

Movements Matter

By Harold Jordan

There are a lot of things that club managers can do to improve the quality of bridge games at their clubs. One of the most important things should be to improve the movements. What? OK, so you're not a club manager? Then for the love of bridge: read along, become convinced, then **insist that your club manager and director do a better job.**

This article is intended only to convey practical matters about how to move the pairs and boards during a bridge game in an improved fashion, and will not attempt to defend the solid body of evidence that indicates the movement is statistically significantly superior. I expect that that information would be largely unappreciated. If you disagree with the following statement just go on to the next page of your Dummy: *It is best for all players to play all of the boards in play: not 24 of the 33 boards in play, for example. If you're going to play 24 boards there should only be 24 boards in play if at all possible.*

Suppose you typically play 24 boards at a session of your club game. One day you draw nine and a half tables. Years ago, we would set out 3 boards on each table and play a 10 table Mitchell movement with a phantom pair in it. At the end of the event, some boards were played 8 times and some were played 7. So some boards were factored. Additionally, the players played 21 or 24 of the 30 boards in play depending on whether or not they sat out. Yuck.

With the advent of ACBLScore and computer scoring most club managers learned how to eliminate the board factoring by using a 9 table movement with a bumping pair. Each round pair 10 bumped another pair out of the game and took their seats for 3 boards. Now all the boards were played 8 times, that was better. And the players played 21 or 24 of the 27 boards in play. That was also an improvement over having 30 boards in play. It was a little more complicated for the director who had

to warn pairs that they were about to be bumped and keep the bumping pair on track as well. Yet overall this was a tremendous improvement. We should just rest on our laurels, right?

All along there has been a better movement available that is easy to run and more sound in the scoring comparisons. It's called an *Appendix Mitchell* and works like this. Put out 3 boards each on tables 1 through 8. Move table 9 near table 1, and have them share (relay) boards. Your extra pair is #10 E/W and they sit out the first round. Every round the N/S pairs move to the next higher table and the boards move to the next lower table. E/W pairs leaving table 9 sit out for 1 round at table 10 before entering the next round at table 1. There is an E/W Skip after round 4. Now let's look at the comparisons. All the boards in play are now played 9 times rather than 7 or 8. All the pairs now play 21 or 24 of the 24 boards in play rather than 27 or 30. The sit out is always after playing E/W at table 9 and there are no bumping pairs hopping all over the room.

Why is your club not using the best movements available? I have no clue. If you want a movement file for ACBLScore for this movement, go to <http://unit190.org> and click on "Movements Matter" for free downloads and instructions.

The Appendix Mitchell can be used to remove an unnecessary set of boards and therefore improve comparisons for any number of tables *that include a half table* using the same algorithm. If the number of board sets in play is even there will be a skip after half the rounds have been played, if the number of board sets is odd there is no skip. The maximum number of played rounds is the number of board sets (1.5 less than the total number of tables). Therefore it is not ideal for 8.5 tables because it would limit you to seven rounds and imply 4 board rounds and a 4 board sit out. However, any half table greater than 9.5 works equally well.