

NAST Satellite Pairings

Every Satellite tournament will use the same pairings format, so players will know what to expect regardless of where they play. This also ensures that all players who play their way into the Final Event do so by the same criteria.

The pairings charts are set up so that they can be done easily by hand. We will try to get them into a computer pairings/results program for use at tournaments, but computers will not speed the process much. Pairings are preset for the first four rounds, and the last two rounds must wait for all prior results before pairing. Most Satellites should be small enough to pair easily by hand.

The preset pairings are designed for all fields up to 48 players. If a Satellite has a field larger than 48, the Director will divide the field into two similar, even-sized groups for the first four rounds of preset pairings. Exceptionally large fields can be divided into three or more groups. For example, a field of 60 players will be divided into two groups of 30; a field of 66 players will be divided into groups of 34 and 32 players (*not* three groups of 22); a field of 100 players will be divided into groups of 34, 34 and 32.

Remember, any necessary division is for the first four rounds only. For the Swiss-paired Round 5 and King-of-Hill Round 6, divided fields will be joined so that the results of all players are used to pair the final two rounds. Repeat pairings will not be avoided in Round 5. This may be changed in future years.

Divided groups should be as evenly sized and large as possible. A snake procedure, based on ratings, will be used to divide fields, so that the strength of each group will be similar. That is, Group 1 will contain players ranked 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13... and Group 2 will contain players ranked 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11... Unrated players will be ranked at the bottom of the field, regardless of playing strength.

There will be no Gibsonizing at the Satellite tournaments. That is, players who have clinched a position in the Final Event will continue to play per their standing. The reasons for this include standardization (the Gibson rule can be unevenly applied or misunderstood) and the fact that some prize money and rating points are still at stake. In such a short tournament, there is little justification to use the Gibson rule with its underlying assumption that clinching players won't be motivated to play their best. Especially in a Satellite tournament, a clinching player should be motivated to knock out their toughest competition for the Final Event. There is also the possibility that Satellite performances will be used, at least partially, in determining the seeding of players in the Final Event.