBO automatically divides it into two equal Sections.

Howell Movement

These are Full Howells so the Number of Rounds (R) is Determined by the Number of Tables (T) Using the formula: $R=2T-1$. These are Single Winner Tournaments. They are well balanced if left uncurtailed.

Tables	Rounds (Pre Set)	Boards per Round	Total Boards	Winners
3	5	4	20	1
4	7	3	21	1
5	9	2	18	1
6	11	2	22	1
7	13	2	26	1

Notes: To run a Howell, the Host Account must be online at the Start of the Tournament.
 The host can Curtail the number of rounds but this destroys the balance.
 There must be at least as many pairs as there are rounds or the Tournament will fail.

Setting Boards and Rounds in BBO v2 – Notes

Which Movement?

Howell Movements

The most obvious way to organise a fair movement is to have every pair play against every other pair once, and once only. The Full Howell movement achieves this and is therefore essentially a Round Robin. You designate one pair as the so called “Pivot Pair”. By convention, you sit them at the highest numbered table, where they remain throughout the tournament. Now you have every other pair play against them in turn. So, let’s say you have 8 pairs in total. You need 7 rounds to achieve your aim of having the Pivot Pair play against every other pair. In the course of those rounds, every pair plays every other pair once, and once only. So, in a Full Howell, the number of rounds (R) is 1 less than the number of pairs. In the real world, the formula used is $R=2T-1$ to cater for half-tables but of course BBO has no truck with half tables. Note that in a Howell movement, there is no concept of NS and EW. Players are identified by a unique number.

Advantages

- It is very fair
- It produces one overall first, second, third etc. down the ranks – in the jargon, it’s a One-Winner competition.

Disadvantages

- The movement is very complicated (Howell was a mathematician) but in the Virtual World of BBO, that’s irrelevant.
- The number of rounds is strictly determined by the number of tables. In practice, this makes it unsuitable for large competitions.
- There is only one Stationary Position (the Pivot Pair). Again, this is irrelevant in BBO.

Variations

- If you can’t play the number of rounds that the movement demands, there are two ways to shorten it.
 - One is called a Reduced Howell (aka $\frac{3}{4}$ Howell). In this version, extra stationary pairs are introduced and for every such pair, a round is deducted. This destroys the balance. BBO does not support this.
 - The other is a Curtailed Howell, where you essentially stop the movement before all the rounds have been played. This too destroys the balance. BBO does support this.
- There are a large number of different movement schemes available to achieve the aims of the Movement. So, for example, the scheme in Scorebridge or EBU Score might well differ from the scheme your club has in the movement cards it uses. The version used by BBO is tailored so everyone plays a given board set at the same time. I believe it is called a Flower Howell.

How to run a Howell on BBO

- Set the tournament up using a Clocked movement with Match-Point scoring and enter the number of boards and boards per round as listed on the appended table. I have supplied these numbers for 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 table Howells.
- In the description section of the competition, enter +howell+. It must be all lower case with no spaces.
- The host account must be online as the tournament is starting; so, you need to contact Aidan, Dan or Dick. Note that they don't have to direct the tournament, but they must be online.
- There are a variety of other ++ commands available e.g. to curtail the movement, but you don't need them to run the (proper) Full Howell.
- You can't have a half table. My understanding is that the movement will work with a half-table, in the sense that it won't crash (I haven't tried and don't intend to!) but the scoring will be messed up.

The Clocked Movement

This is essentially a Straight Mitchell movement with the added bonus that it works regardless of whether you have an odd or even number of tables, so you don't have to concern yourself with Skips, Shares, Relays or Rovers. Most of you are very familiar with this but there are a few issues I want to highlight

- In a Mitchell type movement, there are actually two competitions going on. Let's say you are sitting N. Provided the movement is complete, you will meet every E/W pair once and only once. You never meet a N/S pair. So, while your opponents are the E/W pairs, you are actually competing against the other N/S pairs.
- There are two winners; a N/S winner and an E/W winner.
- There is no competition going on between the N/S pairs and the E/W pairs
- If you want a one-winner competition, e.g. for your Presidents Prize, you can't use this movement. The practice of listing pair from both sides in order of their %score is utterly meaningless.
- There is a variation of the Mitchell Movement called a Switched Mitchell which involves switching players from N/S to E/W for some of the rounds. This will produce a one-winner competition but BBO does not support it.
- Provided you are happy with the two-winner format and provided the number of rounds played equals the number of tables, this movement is very fair.
- If you have one round fewer than there are tables or one round more than there are tables it becomes unbalanced, but it's acceptable.
- If the discrepancy between rounds played and the number of tables is 2 or more, it becomes very unbalanced. You would be as well off running a raffle! OK that's a slight exaggeration but you get my drift.
- BBO will allow you to run a Clocked Movement with a half-table, in the sense that it won't crash; but the scoring is messed up. I actually have done this once and won't be doing it again. I strongly advise against it.
- I have provided recommended numbers for Clocked Movements from 3 to 12 tables. In reality, running a two-winner competition with fewer than 5 tables, is a bit daft, so I recommend using Howells for 3-6 table tournaments.

The Swiss Movement

The Swiss Movement comes into its own in larger competitions, where a Round Robin is not feasible. To put it another way, use Swiss when you have more tables than rounds; so, in practice 13+ tables. It was first used for a Chess tournament, held in 1897 in Zurich, thus the name. The Swiss is a one-winner movement. There are a number of versions, but the one used by BBO works as follows:

- The assignment of pairs to compete against one another in the first round is random.
- At the end of the first round, the top scoring pair goes to table 1 as NS, the next highest to table 1 as EW, the next to table 2 as NS and so on. This arrangement is referred to as the Monrad system.
- As the competition progresses, the same system is employed to determine who plays who in each succeeding round.
- In the real world, there is an algorithm built into the system to prevent pairs from meeting more than once. Sometimes, this algorithm is switched off for the last round.
- In BBO's version of Swiss, there is no such algorithm, so pairs can meet more than once in any round. This variation is referred to as the Danish system. Players don't like this feature, but it doesn't interfere with the fairness of the result.
- Note also that a player may (probably will) move between NS and EW as the competition proceeds. They should be warned about this.
- There is obviously a minimum number of rounds required to run a Swiss Competition. There is also an optimal number. The appended table shows the optimal number (followed by the minimum number in brackets) for 13 to 26 tables. If you need the numbers for more tables, just ask me.
- It may seem counter-intuitive, but it is very easy to run too many rounds in a Swiss competition. The effects vary, depending on the exact system but it's undesirable. In the Danish system, one of the consequences is to increase the probability of pairs meeting multiple times. Tournaments using a Swiss type movement with too many rounds are referred to as being "Over-Swissed".

How to Run a Swiss Tournament on BBO

- Select Swiss and change the scoring to IMPs.
- Enter the number of boards and boards per round as per the appended chart.
- BEWARE: You absolutely must never have a half-table. If you have, the system crashes at the end of the first round and you will have a minimum of 52 very unhappy customers!

One-Winner Competitions

If you require a one-winner movement, I have included Howell movements for 3-7 tables and Swiss Movements for 13+. What do you do for 8-12? For 8 or 9 tables you can run a 4 round Swiss and for 10-12 a 5 round Swiss. The latter is actually fine and the 4 round Swiss for 8-9 is just acceptable. If you can't hack that, just resort to the raffle!

Aidan Synnott.
19/7/2020.