

The use of Accelerated Pairings

Paraphrasing from the USCF rule book:

In a tournament where the number of players far exceeds the number two raised to the power of the number of rounds, more than one perfect score is possible, and top contenders may not play each other. The director has pairing options, which in effect "add" an extra round or two to the tournament without any additional games being played.

Accelerated pairings are most effective in a one-section tournament, an Open Section, or a section in which no more than about half the players are in the same 200 point rating class.

Accelerated pairings alter the basic rules of Swiss System pairing in the first two rounds in an attempt to quickly reduce the number of perfect scores.

How Windows TD, the software currently in use, does the 1/4's method.

Round 1:

Players are divided into four (roughly equally sized) groups from highest ranking to lowest. Call them A1, A2, B1 and B2 from top to bottom. Group A1 plays A2, B1 plays B2. With normal pairings, A1 would be playing B1 and A2 would be playing B2. Thus the stronger players (in A1 and A2) will have tougher competition in the first round under accelerated pairings, the weaker players (B1 and B2) will have easier games. In effect, the first round pairings are more like typical second round pairings.

Round 2:

Winners from A1 versus A2 play each other. Non-winners from A1 versus A2 play winners from B1 versus B2. Non-winners from B1 versus B2 are paired normally (draws play draws, losers play losers).

Accelerated pairings work to reduce the number of perfect scores faster than normal pairings if the non-winners from A1-A2 win most of their games against the B1-B2 winners. If the B1-B2 winners take a fairly high percentage of games off the A1-A2 non-winners, accelerated pairings will produce more perfect scores, not fewer.

This implementation of accelerated pairings **follows USCF Variation 28R2 (Adjusted Rating)**. Note that this method is different from the way that programs such as SwisSys and PairPlus do accelerated pairings. They follow Variation 28R1. The two methods differ in the second round handling of A1-A2 draws. Windows TD pairs them against B1-B2 winners. Under Variation 28R1, they play each other. The Windows TD method is better for reducing the number of perfect scores.

To use the 28R1 (added-scores) method, check the +1 Accelerator box in the Pairing Rules section of the Preferences dialog box.

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1/4 Accelerated-pairing rules shall be used for any section within an event that meets the recommended criteria for its use as set out by the most current rules of the USCF. The "Adjusted Rating" option shall be used. We further define the USCF phrase "far exceeds" used in its recommended criteria to mean that when the number of players is greater than or equal to half way between the number two raised to the number of rounds and the number two raised to the number of rounds plus one.