



# World Othello Championships Rules

## I. GENERAL RULES AND PLAYING CONDITIONS

### I. Organisation

The World Othello Championship (WOC) shall be held annually to determine the World Othello Champion, the Women World Othello Champion (WWOC) and the World Othello Team Champions. The WOC shall be organised under the responsibility of the World Othello Federation (WOF) and the owners of the Othello registered trademark. The World Othello Federation is the body responsible for these rules. All WOC players tacitly agree to this set of rules. Countries wishing to host a WOC shall apply to the World Othello Federation, which shall make the final decision concerning the location of the WOC.

### 2. Contestants

#### 2.1 Nations

Unless ruled otherwise by the WOF, only WOF-member nations can send contestants to the WOC. The possibility for a non-member nation to send contestants shall be decided by the WOF head council prior to the tournament. Applications must be received by the WOF at least one month before the WOC.

The WOF recognises two types of member nations: National Federations and Nations with Contact Person. Federations are allowed to send a full team (up to four players, no more than three being of the same gender). Nations with Contact Person can send one player to the WOC. In case of an odd number of participants, the host country may enter an additional player (see II.2).

#### 2.2 Players

All Federations have to register their team at least one month before the WOC. Each team can be composed of one to four players. No more than three players on a team may be of the same gender. All Nations with Contact Person have to register their player at least one month before the WOC. Any changes made less than one month before the WOC require the express permission of the tournament director. In any event, all changes must be made before the start of the first round. No changes are allowed after play has begun.

The team championship will be decided based on the best three results from the team. All players are eligible to win the WOC. All women are eligible to compete for the WWOC title.

#### 2.3 WOF minimum requirements

In order to retain Federation status, Federations must send the results of their tournaments to the WOF Rating list. They must be sent by the deadline for WOC registration. (Preferably the results of all tournaments, but at the very least the WOC qualification tournaments.)

To be able to represent a country at the WOC, a player must: a) be citizen of the country OR b) be resident in the country for 6 months within the 12 months ending on the date of the WOC. National Federations may impose more strict rules if they wish.

### 3. The Officials

The host country, with the agreement of the World Othello Federation, shall arrange for the services of a tournament director and other tournament officials. Where possible, there shall be sufficient officials to provide a table judge for each tournament game. The tournament director shall be responsible for the running of the tournament, including the pairings process and adherence of players and spectators to the rules described herein, and shall be the arbiter of any disputes arising during the tournament. The tournament director can appoint assistants to help him with the various tasks needed to run the tournament, including the pairing process, live broadcasting of games...

The tournament director shall appoint table judges (see IV.2), who will transcribe the games.

## **4. Playing Conditions**

### **4.1 The tournament room**

The host country shall endeavour to provide the contestants with good playing conditions. The tournament room shall be quiet and well lit. (Indirect lighting is preferred because direct light reflects off the shiny surfaces of the playing discs, making it difficult to distinguish their colour).

### **4.2 Consultation**

During the course of the game, a player may not consult any notes, use any unapproved electronic device, or exchange information of any kind with another person (with the exception of a tournament official or their opponent). All cases of abuse shall be referred to the tournament director who will exercise common sense judgement on what penalty (if any) is necessary.

During the first two days of the tournament (excluding playoffs), once the pairings of a round have been announced and until the end of their game, players may not consult any unapproved electronic device. To enforce this rule, all players should be in the playing room before the pairings are announced.

### **4.3 Smoking**

It is strictly forbidden to smoke in the tournament room.

### **4.4 Mobile phones**

Mobile phones brought into the tournament room must be switched off. If someone forgets to do so and their phone happens to ring in the tournament room, they must not answer the call but must immediately switch the phone off.

### **4.5 Clearing the board**

To prevent noise in the playing room when games are in progress, players should not clear the board when their game is finished. All boards should be cleared and set up with the starting position between the rounds or just before the start of the games.

## **5. Spectators**

Spectators are permitted in the tournament room at the discretion of the tournament director. Spectators and other contestants are permitted to observe a game in progress, but must not interfere in any way with the conduct of the game. In particular, observers must refrain from making any comments on the game, or in any way distracting the players or the table judge (in particular, use of flash photography is prohibited during the course of a game). However, if a spectator detects any irregularities in the game, he may mention them to the tournament director or one of his assistants.

At the tournament director's discretion, the tournament room and various games may be broadcast live (video, webcams, online). The tournament director should ensure that any broadcast or equipment does not disturb the players or interfere with the games.

## **II. TOURNAMENT FORMAT**

### **I. Overview**

There will be three days of tournament play. The aims of the first two days of competition are:

- a) To select four players who will compete on the third day for the individual title.
- b) To select two women players who will compete on the third day for the women's individual title (unless unnecessary, see III.5).
- c) To decide the World Othello Team Championship.

The third day of competition will be organised as follows:

#### **Individual title**

- a) There will be two semi-finals, one played between the first and fourth-ranked players from the first two days of competition, and the other between the second and third-ranked. These are to be the best of three-games matches.
- b) There will be a final, organised as a best of three-game match between the winners of the two semi-finals, and a one game playoff for third place between the two losing semi-finalists.

#### **Women's individual title**

There will be a final (see III.5), organised as a one game match between the top two women players.

### **2. Playing System**

During the first two days of the tournament, the system used will depend upon the number of contestants in the tournament as set out below:

- a) Up to 8 players: a double Round Robin.
- b) 9-14 players: a single Round Robin.
- c) 15-24 players: a modified Swiss system.
- d) More than 24 players: an unmodified Swiss system.

See II.6 for further details. If a Swiss system is to be used, seven rounds will be played on the first day and six on the second.

If there would otherwise be an odd number of players, the host country may enter an additional player in the tournament to prevent the introduction of a bye. This player shall be designated as the country's additional player before the beginning of the tournament.

If the host country has already entered a team of at least three players, the points gained by the designated additional player shall not count for the team championship.

However, the additional player shall have the same status as the other players as regards the individual championships, and, in particular, shall have a full right of access to the semi-finals and final (and shall compete for the WWO title if the additional player is a woman).

### **3. Individual Final Ranking List (IFRL)**

At the end of the first two days of competition, the officials will draft the Individual Final Ranking List (IFRL) following the procedure set out below:

#### **3.1 Provisional list**

A provisional list is first drawn up, players being arranged in order of number of points scored in the tournament -one point will be awarded for each win and half a point for each draw; in case of ties, the Mixed Brightwell System (MBS) will be used to separate the contestants (see appendix A).

If two or more players have the same number of points in the tournament, ties shall be resolved by ranking the players in descending Brightwell Quotient (BQ) order. If two or more players have the same number of points and the same BQ, ties shall be resolved by ranking the players in descending disc-count order. Further ties shall be resolved by any random equitable means (flip of an Othello disc, pulling numbered tokens from a closed bag...).

### **3.2 Playoff**

- If the fourth and fifth-ranked players in the provisional list have the same number of points, they will play a playoff game.
- If the third and sixth-ranked players in the provisional list have the same number of points, they will play a playoff game.
- If the second and seventh-ranked players in the provisional list have the same number of points, they will play a playoff game.
- If the first and eighth-ranked players in the provisional list have the same number of points, they will play a playoff game.

#### **Choice of colour**

In each playoff game, the better-ranked player shall have the choice of colour or draw win (see IV.9).

### **3.3 Final list**

The players who will compete in the semi-finals on the third day of competition are:

- All players in the top 4 of the provisional list who did not have to play the playoff games,
- All winners of playoff games.

The IFRL is the same as the provisional list with three modifications:

- a) The four players qualified for the semi-finals (see above) are ranked 1 to 4 according to their respective order of finish in the provisional list.
- b) All losers of playoff games are ranked equal fifth.
- c) Any players not ranked among the top four and having the same number of points are declared equal.

## **4. Team Final Ranking List (TFRL)**

The final ranking list used to determine the World Othello Team Champion will be drafted as follows: the officials will calculate for each team the sum of the points scored by its members (in case of a four players team, only the three best results will be used to calculate the sum), and the ranking list will be drawn up according to this sum. (If the host country has provided an additional player, the points scored by the designated additional player will not be taken into account if the team is already composed of at least three players). In case of a tie for first place, the country with the greatest number of games between members of its team shall be declared the champion. If two or more teams are still tied for first place, the team having the top player in the IFRL (using the final list, with MBS followed by disc-count being used to separate the contestants) will take preference. In case of a further tie, the team whose second-ranked player is higher in the IFRL will take preference. In case of a further tie, the tied teams will be declared equal.

## **5. Women's Final Ranking List (WFRL)**

At the end of the first two days of competition (or after the playoffs on the third day), the officials will draft the Women's Final Ranking List (WFRL) following the procedure set out below:

### **5.1 Provisional list**

A provisional list is first drawn up, women players being arranged in order of number of points scored in the tournament - one point will be awarded for each win and half a point for each draw; in case of ties, the Mixed Brightwell System (MBS) will be used to separate the contestants (see appendix A).

If two or more women have the same number of points in the tournament, ties shall be resolved by ranking the women in descending BQ order. If two or more women have the same number of points and the same BQ, ties shall be resolved by ranking the women in descending disc-count order. Further ties shall be resolved by any random equitable means (flip of a disc, pulling numbered tokens from a closed bag...).

### **5.2 Playoff**

If one or several women are qualified for the WOC semi-finals, no women's playoffs shall be played. Otherwise:

- If the second and third-ranked women in the provisional list have the same number of points, they will play a playoff game.
- If the first and fourth-ranked players in the provisional list have the same number of points, they will play a playoff game.

These games will be scheduled to start at the same time as the first game of the WOC semi-finals.

#### **Choice of colour**

In each playoff game, the better-ranked woman shall have the choice of colour or draw win (see IV.9).

### **5.3 Final list**

If one or several women are qualified for the WOC semi-finals, no women's final shall be played. Instead, all women playing on the WOC semi-finals will be ranked according to their final order of finish after the WOC final and third place playoff.

Otherwise, the women who will compete in the women's final on the third day of competition are:

- All women in the top 2 of the provisional list who did not have to play the playoff games,
- All winners of playoff games.

The WFRL is the same as the provisional list with three modifications:

- a) The two women qualified for the final (see above) are ranked 1 and 2 according to their respective order of finish in the provisional list.
- b) All losers of playoff games are ranked equal third.
- c) Any women not ranked among the top two and having the same number of points are declared equal.

## **6. Pairings when a Swiss system is used**

### **6.1. First round**

The pairings for the first round shall be determined as follows:

- The players are divided into group A, those who have played in at least one semi-final of the previous ten World Othello Championships, and group B, all other players.
- Two players are chosen at random, one from group A and the other from group B. They are paired against each other, with the player from group A assigned black.
- This is repeated, with the player from group A assigned alternately black and white, until one of the two groups is empty.
- The remaining players are paired by random draw.

The tournament director will be responsible for the exact procedure leading to the pairings of the first round. He may do them himself or have the players draw random pairings as long as the above procedure is followed.

### **6.2. Second and subsequent rounds**

In determining the pairings for the second and subsequent rounds in a Swiss system, the following rules should be followed, in decreasing order of priority:

- a) If an unmodified Swiss system is used, two players who have already played against each other cannot be paired together again. If a modified Swiss system is used, two players who have played against each other twice cannot be paired together.
- b) The two players paired together should have the same number of points. If this is not possible, the difference should be minimal.
- c) In a modified Swiss system, if possible, players who have already played against each other should not be paired together again.
- d) Players should tend to play black and white the same number of times during the tournament. If this is not possible, the difference should be minimal.
- e) A player who has already "floated up" should "float down", and a player who has already "floated down" should "float up".
- f) Players should alternate colours from round to round.
- g) Two players registered for the same country (regular team + additional player) should not play together during the Swiss-system if an equivalent pairing (in regards of the other above rules) can be found without this match.

## **7. Withdrawals**

If a player withdraws from the tournament, he may not re-enter. In particular, he may not qualify for the semi-finals or final. However, his score at the time of his withdrawal will be entered in the IFRL and be taken into account in the TFRL. A player who has withdrawn will not be considered for the purposes of pairing rounds after his withdrawal, and instead a dummy player called "BYE" will be introduced into the pairing process. See also Appendix A for the effect of a withdrawn player on the calculation of the MBS.

### **III. SEMI-FINALS AND FINAL**

#### **I. Best of Three-Game Matches**

The higher-ranked player in the IFRL shall have choice of colour for the first game of the match.

Each player shall be awarded one point for each win and half a point for each draw in the match.

Colours shall be reversed for the second game. If a player wins both the first and second game of a match, then that player shall be declared the winner and a third game shall not be played.

Choice of colour for the third game, if necessary, shall be awarded to the player having the greater number of discs in the first two games. In the case of a tie, the higher ranked player in the IFRL shall have choice of colour.

At the end of three games the player having more points in the match shall be declared the winner. If after three games the two players have the same number of points, the total number of discs in the three games shall be used to determine the winner. In case of a further tie the higher ranked player in the IFRL shall be declared the winner.

#### **2. Semi-Finals**

At the beginning of the third day of competition, the four top players in the IFRL will compete in the semi-finals. Each semi-final match will be a best of three-games match.

The top-ranked player in the IFRL will play against the fourth-ranked player, and the second-ranked player will play against the third-ranked player.

The two winners of the semi-finals will advance to the final.

#### **3. Playoff For Third Place**

The two losers in the semi-final will play a single playoff game for third place. This game will be scheduled to start at the same time as the first game of the WOC final. The higher ranked player in the IFRL shall have the choice of colour or draw win (see IV.9).

#### **4. Final**

The final will be a best of three-games match. The winner will be awarded the title of World Othello Champion.

#### **5. Women's Final**

If one or several women are qualified for the WOC semi-finals, no women's final shall be played. Instead, all women playing on the WOC semi-finals will be ranked according to their final order of finish after the WOC final and third place playoff. The higher ranked woman will be awarded the title of Women's World Othello Champion.

If no woman is qualified for the WOC semi-finals, a one game final will be played between the top two women in the WFRL. This game will be scheduled to start at the same time as the second game of the WOC final. The higher ranked woman player shall have the choice of colour or draw win (see IV.9). The winner will be awarded the title of Women's World Othello Champion.

## **IV. CONDUCT AND SCORING OF INDIVIDUAL GAMES**

### **1. Time Limits**

Digital clocks will be used to time all tournament games. If not enough of them are available, analog clocks will be used in addition.

During the first two days each player shall have 30 minutes to complete all his moves in each game. In any playoff game at the end of these two days, players shall also have 30 minutes per game.

During the semi-finals, each player shall have 35 minutes per game. In the final and women's final, each player shall have 40 minutes per game. In the playoff for third place, each player shall have 35 minutes. If for any reason these time limits cannot be applied, games should never be played with less than 25 minutes for each player per game.

### **2. The Table Judge**

Whenever possible, the tournament director shall assign one of the tournament officials to be the table judge for a tournament game. The table judge shall be responsible for making a transcript of the game, broadcasting the game if applicable, observing the rules of Othello and ensuring the smooth running of the game.

Before the beginning of the game, the table judge shall make sure that both players have enough discs to complete the game. It is the official's duty to regulate the clock and place it on the right of the player with the black discs (unless both players agree to do otherwise).

During the game, the table judge should attempt to make a transcript of the game without requiring the contestants to announce their moves. The record keeping process must never be allowed to interfere with the player's concentration.

If, during the game, a player is left without discs, the table judge shall arrange for a sufficient number of discs to be transferred from the player's opponent. To do that he is allowed to stop the clocks for the time required.

If a tournament game does not have a table judge assigned to it, both players shall be responsible for taking a transcript of the game. If other assistance is required, either player may stop the clock and summon the tournament director, or a designated assistant.

### **3. Objects on the Board**

No objects of any kind may be placed on the board with the exception of those Othello discs forming the position and the one Othello disc used by the player to carry out his move.

### **4. The Move**

A player cannot make a move on his opponent's time. If a player does so, his opponent can summon the tournament director who shall do whatever is necessary (like adjusting time up or down for the players). If a player forgets to press his clock after his move, his opponent is allowed and encouraged to tell him to do so. No spectator, apart from the table judge, the tournament director or one of his assistants, can warn a player that he has forgotten to press his clock. If this happens, the tournament director should expel the spectator from the tournament room and can impose a penalty on the spectator as listed in section V.2.

A player commits himself to a move if he touches the board with his hand or with a disc, with the apparent intention of moving to a given square. In this case, provided the player has a legal move to that square, he must move to the first square he touches, and may not change his mind and move instead to a different square, even if his opponent authorises him to take back his move. The purpose of this rule is to prevent an indecisive player from distracting his opponent or obstructing his opponent's view of the board. A player shall not be bound by this rule, if in the opinion of the table judge, he touched the given square unintentionally.

Once a player has committed himself to a move, he is bound to turn over all of the captured discs. He must do this using one hand only, and then use the same hand to press his clock (even if his opponent passes afterwards). If, having played a move, a player forgets to press his clock, the table judge should tell him to do so.

A player must acknowledge that he has to pass by pressing his clock.

## **5. Illegal Moves**

### **5.1 Procedure**

The table judge is present to enforce the rules of Othello. An error in the play of a move which has just been played but not yet answered may be brought to the attention of the table judge by either player, by the tournament director or by one of his assistants (but not by a spectator who shall summon the tournament director who will decide what to do). Once the table judge (or the tournament director, or one of his assistants) notices, or is informed of such an error, he shall adopt the following procedure:

- a) Restart the clock of the player who committed the error.
- b) Correct the error himself, and
- c) Restart the clock of the player whose turn it is to move.

If no table judge is present at a table, an error in the play of a move which has just been played but not yet answered may be signalled by either player. The following procedure shall then be adopted:

- a) Restart the clock of the player who committed the error.
- b) Have that player correct the error, and
- c) Restart the clock of the player whose turn it is to move.

### **5.2 Accepting the position**

Only the most recent move is subject to challenge. When a player commits himself to a new move, he tacitly accepts the board position as it is, and neither he nor any official can later seek to correct a previous error.

### **5.3 Unreadable position**

The players must play their moves and centre the discs so that the position is clearly readable.

If, in the opinion of the table judge, the position becomes unreadable, he should take any action to correct it (including stopping the clocks and playing through the transcript). He may also invite the tournament director to impose some penalty on the offending player.

If no table judge is present, either player can call the tournament director or one of his assistants if there is any dispute concerning the position.

## **6. Time Defaults**

A player forfeits the game unless he can make his final move, flip all the appropriate discs, and stop his clock before the flag on his clock falls. If a player's flag falls, he loses the game and his opponent is awarded a win regardless of the position of the board.

Both players are given two extra minutes. The game is then continued with the true final score standing, save that the non-defaulting player is guaranteed at least a 33-31 win. If the defaulting player's flag falls a second time, the game is scored 64-0. If the flag of the non-defaulting player falls after having been given two extra minutes, the player who first defaulted loses the game with a 31-33 score.

## **7. Defective Clock**

If, in the course of the game, the clock in use is found to be defective, the table judge, or the players, if no table judge is present, shall summon the tournament director, who will take whatever action he deems appropriate.

## **8. Scoring**

At the end of the game, if both players have completed their moves in the allowed time, the winner is the player with the greater number of discs of his colour on the board at the end. The official score of the game will be determined by counting up the discs of each colour on the board, counting empty squares for the winner.

In the event of a draw, the score will always be 32-32. If one player defaults, the scoring is carried out as in IV.6 above.

A player should not resign a game before it is finished, if he does, the official score shall be 64-0 in favour of his opponent.

Once a game is finished, both players should sign a transcript sheet thereby showing they agree on the final score and hand it to a tournament official.

## **9. Choice of Colour or Draw Win**

When a player has the option to choose his colour for the game or a draw win he has the choice of either:

a) Deciding the colour himself and if the game is a draw his opponent shall be declared the winner.

or

b) Allowing his opponent to choose his colour and being declared the winner in the case of a draw.

When a player can choose his colour for a game, he must announce his choice to the tournament director and his opponent at least five minutes before the start of the game.

## **10. Rules for players with special needs**

If the tournament director determines that a player has special needs then that player may have an assistant who may do some or all of the following (depending on the player's needs):

- Pressing the clock,
- Notifying the player of their remaining time,
- Notifying the player when their opponent has completed their turn,
- Placing and Flipping Disks (after the player has indicated their move in a TD approved manner),
- Any other need that the tournament director thinks is necessary to allow the player to have a fair and balanced chance to participate in the tournament.

At no point shall the assistant be allowed to otherwise interfere with the game or give directions to the player. If it is necessary for a sight impaired player to use their hands to feel the board in order to determine the position, there shall be no penalty to that player for doing so. However, the opponent may request that there be a primary board that is unobstructed at all times and the sight impaired player's turn will not be completed until the move is completed on that board by the assistant and the clock is then pressed. In this case, an additional 5 minutes shall be added to the sight-impaired player's clock to allow additional time for the move to be transferred between boards.

## **V. ENFORCEMENT OF THE RULES**

### **1. Overview**

In order to enforce both the rules of Othello and the World Championship Rules, the tournament director (and only he/she) may impose penalties on a player or on a spectator.

In imposing penalties, the tournament director should adjust the severity of the penalty to the severity of the offence and never penalise a non-offending player.

The decision of the tournament director shall be final.

### **2. Penalties**

The tournament director may impose the following penalties on a player or on a spectator:

- a) Removing time from an offending player's clock and/or giving additional time to his opponent's clock.
- b) Changing the final score of a game to the benefit of the offending player's opponent.
- c) Declaring the game to be a draw or awarding the game to the offending player's opponent.
- d) Expelling temporarily or definitively from the tournament room a player or a spectator.
- e) Expelling a player from the tournament (who shall afterwards be treated as having withdrawn).

## **APPENDIX A - The Mixed Brightwell System (MBS)**

### **1. Overview**

The Mixed Brightwell System (MBS) is a method of breaking ties in Othello tournaments run with the Swiss system. It is also applicable to Round Robin tournaments, where it is equivalent to disc-count. Essentially this system is a combination of Strength-of-Opposition and disc-count.

### **2. The Constant C**

MBS depends on a constant  $C$ , which is a weighting for the relative importance of Strength-of-Opposition and disc-count. For the World Championship, assuming that it is run either as a Round Robin or as a 13 rounds Swiss system,  $C$  will be set equal to 6.

### **3. The Brightwell Quotient (BQ)**

After the end of the tournament, the tournament officials will evaluate, for each player involved in a tie, the BQ. This is calculated as follows:

- a) If any of the player's opponents have withdrawn in the course of the tournament, ignore any such games for the moment. Also, if a player has been paired against "BYE" (or has not played a round), leave out such a game.
- b) Calculate the total number of discs scored by the player in all games not covered by a) and add  $C$  times the sum of points scored in the tournament by all of the player's opponents, except those who have withdrawn.
- c) For each game against an opponent who has withdrawn, and each bye received (or unplayed round), add 32 plus ( $C$  times the player's own tournament score) to the result calculated in b). The number resulting is the player's BQ.

### **4. Resolving Ties**

If two or more players have the same number of points in the tournament, ties shall be resolved by ranking the players in descending BQ order. If two or more players have the same number of points and the same BQ, ties shall be resolved by ranking the players in descending disc-count order. Further ties shall be resolved by any random equitable means (flip of an Othello disc, pulling numbered tokens from a closed bag...).