

STRATIFIED RESULTS AND MASTER POINTS for EBU affiliated clubs

1. What is Stratification?

Stratification is a way to spread you Master Point awards so that players of all ranks have a greater opportunity to earn points. [Read More](#)

2. Is Stratification suitable for our club?

Stratification should suit clubs that have a range of different abilities playing. [Read More](#)

3. How does it work?

Competitors are split into categories based on EBU Master Point ranks. Whenever a pair finishes within the top third of their category, or any higher category, they earn points. [Read More](#)

4. What are the actual Master Point awards?

Of course, your scoring software should work this out! But if you really want to know... [Read More](#)

5. Won't our higher-ranked players be worse off under Stratification?

That will be the case, but club members as a whole are likely to benefit. [Read More](#)

6a. Can I select my Stratification Levels based on other criteria?

The concept was based on use with Master Point ranks, and software has been developed with this in mind, but the EBU has authorised alternative methods. [Read More](#)

6b. Some of our players have low ranks, but are really much better players.

Is it fair that they compete alongside the 'genuine' lower-ranked players? [Read More](#)

7. What ranks should we use to categorise our players?

This is entirely the club's decision. There is no 'default' or recommended setting, but we may be able to give you some guidelines. [Read More](#)

8. OK, then, our club wants to try this out. What do we do next?

You need scoring software that will do this for you. ScoreBridge has been developed to allow Stratification. If you use other scoring software, please contact the author directly. [Read More](#)

1. What is Stratification?

Does your club have a wide range of abilities, from beginners to Grand Masters? Do the relative beginners seldom earn Master Points? Would you like to give them a better chance to do so?

In the past, to give your less experienced players a better chance to earn Master Points, you would have to separate them from your Grand Masters, and have them playing in their own section. That's if you are lucky enough to have a club large enough to be able to split into multiple sections!

Stratification allows all your players to compete within a single large section, whilst awarding Master Points to your lower-ranked players as if they had been competing in their own section.

In summary: Your players are divided into categories based on their Master Point rank. A ranking list is produced for each category. Any pair that finishes in the top third of their own category earns Master Points. If they do well in relation to pairs that are more highly ranked than them, they could earn Master Points for that instead, if that would have been more beneficial (i.e. pairs are not penalised for being in a lower category).

2. Is Stratification suitable for our club?

Stratification is not compulsory, it is entirely a choice for each club whether or not to adopt stratification. Similarly, it is the club's choice of how to apply stratification should they choose to do so (i.e. how many levels, and what ranks to use – see below).

The main points to consider:

1. Does your club have a wide range in the ranking of their players?
2. Do your lower-ranked players seldom feature 'in the points'?
3. Do you wish to attract new (perhaps inexperienced) players to your club?
4. The scheme may not be as popular with your more highly ranked players.

Stratification may be good for a club with a wide ability range, or with a feed-in of new players (e.g. from teaching courses). It may not suit clubs whose members are mostly of similar rank, or whose lower-ranked players normally do as well as the higher ranked players!

Only the club can decide. A period of experimentation would be appropriate. If you would like to test whether stratification is suitable for your club you can retrospectively apply stratification to past club events (without officially publishing the results), to see the effect.

3. How does it work?

Clubs divide their players into up to four categories (or 'stratification levels'), based on their Master Point Rankings. The choice of ranks by which you categorise your players is entirely at the club's discretion. For example, you could choose to divide into only three categories:

- A: Players ranked Tournament Master and above.
- B: Players ranked at least Master, but below Tournament Master.
- C: Players ranked below Master

N.B. *A pair of mixed rank must be assigned the category of the higher-ranked player.* Scoring software should do this automatically

Run your session as a normal event. At the end, a separate ranking list will be produced for each category:

1. An overall ranking list (including pairs from all three categories),
2. one that includes pairs in categories B & C,
3. one that includes only category C pairs.

N.B. *Lower-ranked pairs compete not only in their own category, but also in all higher categories.*

For each ranking list, Master Points are awarded to the top third of the field. The Master Point rate for the overall ranking is very slightly lower than it would be without stratification. The rate reduces a little for each subsequent category.

Pairs that appear in the top third in more than one category will earn whichever points are most beneficial. They do **not** accumulate all the points due to them.

Thus a pair of club masters will earn a small amount of Master Points, if they at least beat all the other pairs in the lowest category. If they do well, and finish ahead of all the higher-ranked pairs, they will get full credit for doing so, but they will not **also** get their points for winning the lowest category.

A more detailed example can be found...

4. What are the actual Master Point awards?

Awards for the 'A' category (i.e. the whole field) will be slightly less than it would have been without stratification. The rate decreases for each subsequent category.

1. For Single-winner events (e.g. Howells or switched Mitchells):

Without stratification, the awards would have been awarded to the top third in multiples of 6. With stratification, the awards are:

- Category 'A': Awards to the top third in multiples of 5;
- Category 'B': Awards to the top third in multiples of 4;
- Category 'C' (if any): Awards to the top third in multiples of 3;
- Category 'D' (if any): Awards to the top third in multiples of 2.

2. For two-winner events (i.e. un-switched Mitchells):

Without stratification, the awards would have been awarded to the top third in multiples of 10. With stratification, the awards are:

- Category 'A': Awards to the top third in multiples of 9;
- Category 'B': Awards to the top third in multiples of 7;
- Category 'C' (if any): Awards to the top third in multiples of 5;
- Category 'D' (if any): Awards to the top third in multiples of 3.

In each category, the number of awards will be the same for North-South and East-West, and will be based on the *smaller* of the two fields. Thus if you have 8 category 'B' players sitting North-South, and only 3 sitting East-West, **only one award will be given in each direction.**

N.B. to maximise awards in a two-winner event, clubs would need to ensure that the players of each rank are evenly spread between North-South and East-West. This will probably be quite hard to achieve! Clubs are strongly encouraged, therefore, to run single-winner movements if they choose to adopt stratification.

Other regulations generally pertaining to Master Point awards also apply to stratification. For example:

- i. If pairs are tied, they share any Master Points due, any fractions being rounded up.
- ii. 'half tables' are ignored when it comes to working out the number of awards for any category.
- iii. The 'maximum exceeded' formula applies to any sufficiently large event or sub-category.
- iv. Where applicable, if points are awarded at 'District Level', awards will be 1½ times the above, and similarly for higher levels.

Exceptions to general regulations are:

- i. The minimum number of tables required for Master Points to be issued does not apply to the sub-categories (though it applies to the overall number of tables). For each stratification level, there must be a minimum of 3 pairs for points to be awarded.
- ii. The standard minimum award for any player (normally 6 points at club scale) does not apply. The minimum award for each stratification level will be equivalent to the lowest award for a 1-winner event (i.e. 5 MPs for level 'A', 4 for level 'B', etc.)

5. Won't our higher-ranked players be worse off under Stratification?

Yes, this will indeed be the case. Players that regularly finish in the top third will now generally be a little worse off, while lower-ranked players will obviously be better off.

The Tournament Committee, whilst wanting to provide a scheme to encourage the lower-ranked players, were anxious not to be simply offering extra Master Points.

Stratification should be seen as an opportunity for clubs to spread the award of Master Points over a wide ability range, not to give extra points.

However, under the right circumstances, it is quite likely that the total amount of Master Points issued will indeed be greater under stratification than without. Higher-ranked players will lose out, but lower-ranked players will generally gain by a greater margin.

6a. Can I select my Stratification Levels based on other criteria?

For example, you might have your own handicap system in place, or when the National Grading Scheme is launched, this might feel that this would provide a better basis for categorising your players.

The intention of the scheme was that it should be used with Master Point ranks, and it is with this in mind that scoring software is being developed. However, The Tournament Committee has authorised clubs to use alternative methods of categorising their players. They may choose any method that they like.

However:

1. Clubs are advised to choose a method that is entirely transparent, and not subjective.
2. Your scoring software may not be able to cope with your chosen method. ScoreBridge, for example, has been developed to allow for stratification by Master Point ranking, but not (yet) by any other means. It allows you to manually override a player's, or a pair's, stratification level on an individual basis for each event, but it may get tedious if you repeatedly have to do so for all your players.

6b. Some of our players have low ranks, but are really much better players.

This could be a problem with regard to your members that have played for a long time, but only recently joined the EBU, or never used to register their paper Master Point certificates. Or you may have some good players recently arrived from overseas, for example.

Furthermore there are some players who, despite being full EBU members, hold their master point record with another union (WBU, SBU, NIBU or CBAI). If that is the case, they will appear on the EBU database as 'unranked'.

In the latter case, it is quite important that the players are assigned their correct category – according to their actual Master Point ranking as held by their own Union.

In other cases you should bear in mind that Master Point rank is not a measure of ability, but a measure of lifetime achievement, and that all of us, however good or bad, have had to work our way through the lower ranks. If a player is ranked lowly, it may be genuine that he has not yet earned a higher rank, and is entitled to compete at the lower level. You should have a very good reason to override a player's Master Point rank.

Nevertheless, as mentioned in paragraph 6a, and subject to the same caveats, the club is allowed to use any criteria for stratification, and this could include 'exceptions' to a general rule.

7. What ranks should we use to categorise our players?

In examples published, the ranks used have been arbitrarily chosen, purely as an example, and are not intended to be recommendations, or to represent a typical club. Different clubs have different clientele, and you need to work out for yourself which ranks would be most suitable.

As a rough guide, it is probably best to choose a rank so that about a third of your pairs are in category 'A', and for each subsequent category cream off the top third again.

You may need to spend some time to experiment with different categories, perhaps using past results, to get the best proportions of each category.

Alternatively, you might have a particular 'target customer', whom you wish to benefit from the scheme, regardless of the relative proportions.

Ultimately, this is entirely the club's own decision.

8. OK, then, our club wants to try this out. What do we do next?

First of all, your scoring software needs to be able to support stratification. If it doesn't, then I'm sorry – you can't do this without a lot of manual effort and technical knowledge!

ScoreBridge has been developed to allow Stratified Results based on EBU Master Point rankings. You will need to upgrade to the latest release, 9.11.28. You might find that in the next few months there will be further releases to correct any errors, or to add further features. It would be a good idea for you to check up on a regular basis whether there are any new releases.

Further instructions for ScoreBridge users are on a separate document.

If you use another scoring program, you will need to check with the author directly as to whether they support stratification.