

Enclosure

Intentions, correspondence, interpretations and timing.

It seems obvious that the original intention of the ECU was to create a Performance Rating system, which gives a performance rating for the full tournament.

The new regulations are made by a working group appointed by the ECU, which in the process lead to the General Assembly's acceptance of the regulations it has been presented as a normal Performance Rating system.

The working group contacted the ACP on the 9th of July 2009 by email:

"Tie break matches should be replaced by 1. Performance Rating either all games or without the highest and the lowest rated opponent maximum difference 400 rating points unplayed games are calculated as a draw against the player himself 2. Median Buchholz 3."

On the 10th of July 2009 the ACP replied back:

"1) We do think, that both rapid tie-breaks and performance are acceptable and it is hard to decide, if one of the options is clearly better."

In the circular letter No. 09/2009 ECU sent to its member federations the proposal for the current rules and on the 24th of October 2009 the General Assembly accepted the proposal. The minutes state:

"Furthermore the Board proposed to delete the tie-break matches for champions, for medals and for the qualification in the European Individual Championships. In that case it is possible to save one day and the final decisions are not taken by a different kind of chess tournament. The proposal was already sent to ACP for their comments. The Board of ACP agreed with the proposal. The following changes in the ECU Tournament Rules have been accepted unanimously:"

It is clear in the process that at no point, to none of the parties concerned did the ECU communicate that they wanted to implement a Performance Rating that differs extensively from the common understanding of the term.

This is illustrated by the draft sent to the ACP in which two possible ways of calculating the performance Rating are suggested without specifying that they lead to drastically different results.

The ACP answers back focusing on the difference between tiebreak matches and performance also under the assumption that no huge difference exists.

In that form it was presented to the delegates at the General Assembly and the voting was under the assumption of this being Performance Rating in the common understanding of the term.

The aim of the ECU was to make a "median Performance rating". This is stated in my correspondence with the head of the aforementioned working group under the ECU:

"...the idea of deleting the highest and the lowest rated opponent before calculating the average rating was to avoid the influence of one very high or very low rated opponent, and to count any unplayed game to be the „lowest rated“ opponent. So we are using a kind of „medium average rating“. In my pre-calculations it worked."

Most likely the inspiration came from median-Buchholz, the (b) tiebreak in the tournament. In that system the score is defined by adding the number of points scored by one's opponents in

the tournament but deleting the highest and the lowest score. While the ECU Performance Rating might look similar to the ideas of the median-Buchholz at first sight, it is fundamentally different. In median-Buchholz two players with the same total score against the same opponents will always get the same median-Buchholz score. Similarly it is never possible to improve one's Median-Buchholz score by lowering the score of one's opponents. The core of the problem in the EC 2011 implementation is that it changes the percentual score, which has already been defined by the final score of a player. Logically, tie-breaks only make sense for players with the same number of points, which is why they should have the same percentual score for calculating the Performance Rating.

It is indeed possible to create a median performance rating that works and would give the intended results. For calculating the average rating the highest rated and the lowest rated opponent is deleted, but for the calculated percentage score their results are kept. In this way all the problems and absurdities pointed out in the above examples are avoided, and a performance rating for the whole tournament, not a selection of nine games is created.

A reasonable question is that if some players thought the regulations inapplicable and not an adequate system for calculating Performance Rating, why didn't they protest before?

The rules are written like this:

(a) Performance Rating

In case of (a) the highest and the lowest rated opponent will be deleted and the maximum rating difference of two players shall be 400 points.

While (a) Performance Rating is clear, the rest of the rule is formulated very imprecisely and is open to interpretation. Will the highest and lowest rated opponents be deleted from the calculating of the average rating or also from the percentage score? The same question can be asked for an opponent with a rating difference that exceeds 400 points. What happens if two opponents have the same rating? Who is lowest/highest?

Are these questions important? I would say very much so. Had Radek Wojtaszek's opponent in the 2nd round been rated 1 Elo point higher, the definition of which of the players rated the same would be rated lowest would have decided the gold medal in the tournament. And its not defined in any way by the rules!

Returning to the question of why we did not protest before the start of the tournament. For my own part I can answer that I protested at the same instance when I realised how the regulations were interpreted to calculate the final standings. However, the arbiters informed me that despite their sympathy this is how they where instructed to calculate the tie-breaks by the ECU.

My interpretation of the written regulation was different. I read it as the highest and lowest rated opponents would be deleted when calculating the average rating, but of course without deleting the results included in the percentage score too.

It is possible to read the regulation like this and it is a logical assumption from a player who understands that by changing the percentage score the fundamental principle of Rating Performance is violated.

Århus, the 10th of April 2011.



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