



New Competition Format for ISSF (from 2015)

Introduction

From 2015, ISSF will run competitions with new rules with the specific aim of making the qualifications more meaningful, the finals more exciting, while all the time creating a tournament that the public will enjoy even more than before!

The new qualification process offers more excitement, more fairness, and, very importantly, more stacking action for every stacker.

The Finals will no longer be organised according to age classification, rather, they will be based on ability grouping – meaning that everyone has the chance of being a winner at their own individual level.

Qualification Rounds

The qualification rounds will usually be conducted in 10 preliminary rounds (the exact number depends on the number of competitors in the tournament). The rounds will be conducted according to the Swiss System¹. This system is similar to a 'Round Robin' tournament. Every round depends on the results from the previous round.

The Swiss System is excellently suited for Round Robin Tournaments. The initial round will be determined and stackers paired off. At the completion of the first round, the results are submitted and an interim standing list is generated. From this, the second round will be drawn up where first stacks against second, third against fourth, fifth against sixth, etc.

In this version, within each pairing, the two stackers stack each of the three individual disciplines, 333, 363, and Cycle as a 'head to head' duels. The pair begins with one of the three disciplines. The duels are stacked until one competitor has won that discipline 5 times. When that happens, the pair then stacks the next discipline. The results will vary for each pair. The most extreme result would be 15:0, while the tightest result would be 14:13.

The following supplementary rules apply to the qualifications duels:

- If a cup falls off the table, the stacker simply picks the cup up and continues stacking.
- If a cup touches either the opponent's mat or cups, then the opponent automatically wins the round.
- If a cup from another third party disturbs either of the mats or cups of a pair who are duelling, then the duel will be simply rerun.
- The stackers are their own referees. If there is uncertainty about rule interpretation, or a dispute, then an official tournament referee can be called upon to make a final decision.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swiss-system_tournament

Before beginning to stack, each pair gets a result sheet on which to record the results and who has won. The result sheet needs to record the table number as well as the names of the two stackers. At the end of the round, the sheet must be submitted to the tournament officials.

The winner of the duel receives a point. The results are entered into the computer software and new duel pairs are determined and announced (based on the results). In essence, after the initial round, every stacker will compete against stackers with the same amount of competition points. The software does not allow two stackers to stack against one another more than once. With every round, stackers of a similar calibre move towards one another, meaning that the finals involve everyone, competing in a group based on similar performance results.

There are 10 Qualification Rounds in total. Between each round, the standings list and the new pairings will be announced. The process is transparent and it will be easy to see who you are likely to face in the Finals!

Important: Every stacker competes in every round! Even if you lose, you still can make a Final. Also, if you miss the first round (due to unforeseen circumstances e.g. traffic, inclement weather) it is still possible to qualify for the Finals although there is a disadvantage of losing the rounds you've missed. The aim of the Qualification Rounds is determine the top 70 competitors, as these top stackers will all be placed in the finals.

Finals

The results of the qualification rounds determines the divisions for the Finals.

The first 70 competitors will all have a place in the Finals. The first ten (i.e. those with the highest point tally from the qualification rounds), make up Division 1, those who placed 11-20 are in Division 2, 21-30 are in Division 3, etc.

Qualification Ranking	Final Division
1-10	Division 1
11-20	Division 2
21-30	Division 3
31-40	Division 4
41-50	Division 5
51-60	Division 6
61-70	Division 7

The Finals are conducted in the traditional format. The lowest rank stacker in the division stacks first. The Final for 333 will be conducted first (with 2 warmups and 3 official attempts). Then the 363, and finally the Cycle.

Should a finalist not be able to, or choose not to, compete in their allocated Division Final, then no replacement will be made to fill the group. This will minimise any attempts to rig the competition. The Final will be conducted with a reduced number of competitors.

IMPORTANT: World Records will still be recorded. The existing ISSF age groups and corresponding records remain as they are. New records will be recognised with accordance of age, regardless of the Division the stacker stacks in. But you only can stack a record if you reach a final.

Doubles

The following rules now apply to Doubles:

1. The stackers cannot be more than 10 years different in age (taken from year of birth of both stackers).
2. The registration of pairs for the double MUST be received by the organising desk at the halfway point of the qualification rounds.

The results from the qualification rounds provide the basis for determining the distribution of pairs for the Doubles Finals: The points from both stackers in any given competing pair will be added together to determine the pairs overall point tally. The pairs will then be distributed into Finals Divisions as follows:

Pairs placing (based on qualification round points)	Finals Division
1-5	Division 1
6-10	Division 2
11-15	Division 3
16-20	Division 4
21-25	Division 5

The Finals are conducted in the traditional format. The lowest rank stacker in the division stacks first. The Final for 333 will be conducted first (with 2 warmups and 3 official attempts). Then the 363, and finally the Cycle.

Advantages of the New Competition Format

In short, the advantages of this new format are:

- Every stacker participates in all of the Qualification Rounds
- That means that everyone is busy stacking, having fun and stacking against different opponents.
- Even if a stacker doesn't make the final, they have stacked 10 Qualification Rounds!
- Even if you don't make the Individual Finals, you can still qualify for the Doubles.
- Every tournament will be different and stackers will be competing against different opponents in the Qualification Rounds (not just the same old faces!).
- There will be different stackers in the Finals
- When stackers are competing against stackers of a similar standard in a Final, then every stacker has a chance of winning that Final! And that makes ...
- Exciting Finals!
- The Division 1 Final will be the highlight of the Tournament, with the 10 best stackers of the day all competing against one another!

Tournament Software (UDE Mantis)

The new system is very simple to run. The ISSF has chosen the software UDE Mantis which makes both the sorting of pairs for the Qualification Rounds, and the printing of the interim results very easy.

Stackers with same points at the conclusion of Qualification Rounds: To establish the individual places at the end of the Qualification Rounds, the software uses the so-called Tie Breaker Formula (T1, T2 and T3). Every stacker will be rated by the software according to these formula. The higher the rating, the higher the ranking in the finals. In calculating this, the software ranks T1 more important than T2, which, in turn, is more important than T3.²

Basically, the system works as follows:

- **T1 shows how good your opponent was!**

The T1 rating is based on the opponents that a stacker has competed against. The stronger the opponents, the higher the ranking will be.

- **T2 shows how good your opponent's opponent were!**

The T2 rating comprises of the total points from the T1 of all the stacker's opponents. (Rationale: T2 tracks the ability and performance of the previous opponents. Stackers, who have stacked against stronger (i.e. faster) opponents, will be ranked higher than those who have stacked against slower stackers.

- **T3 shows at what stage in the Qualification Rounds did I start losing – the later, the better!**

The rating for T3 is calculated from the sum of the squares in which a stacker lost. (Rationale: T3 is calculated on the actual ROUND in which someone lost. The stackers who lose in later rounds, will be ranked higher).

Important: While it can be exciting to follow the Tiebreaker process, it is NOT important to understand the system to have fun in the Qualification Rounds. Basically, every stacker competes against their designated opponent. Eventually, you will be stacking against stackers of a similar level to you. Note: the more you win, the higher you will be in the ranking.

² For more details on the scoring system for the Tiebreakers, please refer to the Appendix at the end of this document.

Appendix 1. Tournament Policy:

· Tiebreaker Bonus #1: Win/Loss Sum

Tiebreaker #1 represents the performance of players that a player has played over the course of the tournament. Players that played against stronger opponents will be ranked higher within the tournament. The formula to calculate the number is: Total the number of points each opponent contributes. Opponents contribute +1 point for each win they accumulate throughout the tournament and -1 for each loss they accumulate throughout the tournament.

· Tiebreaker Bonus #2: First Tiebreaker Sum

Tiebreaker #2 represents the performance of the opponents that all of a player's opponents played. Players that played against opponents who consistently played against stronger opponents throughout the tournament will be ranked higher. The formula to calculate the number is: Total the sum of Tiebreaker One for all opponents that the player played.

· Tiebreaker Bonus #3: Timing

Tiebreaker #3 represents the importance of the rounds in which you lost. Players losing in later rounds will be ranked higher within the tournament. The formula to calculate this number is the sum of the squares of the rounds that you lost in.