

To all bridge players in Norfolk, Suffolk, Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire**Consultation on Stratified Duplicate Results**

Bridge is unusual in that players of very wide differences of ability can play in the same event (a comment that applies to duplicate rather than rubber!).

But that in turn means that weaker players rarely get the satisfaction that comes with winning. There are two ways of coping with this – flighting and stratifying. The former entails separate, parallel events – the A, B and C flights at some major congresses. The latter does not, but provides separate rankings for groups of different ability.

Stratifying is widely practiced in America, and seems very popular. It is only really feasible with computer scoring, so is a relatively recent innovation. In order to understand how it works we can take a straightforward 15 table Mitchell event, with separate rankings for each polarity, and participants having abilities labelled A, B & C (say open, Master to Tournament Master, and below Master). Let's assume there are 5As, 5Bs and 5Cs.

The event is first scored in the ordinary way, and typically the As will cluster at the top and get most of the 150 MPs available, the Cs at the bottom. But then in addition there will be results for just the ten Bs & Cs (10 pairs each way), with typically the Bs getting most of the 100 MPs available. Finally there will a score sheet for the five Cs, who will have been competing for 30 MPs. There would be a rule enabling any B or C pair to be awarded only the higher/est of any MPs won. Thus a C pair, in the above example, who came third overall but first in the B&C event would get 40 MPs, forgoing their C winnings of 20 MPs and their third place in the full event (30 MPs). Similarly a B would get 50 MPs for winning overall, forgoing the 40 from winning the B event.

But always there would be 280 MPs awarded, instead of the 150 under our current regimen – to some extent diluting the value of an MP.

An example of an actual result sheet from an American club can be found on http://www.bridgescore.com/inbetween/games/oct_02_ib.a.htm

The above description is illustrative only – any final scheme might well differ substantially – hopefully after club consultation. It would be optional for any club. It is being considered for Tournament Bridge.

It could not be provided before 2011, as scoring programmes would need to be amended. By then the National Grading System will be running (or imminent), and interest in MPs may wane.

Also, unlike the USA, the EBU will from 4/2010 have a large influx of new members who have for years not been collecting any MPs they have earned, and these people may be unconcerned about MPs generally.

Please let me (Suzanne Gill) have any views you have on this idea

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Please when replying at any time identify, [a] your club and [b] your county of affiliation