

Swiss Teams

Swiss Teams events are very popular in larger tournaments where it is not possible for all teams to play against all the other teams, but such events can also be played at clubs. For example, a club Swiss Teams championship could be played over two sessions on a Sunday, or over two separate weekday sessions in successive months or weeks. (In the latter case you would need regulations to cope with possible changes to the team compositions on the second day.)

The original idea was borrowed from chess as a good way of deciding opponents in each round other than by making a random draw. Opponents in the first round are drawn by lots. You play a match against an opposing team of (usually) six to eight boards, which is more than you would play in the club in a multiple teams event, where rounds are normally two or three boards.

This gives you the chance to learn more about your opponents and provides a fairer comparison of the two teams. At the end of the round the final score is calculated. If you beat your opponents, you go up the ranking list; if you lose, you go down.

Now this is where the 'Swiss' element comes in - for the next round you are matched against a team with the same or nearly the same score as you. Now you play another match and carry on for as many matches as there are in the tournament, moving up or down the field at the end of each round according to your total score achieved thus far.

One of the main advantages of Swiss is that you will mostly be playing against teams of approximately your own level, and the higher you get, the tougher your opponents should be.

The other feature of a Swiss Teams event is that you only play against another team once, so even if you are leading the field you cannot be drawn against the team lying second if you have played them before. You will be drawn against the leading team you haven't previously played.

In a club two-session Swiss teams, you would normally play three or four matches in each session. At the end of the tournament the team with the highest score wins.

Scoring and assigning matches

Swiss teams events are most easily scored by using an appropriate computer scoring program, preferably with wireless scoring devices to collect the scores. The program then also provides the match allocations for the next round.

If scoring by hand, at the end of each match the EW pairs go back to the home NS table and score up with their team-mates. (Each match is played for 20 Victory Points - see the previous section on Multiple Teams for more details.) The team captains then agree the match result, fill in the details on the teams' Assignment Cards and hand them in to the Scorer.

The Scorer will then assemble the cards into score order with the highest score on the top of the pile. When all the scores are in, he can begin to assign for the next round. He assigns the top two cards to be a match and allocates a table (usually table 1); he carries on like this until he reaches the bottom of the pile. Of course, as the event progresses he will often find that two teams (call them A & B) have already played each other, so he now moves down the pile until he finds the first team that A has not played and then similarly for B.

If there is an odd number of teams, there might have to be a triple or threesome. These three teams play two mini-matches. It is best to assign them first. Usually the lowest placed three teams will play in the triple but there might be constraints such as 'can only play in the triple once' or 'can't play anyone more than once' which will affect the choice of assignments.

With a small number of teams in a club it may not be possible to keep to such constraints.

For clubs holding a Swiss Teams competition with a larger number of teams, it would be wise to have a non-playing Director/Scorer running the event. With a very large number of teams, he would need assistance and should have attended a County TD Course in which organising Swiss events is covered in more detail.