

Club Duplicate Pairs and Suggested Movements

Duplicate Pairs is the game we all know and love and the one most commonly played in bridge clubs up and down the country. The idea of duplicate pairs is that a partnership should play a number of boards against each other pair. The pairs then move and play different boards against another pair, carrying on like this throughout the session. It is essential that they do not meet the same hands twice, and desirable that they do not meet the same opponents twice. Standard pairs 'movements' of boards and players are designed to ensure this. The number of tables, the time available and the experience of the players will determine the number of boards to be played.

There are no absolute rules for which movements clubs should use in their duplicate sessions, as each club is different. Some clubs prefer to play single winner arrow-switched movements; others prefer to have separate North-South and East-West winners. Some clubs like to play more boards in a session; others prefer fewer. Some clubs may have to provide for more stationary pairs than others. There are many movements to choose from, all with their own particular advantages.

Generally, with a smaller number of tables you should use a Howell; a Mitchell otherwise. In the table below we have made some suggestions for movements which could be used at a club on the assumption that most clubs like to play between 24 and 27 boards in a session. A more complete listing with full details can be found in the *EBU Movement Manual* available from the [EBU Bridge Shop](#). See also occasional articles in the EBU's *Club Focus* newsletter.

Club standard movements

Directors need to avoid choosing a movement with too many boards resulting in a late finish, which may make members unhappy. It is good practice for a club to decide on a set of club standard movements for each number of tables likely to occur at the club's sessions and produce a sheet listing these as reference for the club's TDs and Scorers. Modern bridge scoring programs contain a fairly comprehensive set of movements and allow others to be created and added if necessary. Clubs can pre-define the club standard movements within the scoring program. This makes it easier for the Scorer to find the correct movement in the program when setting up a new event.

Movement cards

The more popular scoring programs allow the club to print its own movement cards, which can be placed on the tables to inform players of the correct pair numbers, boards and movements on each round. Sets of pre-printed cards for the more common Howell movements are also available from the [EBU Bridge Shop](#).

Arrow-switching

A Howell is an all-play-all movement producing one winner. A Mitchell Movement has two entirely separate fields (North/South and East/West) and will produce two winners. You can produce one winner in a Mitchell by means of an arrow-switch on the last round, where the North/South pairs play the East/West cards and *vice versa*. If you want to run a single-winner Mitchell with more than 11 rounds, you should arrow-switch the last two rounds.

There is no mathematical reason why it is the last one or two rounds that is switched. Some clubs do it at the start of the movement (to get it over). Like so many things in bridge it has become custom and practice to switch at the end.

Members sometimes query the validity of arrow-switching. If you get such query, you can refer them to [The Mathematics of Duplicate Bridge Tournaments](#) by J R Manning.

Sit-outs

With a half-table and a choice of movements, it may be better to choose the movement providing the shortest sit-out time, i.e. prefer the movement with fewer boards in each round in order that pairs do not have to sit out for too long. Much of the time it doesn't matter where the half table is placed, but in some events (e.g. share and relay Mitchell) it makes sense to put the half table where you can eliminate the share.

Shortening a movement

It is better to play as many rounds of a movement as possible in order to provide the fairest competition. However, most movements can be shortened by omitting rounds at the end. E.g. if the club wishes to play 24 boards using a standard Mitchell movement on an evening when there are 15 tables, it can simply play 12 two-board rounds out of the full 15, missing out the last three rounds. In this particular case, if a single-winner movement is desired, rounds 11 and 12 should be arrow-switched.

Stationary pairs and $\frac{3}{4}$ Howells

A club may have several pairs that need to remain stationary. Obviously, a Mitchell movement where all North/South pairs remain in the same position throughout will solve that problem. A full Howell normally only has one stationary pair, but note that for 8-12 tables, Howell cards are available for 26 boards with 13 moving pairs (numbers 1-13), and the remaining pairs all stationary. They are not strictly Howell Movements, in that each pair does not play every other pair, but are known as ' $\frac{3}{4}$ Howells'.

Other Movements

Some Mitchell and Howell movements do not fit in well with what the club requires. For example – an 11-table Mitchell means putting out either 22 boards (usually not enough) or 33 and truncating after 8 or 9 rounds. A $5\frac{1}{2}$ table Howell mean only 22 boards in play with all pairs only playing 20.

One solution is to play a Hesitation Mitchell movement. This allows for an extra set of boards to be played with an extra round. As an example, if you have 11 tables and would like to play 24 boards, you can turn an 11-table Mitchell into an 11-table Hesitation Mitchell – playing 12 rounds. This is achieved by setting out 11 tables as normal. North/South Pairs 1 to 10 are stationary as normal. The moving pairs move as follows

EW1 →EW2→EW3→EW4→EW5→EW6→EW7
→EW8→EW9→EW10→EW11→NS11→EW1

So the moving pairs play twice at table 11 – once as EW and then as NS – and then resume their normal progression as EW. For this event the 24 boards are put out 2 per table with a relay (boards 11 & 12) after table 5. As was mentioned earlier, most scoring programs allow you to print out movement cards with the finer detail on them.

Suggested Pairs Movements for Clubs

With a half-table the movement is defined by the next highest whole number, i.e. for six-and-a-half tables you need a seven-table movement.

No. of tables		Movement	Boards per round	Rounds played (unplayed)	Length of session (no. of boards)
4		4-table Howell	3	7(0)	21
	or	4-table Howell	4	7(0)	28
5		5-table Howell	3	9(0)	27
	or	5-table Mitchell	5	5(0)	25
6		6-table Howell	2	11(0)	22
	or	6-table $\frac{3}{4}$ Howell	3	9(0)	27
	or	6-table share and relay Mitchell (1 & 6 share, relay between 3 & 4)	4	6(0)	24
	or	6-table Double Hesitation	3	8(0)	24
7		7-table Howell	2	13(0)	26
	or	7-table Mitchell	4	7(0)	28
	or	as above with six rounds	4	6(1)	24 out of 28
	or	7-table hesitation Mitchell	3	8(0)	24
8		8-table share and relay Mitchell (1 & 8 share, relay between 4 & 5)	3	8(0)	24
	or	8-table skip Mitchell	3	7(0)	21 out of 24
	or	8-table hesitation Mitchell	3	9(0)	27
	or	as above with eight rounds	3	8(1)	24 out of 27
9		9-table Mitchell	3	9(0)	27
	or	as above with eight rounds	3	8(1)	24 out of 27
10		10-table skip Mitchell	3	9	27 out of 30
	or	as above with eight rounds	3	8(1)	24 out of 30
11		11-table Mitchell	2	11	22
	or	11-table Mitchell	3	9(2)	27 out of 33
	or	11-table Mitchell	3	8(3)	24 out of 33
	or	11-table hesitation Mitchell	2	12(0)	24
12		12-table share-and-relay Mitchell (1 & 12 share, relay between 6 & 7)	2	12(0)	24
	or	12-table skip Mitchell	2	11(0)	22 out of 24
	or	12-table skip Mitchell	3	8(3)	24 out of 36
	or	12-table hesitation Mitchell	2	13(0)	26
	or	as above with 12 rounds	2	12(1)	24 out of 26

Larger events

For club duplicates with thirteen or more tables it is usual to play a Mitchell with 2-board rounds (a Skip Mitchell with an even number of tables). These can be shortened by missing out the final rounds as required.

For larger events with more than 16 tables you should consider splitting the movement into two sections. So with 17 tables you might have a nine-table section and an eight-table section. If you can have two sets of identically duplicated boards for both sections, so much the better, for then you can score it as a single event. (Wireless scoring systems can be set to automatically merge the results of two sections.) If identically duplicated boards are not possible, then you need to score each section as a separate event.

Another solution for a larger number of tables is to use a Web Mitchell movement. However, this needs two, and sometimes three, sets of identical boards, so is impractical for a club without access to pre-dealt boards. If you are in the lucky position to have such access, then it is possible to play precisely 26 boards with any number from 14 to 25 tables. – See full [details of Web Mitchell movements](#).

Movements with fewer tables and boards

English Bridge Education & Development sells a 'Small movements pack' for 3, 4, 5 or 6 tables playing fewer boards. Ideal for novice and supervised play groups where 14-18 boards are required. If this is of interest please email [Lisa](#).