



Movement Selection by Bob Gruber

In selecting a movement, a director considers several factors, among them:

- ♠ Fairness of the movement—the more comparisons in common the fairer the movement
- ♠ Ease of the players in following the movement
- ♠ Need for stationary pairs
- ♠ Number of boards played
- ♠ Minimizing the duration of a sitout when there's a ½ table
- ♠ Greatest number of players receiving masterpoints
- ♠ The Director's knowledge of the movement and confidence in executing it

At BA II, there's a chart of recommended movements. These movements are recommendations only, not requirements. A director should always be comfortable and confident in the movement he/she has chosen. A technically superior movement that gets fouled is not good. And if it's fouled beyond recovery, which does happen, it's a total disaster.

Most players prefer a Mitchell Movement where the N-S half of the field is stationary and “players up one, boards down one” is very easy to follow. The ideal Mitchell Movements are 9 and 13 tables, with everyone playing all the opponents and all the boards (either 27 or 26). Mitchells with an even number of tables have a slight complication—they require an E-W Skip in the middle of the game.

Small games (5½ or fewer tables) are largely restricted to Howell Movements. But Howell Movements are not restricted to small games. There are Howell Movements for up to 16 tables.

Six (6), eight (8) and twelve (12) tables lend themselves to a Relay and a Bye-Stand Mitchell. Choosing the relay pair (to share a set of boards each round) and placing the bye-stand are a little tricky for the director, and the bye-stand is a slight complication for the players but not a significant one. The payoff is everyone plays all the opponents and all the boards. A small drawback is playing only 24 boards, but I personally think the fairness issue outweighs that consideration.

Fourteen (14) tables is usually run as a Skip Mitchell (where 1 pair and 1 set of boards are missed, and there is the complication of an E-W Skip), but a Relay and a Bye-Stand Mitchell is slightly superior. You trade the E-W Skip for a Bye-Stand, but no pairs and no boards are missed. And you get a bonus of playing 2 extra boards—28 instead of 26—so you get better value for your entry fee. It does, however, take about 15 minutes longer to finish the game and for some that's a downside.

Web Movements can handle an even number of tables (including a ½ table that rounds up to an even number) from 8 to 26. They were discussed previously in this column, so here we'll only note that they require 2 sets of boards, can increase the number of “in common” comparisons, can eliminate a Skip and can reduce the length of a sitout. They are, however, a bit tricky for the director to setup and most club directors are not yet comfortable running this movement.

The ½ table movements from 6½ tables to 17½ tables are where complications set in. Minimizing the duration of the sitout is a significant consideration. With that in mind, a couple of non-customary movements are recommended at BA II for 6½ and 7½ tables. The H7 No Rover and H8 Rover movements maximize the number of stationaries, while holding the sitout to 2 boards.



(Rover is synonymous with Bumper, and in the case of the H8 Rover, both N-S and E-W pairs are bumped for 2 boards.)

The 9½ table Bump Mitchell is an interesting movement. Not only is there a normal (N-S) Bump Pair—making for a N-S sitout—but E-Ws 6 and 9 exchange positions for 3 discreet rounds, rounds 3, 6 and 9. Guide cards are provided to N-S 10 and E-Ws 6 and 9, but the director, nonetheless, needs to be on his/her toes.

10½ and 14½ tables are superb candidates for the 1½ Table Appendix Mitchell with Relay. Table 1 and the 2nd highest table (Table 10 in one case, 14 in the other) relay boards. The N-S pair at each of these tables should be relatively fast. There's a phantom N-S at the highest table (meaning it's an E-W sitout) and it doesn't even need to be set up. What the setup should include is placing the 2nd highest table close to Table 1 to facilitate sharing the boards.

The remaining recommended movements will be a Mitchell, a Skip Mitchell or a more customary Bump Mitchell.