



Swindon Chess Club

Pairing & Sit-Out Guide

SCC Pairing System:

The SCC Pairing System aims to provide players with a similar strength opponent who they have not yet played in the SCC Championship during the season. At the start of a Rated Group evening, attending players are matched against each other by the "GSRP System" (Global Score Relative Percentage), as follows:

(A) For competition week 1:

The players are ranked in descending order, using each player's latest ECF grade.

If a player is listed on the ECF Database with a rating corresponding to the competition type (e.g. OTB Classical rating), then they are deemed as RATED at their listed rating value, even if they haven't played for some years.

An UNRATED player in this week, is placed in the middle of the ECF grade ordered list.

Match pairings are then made in top down order (1st vs 2nd, 3rd vs 4th, 5th vs 6th and so on), with the stronger player of each pairing getting the black pieces.

(B) For competition week 2 and onwards:

The players are ranked in descending order, using each player's GSRP value in the competition so far.

$$\text{GSRP} = (\text{player's score} + 0.5) / (\text{total games they have played} + 1) * 100$$

The add of 0.5 and 1, effectively gives every player a first round bye. This stops extreme swings during each player's first few games and will cap the result after 1 game into the range 25%-75%. This small bias offset will become increasingly less influential as more games are played.

The formula above is based on a Bayesian Filtered percentage, with Laplace / Jeffreys prior mid-point weightings.

If a player has not yet played a game in the competition, then their GSRP value is assumed to be 50%, whether or not they have an ECF rating.

In cases where two or more players have an equal position in the ordered list, they are placed in an arbitrary order. A good way to achieve this, is to put them in first name alphabetical order and if identical first names then by their surname, since names and playing strength should be completely uncorrelated.

Match pairings are performed by working down the ordered list of players in attendance, pairing each player with the next lower player against whom they have not already played in the competition. This is repeated until all the players in attendance are paired up.

The same two players will never be paired up twice in the competition.

P.T.O.



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SCC Pairing System (cont):

If pairing players in a simple top-to-bottom ordering proves problematic, then as far as possible, players will be matched with their closest opponent from the ordered list.

Finally, the player who gets to play with the white pieces vs the black pieces is decided, with the aim of keeping it balanced over the duration of the competition.

If a player(s) cannot be matched by the SCC Pairing System, they will either be asked to Sit-Out, or where possible to play a game outside of the SCC Championship. This game will be unrated, unless the players wish to play a rated game, in which case so long as the evening organisers are informed of this decision prior to it commencing, the game's result will count towards the player's ECF ratings.

Sit-Outs:

In the event of an odd number of players turning up to a Rated Group evening, which can happen from time to time, then one player will be asked to stand down (i.e. "sit-out"). The following criteria are used to determine which player in attendance is asked to sit-out, applied in the order shown:

- A verbal request for a volunteer willing to sit-out
- A player who has played the maximum 15 club championship games
- A player who has played the most games in the club championship

Alternatively, three volunteers maybe requested to sit-out and play some quicker time-format casual games, taking turns to play. In this case, these games will not be rated.

NB: This Sit-Out process is currently under review by the SCC Committee (06-Apr-2026) and is therefore subject to change in the future.