

Seeding and Draws for the Knockout Phases of Australian Croquet Tournaments

Abstract

This paper details the method for conducting the draw for knockout phases of Australian Croquet Tournaments. It is based on the WCF seeding method. It provides a uniform and well-documented method for allocation of players to draw positions.

Introduction

The Australian Open Singles provides for a knockout phase containing a maximum of 32 players drawn from the results of block play. The Men's Singles and Women's Singles both consist solely of knockout play and cater for up to 48 players in each.

In these tournaments a number of best-of-three (BO3) knockout singles matches are played in a tight timeframe. It is important that the matches be played as expeditiously as practical. In light of this the draw is constructed in such a way as to minimise the likelihood of drawn out games in the early stages placing time pressure later in the tournament.

In early 2003 the World Croquet Federation (WCF) tasked a group consisting of a number of international croquet players (Chaired by Louis Nel, Canada) with determining a seeding and draw method for the knockout phase of WCF World Championship tournaments. This Committee reported back and their recommendations adopted. The WCF method is described in *Appendix D* of the "WCF Sports Regulations" (available at <http://www.wcfcroquet.org/Regulations/WCFSportsRegulations.pdf>), and summarised below.

WCF Seeding & Draw Method

This section details in brief relevant parts of the WCF method as it applies to the World Championships.

There will be 32 players in the knockout. Players will be ranked in order from 1 to 32 using the world ranking system. Player 1 will be the top seed. A standard Bagnall-Wild knockout ladder is used (rows 1 to 32). The following steps are used to place all players on that draw sheet:

1. Players 1 to 8 are placed on the draw sheet in the normal order. That is at positions 1, 32, 17, 16, 9, 24, 25 and 8.
2. Players 9 through 12 are then randomly ordered and placed at positions 5, 12, 21 and 28.
3. Players seeded 13 to 16 are then randomly ordered and placed at positions 4, 13, 20 and 29.
4. The first round opponents of seeds 1 to 8 are then randomly selected from players 25 to 32, and entered at positions 2, 7, 10, 15, 18, 23, 26 and 31.
5. The first round opponents of seeds 9 to 16 are then randomly selected from players 17 to 24, and entered at positions 3, 6, 11, 14, 19, 22, 27 and 30.

Within this process during steps 4 and 5 manual determination is used to minimise players from the same country, or who played in the same block, meeting in the first round of the knockout. The WCF Regulations give a worked example of this method.

This method permits some randomisation of the fixed pairings 1 vs 32, 2 vs 31, etc, that would otherwise be found in the first round of the knockout.

Modification of the WCF Method

The WCF method is used for the Australian Open where there are 32 players in the knockout. The WCF method minimises players from the same country meeting in the first round, we substitute State.

For the Men's and Women's it is highly unlikely that we will have exactly 32 entries. There may be less, or there may be more (to an upper limit of 48). For these cases it is required to modify the WCF method in such a way that the format is retained. Below we detail the two possible cases.

Less Than 32 Players

This is reasonably straightforward. The draw sheet will contain the usual 32 places, and there will simply be a number of byes in the first round. It is only the placement of the byes that need concern us. Due to the aforementioned time constraints the byes do not go to the top seeds but are randomly distributed amongst the middle-ranked players. This should lead to fewer holdups in the first round.

The draw will be done as described as per the WCF method with a number of "phantom" players placed starting at ranking position 17 and filling spaces from there such that the number of players appears as 32. For example, if there are 27 players there will be five "phantoms" at places 17 to 21.

More Than 32 Players

In this case we must expand the draw to the next higher power of 2, that is a draw catering for 64 players. For this we simply use the concept of "phantom" players as in the previous case and pad the draw out to 64.

The WCF draw is only designed for a 32 player draw. However, it is quite simple to expand it to 64 retaining its principles. This is done as follows:

1. Players 1 to 16 are placed on the draw sheet in the normal order. That is at positions 1, 64, 33, 32, 17, 48, 49, 16, 9, 56, 41, 24, 25, 40, 57 and 8.
2. Players 17 through 24 are then randomly ordered and placed at positions 5, 12, 21, 28, 37, 44, 53 and 60.
3. Players seeded 25 to 32 are then randomly ordered and placed at positions 4, 13, 20, 29, 36, 45, 52, 61.
4. The first round opponents of seeds 1 to 16 are then randomly selected from players 49 to 64, and entered at positions 2, 7, 10, 15, 18, 23, 26, 31, 34, 39, 42, 47, 50, 55, 58, and 63.
5. The first round opponents of seeds 17 to 32 are then randomly selected from players 33 to 48, and entered at positions 3, 6, 11, 14, 19, 22, 27, 30, 35, 38, 43, 46, 51, 54, 59, and 62.

If there are less than 64 players, but more than 32 players, say 49 players (i.e. an additional 17 players) byes are not allocated to the top seeds. Phantom players (i.e. byes) are entered for players numbered 33 to 47 and the 17 players placed in ranked order from 48 to 64.

Summary

The use of the WCF draw method is suitable for the Australian Open singles with a knockout phase involving 32 players. The method has been logically expanded to cater for up to 64 players and as such is suitable for both the Australian Men's and Women's singles which may have up to 48 players.

This draw process is also used for Golf Croquet Championship events.