

# Team Scoring System

## INTENT

Following the 2006 Armed Forces Open (AFO), discussion emerged among players regarding the possibility of using the event to declare both an individual AND team championship without penalizing teams for pairings against teammates. What follows are the details of the proposal for consideration.

## THE CURRENT FORMAT

The AFO poses all branches of service (Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines) in team competition for the purpose of declaring a military team chess champion. Teams are composed of the top 6 scoring players from each service.

## THE PROBLEM

The AFO is unique in that it is the only open event dedicated to Military Chessplayers. The AFO brings together future (cadet), present (active, reserve) and past (retired) Military Chessplayers into a single event. Some have met over the board for over twenty years. For others this event presents the opportunity to challenge figures legendary for this grouping. This cross-section of time and services always begs the question, "Who, individually, is the military's best player?" The search for the answer to that question does not lessen the pride in the team victory. But as there are no individual tournaments for Military Chessplayers, the question of how to achieve this goal without penalizing teams teammate pairings is paramount.

## THE CONCEPT

For the sake of the example we'll deal with a 100 person event composed of 4 unevenly numbered team participants. The event is paired for 6 rounds using a completely individual, swiss pairing (that is to say regardless of team affiliation). Note: It is acknowledged that it is possible to prevent teammates from playing in rounds 1 and 2 usually. From round 2 and beyond, depending on the scores and sizes of the teams, individuals may be matched against teammates.

After all 6 rounds have been completed, the individual champion is selected using the already agreed upon tie breaks designated by the TD. The "teams" for scoring are the highest 6 placing members of each service. Each of the team members receives a score based on the inverse of the number of

participants. (for ease of use, let's use Total players - 1 as the formula so everything equals 100) . Hence, player 1 receives 99 points, player 2 receives 98 points, etc. The points are tabulated and the team with the highest score claims the team championship victory.

### A WORKING MODEL

The following scoring happens in a fictional tournament from the top 6 for each team (note this is one of the worst possible mathematical outcomes where the field is fairly evenly distributed)

Player	USA	Pts	USAF	Pts	USN	Pts	USMC	Pts
1	1st	99	2nd	98	3rd	97	4th	96
2	5th	95	6th	94	7th	93	8th	92
3	9th	91	10th	90	11th	89	12th	88
4	13th	87	12th	86	14th	86	15th	85
5	16th	84	17th	83	18th	82	19th	81
6	20th	80	21st	79	22nd	78	23rd	77
Total		536		530		525		519

On a closer look, one worse scenario is a near deadlock between the top two teams. Here, the two Army players played in the final round. The losing player took 3rd.

Player	USA	Pts	USAF	Pts
1	1st	99	2nd	98
2	3rd	97	5th	95
3	4th	96	6th	94
4	9th	91	7th	93
5	10th	90	8th	92
6	11th	89	12th	88
Total		564		560

In this example, the Army team wins out overall because it took 1st, 3rd and 4th. The consistent performance allowed them to squeak by and claim the team title.

### COMPARISON TO OTHER SCORING SYSTEMS

Most team scores are determined by using the total scores of the players. This system is preferred because it adds a mathematical weight to the scoring and thus giving less opportunity for ties.

### COUNTERING ARGUMENTS

It is conceivable that someone would argue that his or her team placed

second instead of first because teammates played each other in one or more rounds. This would be a misconception though because it would still be the 'overall performance' of the top 6 players that was used. Hence, losing to a teammate who did well would bode well for the losing player on tiebreaks. Likewise, there would be no benefit to deliberately losing to a teammate as the result would be the same. Thus, all players are free to compete fully and without reservation knowing that every effort counts.

## DISCLAIMER

This is NOT another tie-break system. This is a scoring system implemented AFTER the tiebreaks have been computed.

## CONCLUSION

The US Armed Forces Open has a long history of individual and service rivalry, camaraderie, and pride. As the US Military Chess Committee looks for ways to keep the event modern and innovative, this system provides what we see as the best possible solution for fairly and honestly determining both an individual AND team championship without taking away from the spirit of true competition of this event.

Author: Steve Rollins