

The rules of the British Othello Federation

Introduction

These are the current rules relating to most British Othello Federation (BOF) matters. They may be changed by the committee, subject to the constraints laid down in the constitution. The constitution is covered in another document.

This edition, dated 23rd August 2018, incorporates changes approved at the 2007-2018 AGMs. It supersedes the previous edition dated 30th June 2018. This edition has been approved by the committee. This new edition records verbatim what was voted on at the various AGMs.

Membership & finance

1. A player taking part in his or her first tournament will automatically be enrolled as a member of the BOF free of charge on participating in their first BOF-rated tournament and will remain so while having an active rating (having played in a tournament in the previous two years). An inactive player can rejoin by participating in another such tournament. Any person joining or rejoining the BOF by automatic tournament enrolment would be entitled to any voting rights at a preceding General Meeting. A member can also join or rejoin the BOF by other means outside tournaments, for which a non-active rating will not cause membership expiry.
2. A UK citizen's first BOF-organised tournament is totally free, regardless of whether they are a member or not. They do not have to join until their second tournament.
3. Tournament charges for Regional and National tournaments are to be 10 pounds (5 pounds unwaged). For any tournament there will be a family rate of 15 pounds.

General tournament rules

1. Normal rules of Othello apply, except as amended elsewhere in these rules.
2. A disc, once placed, may not be moved. Players must not hold a disc over the board for an undue time before placing it.
3. Once a disc has been placed, the necessary discs shall be turned over with one hand, in a manner that does not obstruct the opponent's ability to observe the legality of each disc being flipped. The same hand must be used to press the clock button.
4. It is the player's responsibility to check the legality of his/her opponent's move. Illegal moves must be rectified while the clock of the player making the move is running. Only the most recent move may be challenged and rectified if it was illegal.
5. Players may not disturb any other player by undue conversation or by unnecessarily or unreasonably leaving the table.
6. Any questions concerning the enforcement of these playing rules shall be decided by the tournament referee.
7. If the number of competitors is odd, then an imaginary player "Bye" is introduced who loses all his games by 20 discs to 44.
8. If there are too few rounds to play a round-robin the Swiss system will be employed.
9. If a game ends with some empty squares, the empty squares are awarded to the winner, or to both players equally in the event of a draw, so that the disc counts always sum to the number of squares on the board.
10. Clocks are to be used on every table at all competitions. In the event of there not being enough clocks, a time limit may be imposed by the organiser during a game, but each player must be given a minimum of ten minutes on the clock.
11. Il lost games due to not being played (e.g. late arrivals, early leavers, and byes) are deemed to have scored 20-44 on disc count.
12. Disc count will be used for tie-breaker in round-robin tournaments.
13. A player forfeits the game unless they can make their final move, flip all the appropriate discs, and stop their clock before the flag on their clock falls. If a player's flag falls, they lose the game and their opponent is awarded a win regardless of the position of the board.
14. A time defaulting player is 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, they too are given an extra two minutes, and the true score stands, unless their flag falls a second time. In this last case, the game is scored as a 33-31 win for the non-defaulting player.
15. The Brightwell Quotient (BQ) tie-breaker is calculated as follows:
 - a) constant C is calculated. It is the integer nearest to (number of squares on the board) divided by (number of rounds in the tournament).
 - b) If any of the player's opponents have withdrawn in the course of the tournament, ignore such games for the moment. Also, if a player has been paired against "Bye", leave out such a game.
 - c) Calculate the total number of discs scored by the player in all games not covered by step b and add C times the sum of points scored by all of the player's opponents, except those who have withdrawn.
 - d) For each game against an opponent who has withdrawn, and each bye received, add half the number of squares on the board plus (C times the player's own tournament score)
 - e) to the result calculated in step c. The number resulting is the player's BQ.
16. For the first round of a Swiss tournament players will be ordered according to their ratings, and then the top half will be paired off against the bottom half. Unrated players will be placed at the bottom of the top half, so that they are paired against the lowest rated players.

Swiss system

The Swiss system is the pairing procedure used in all tournaments that are too large for all-play-all. The basic idea is that, in each round, a player is paired against someone on the same score, whom they have not played before in the tournament. Since this is not always exactly possible, and does not usually define the pairing exactly, the following list of factors is taken into account to determine pairings, in order of priority. [It is recommended that, if possible, a pairings program is used to generate the pairings if the organiser is playing in the tournament.]

1. No-one should play the same opponent twice in the tournament. In particular this includes "Bye".
2. Players should be paired against others on the same score. If this is not possible, then pairing is done so that everyone plays someone on as near to the same score as possible. What this often means in practice is that one person from a higher score group "floats down" to meet someone from a lower score group "floating up". In implementing this and other rules, the top of the tournament takes precedence over the bottom.
3. Players should get an equal number of whites and blacks, or as close as possible to an equal number. This principle can be used to decide which player gets a float, as well as how to pair inside a group.
4. Players should, where possible, alternate whites and blacks.
5. The total number of up-floats received by a player should be as close as possible to the number of down-floats.
6. Ratings are often used to determine pairings in early rounds. The usual way this is done is for the top-rated player to play the player just below halfway in the score group, and the second-rated player to play the next player down, etc.
7. If there are an odd number of players, a fictitious player "Bye" is introduced, who always loses. Bye is always paired against the lowest player who hasn't previously received a bye, usually before any other pairings are carried out.

Regional tournaments

1. There should be seven rounds. There must not be fewer than the number of rounds required for a round-robin, or six rounds in the case of the Swiss system. There may be more rounds.
2. Only BOF members may play in a Regional (except for those playing in their first tournament).
3. There is no residency requirement for playing in a Regional.
4. The standard time limit is 25 minutes per player. This may be changed but must not be less than 20 minutes per player.
5. Regionals will use Brightwell Quotient (BQ) to resolve ties.
6. The 2 minute time default procedure will be used for Regionals.
7. The number of Regionals will be decided on a year-by-year basis.
8. British Othello Federation rules for Regionals must be made available for all competitors.

National championship tournament

1. The National will be a 2-day event.
2. The number of days for the National can only be changed at an AGM.
3. The 2-day National will have 9 rounds plus a 1-round play-off.
4. There will always be a play-off between those coming 1st and 2nd in the 9 rounds.
5. There will only be a play-off between those coming 3rd and 4th if they tied on game points.
6. The player who is higher in the Swiss part of the National will decide on colours for the play-off.
7. The British champion is the winner of the 1st/2nd play-off in the National, or the winner of the Swiss part if the play-off is a draw. A draw in a 3rd/4th play-off is resolved in the same way.
8. The minimum clock time allowed for games is 25 minutes for each player. This can be increased at the discretion of the organiser.
9. For the National the 2 minute time default procedure will be used.
10. For the National the Brightwell Quotient (BQ) will be used to resolve ties (i.e. 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.
11. The National will be open to all members. Regionals will no longer be used for qualifying to play in the National.
12. To qualify to play in the National a player must have been resident in the UK for 183 days prior to the date of the National.
13. The Chairman is empowered to allow foreigners who are expected to reside in the UK for 183 days to play in the National, even though they do not meet the 183 day rule on the date of the National. Such foreigners cannot take part in the play-off to decide the British champion.
14. Any exceptions to the preceding 183 day expected eligibility rule for participating in the National which the Chairman wishes to advocate must be approved by the committee.
15. The National shall be supervised by a non-playing referee, whose decision shall be final and binding.
16. At the National tournament the chief referee can nominate other referees. Other spectators must not interfere in a game.

Grand Prix

1. Only Regionals will count towards GP points, e.g. MSO and Cambridge Christmas tournaments will not.
2. All (rather than the best N) such tournaments played in will count towards GP points.
3. For awarding GP points only the game point position will be considered; ties are not resolved. The total points for the tied positions will be shared between those tying, with any fractions being rounded up.
4. All participants will be awarded some GP points.
5. The GP points are awarded as follows:

Place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 and on
Points	200	160	120	100	80	60	40	20	10	5

6. Ties for the GP winner are resolved by comparing their GP points in the tournament in which they did best (GP-wise), then the tournament in which they did second best, etc. If all these considerations do not resolve the tie, the tiers will play one play-off game at their own convenience before the National. If they fail to do this the chairman will toss a coin to resolve the tie.
7. The GP winner is guaranteed a place on the British team for the World championship, regardless of the outcome of the National tournament.
8. The number of Regionals to be used for GP points will be decided each year by the committee.

World championship tournament

1. To represent the UK in the World championship a player must have been resident in the UK for 183 days prior to the date of the World Final.
2. Places in the regular UK team for the World championship will be offered first to the National Champion, then to the GP winner, and then to players in the Nationals in the order of their placing in that tournament, until the team has the required number of players.
3. If not enough people from the Nationals wish to participate, places shall be offered to people in GP order, and after that to people on the active ratings list, in ratings list order.
4. If there are still not enough people, the chairman shall offer places to other people of his/her own choosing.
5. The place for any special-category tournament held with the World Championships (such as the World Women's Championships) will be offered first to the highest-placed special category player in the National Championships, except that if two special category players are equal on points and are not otherwise involved in a play-off then there will be a play-off to decide that category's first representative. .
6. Should the above not yield a representative for the category, then that space and any additional spaces will be offered following the rules for selection of the regular team.

Ratings

1. For a game to be rated by the BOF it must
 - a) be held in the UK
 - b) be played with clocks
 - c) be understood by both players that it will be rated
2. Notice is hereby given that, unless otherwise announced, all Regional, National, International (European Grand Prix) and MSO tournaments will be rated. "Friendly" tournaments are also usually rated.
3. The minimum time requirement for a tournament game to be rated is 15 + 15 minutes.