BEST PRACTICES, AND TIPS AND TRICKS, FOR TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS

As the developer of Compscore3 and as a regular director / scorer of small and large events, I have prepared this document to share my ideas and suggestion with other tournament directors. These have come from my experiences and practices when scoring tournaments as well as things I've learnt from the experiences of other tournament directors using Compscore3.

This document talks mainly about running tournament events, and much of it won't apply to duplicate sessions.

I would like to make this a "living document" adding contributions from other directors. I welcome ideas and suggestions, including if you feel my assumptions are wrong or invalid. I also welcome tips and tricks and ideas that you have found useful.

One important point – if you encounter any software crashes or bugs when using Compscore3, please let me know by email or via the Compscore3 Forum. I use Compscore3 extensively myself, but other directors use it in different ways or for different event types from me.

GENERAL ISSUES

- Keep a lookout for new Compscore3 builds. You can set an option (under Setup | Options) to check for a new build every time you open the program. You can also click File | Utilities | Check for New Build. There's a page on the web site that shows the latest build date and also lists modifications in each build. (https://www.altosoft.com.au/cs3latestbuild.asp).

- Before the start of the event (ideally the evening before), upload the field and initial draw to the web site. You can also send an initial message as well as the first round seating to MyABF (managed under Options - Quick Post Options). The MyABF Notifications function is being used by a growing number of players and minimises crowding around the notice boards and TV screens at the start of an event and at turnarounds.

- Where possible, use your own laptop – don't rely on the club's PC. The club PC should be available for an emergency. If you plan to use the club's PC, you have no fall-back.

- If you do use the club's PC, make sure you reset it ready for them to resume club sessions, specifically:
  - Web upload option back to their own web site
  - Bridgemate options reset – particularly entering player number at the start of the session
  - Compscore3 opens to their correct database, not the one you used

- If you are using a different printer from usual, ensure you have drivers available for the printer. Some printers don't like the Windows generic drivers, so accepting the Windows default often doesn't provide full functionality. (I have observed on several occasions that a

one-page test print with the generic Windows printer driver is fine but multiple page documents aren't.) Also make sure if you're printing multi-page documents (typically results or personals) that the printer isn't set for duplex.

- When running events where entry is restricted by masterpoints, you will need to check that players comply. Where a player seems to have too many masterpoints for the grade, check the Masterpoints Centre web site for their points at the cut-off date.

- You should also watch for inactive players when running congresses, state or national events. Click the Median Report will show if they're inactive.

- If you need to change a pair after launching (e.g. the house pair is replacing a no-show), edit the names on CS3's **Pair Setup** page, then in the Match form, under **Advanced Functions | Miscellaneous**, you can update the names used in the match with the latest pair names in the event. This will ensure the web site shows the correct names. After this, you can use the **Resend Names** function under the match form's **Advanced Functions | BWS Functions** tab if you want the Bridgemates to show the correct names.

- If you have a late field contraction in a Pairs event, it can be simpler to drop out the 2 lost pairs rather than renumber and reseat everyone. If you

haven't launched, edit the draw so the dropped-out pairs are playing each other at the now empty table and the orphans are now playing each at one of the other tables. If you have already launched, edit the incoming results to change the pair numbers as necessary – nothing else needs to be done.
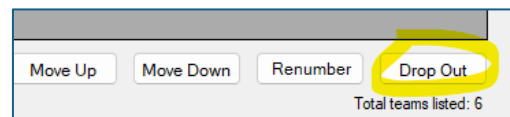
For future matches, the draw will ignore the dropped-out pairs and the largest numbered table will remain empty. One important point – if you have anchored a stationary pair to the largest numbered table, re-anchor them to the new largest numbered table before you create the next draw.

The same procedure applies to Teams events with a contraction. Home tables won't change, but there will be two empty tables in the room.

- Don't let your Compscore3 database get too big – it decreases calculation speed, and you risk data corruption. It's easy to create a new database – the option is under the File menu. It's a good idea to start a new database for big events. I use a new one for each gold point event I score and have another one that I use for normal tournaments, which I refresh every year. More active directors might do this more frequently.

- In events, you should always use **QuickPost**. You can manage which steps are performed via Power Options – Quick Post, expect that Calculation and Next Round Draw are always part of it. I recommend you include the option to send draws and results to MyABF. If you enter your ABF number as the Director, a message will be sent to your MyABF app confirming sending of the MyABF messages.

  QuickPost automates the end of round tasks and takes pressure off the scorer especially when running multiple sections as with graded events.


- On the Bridgemate tab, there is the ability to calculate just the current round or all rounds when you click **Calculate** or perform **QuickPost**. I recommend that when you close each round and produce results and web files, and generate the next draw (if Swiss), you should leave "Calculate all rounds" ticked. This has a minimal effect on turnaround time and is a safety net in case there are edits in earlier rounds. It can be useful to untick this if you want to run a quick interim result part way through a match.

- Don't run the database straight off a USB memory stick. This slows down the disk-intensive processes like calculations, but more importantly it's dangerous to have the live database linked to the scoring program by a USB connection – if it gets disconnected by a physical knock, or by a Windows / USB issue, the database could become corrupted. Also, never connect to a database in a Dropbox or other cloud-based backup space. Resynchs can happen when you least expect them, and if someone else accesses the database from the same shared space, you may get unexpected results.

- Back-up at the end of each day. There's an option on the main Compscore3 toolbar to do this, though remember that this just puts a copy of the database into the \Backup folder on the same PC, so this won't protect you from a general computer failure. You should also therefore copy the back-up to another PC on the network or to a memory stick or upload it to some sort of cloud-based storage – these processes are all performed outside of Compscore3.

- Under **Options | Power Options – Reporting**, there is the ability to always force event Results to portrait. The default is landscape as this presents a better report for player information, and also fits better on 16/9 displays like TV screens. The one time you will need to force the results report to portrait is when an event has more than 12 rounds.
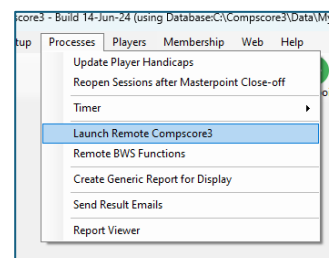
- Under **Options | Power Options – Reporting**, there is the ability to change what is showing in the Matches column of the landscape results report for events scored in imps and VPs. I recommend that columns show match imps not match VPs. Firstly, when players think about a match result, they think of net imps, not VPs. Secondly, in Teams events, showing the imps allows a quick way for players to see if they agree with your score – after scoring up they will know how many imps they won or lost by, but probably not how many VPs.
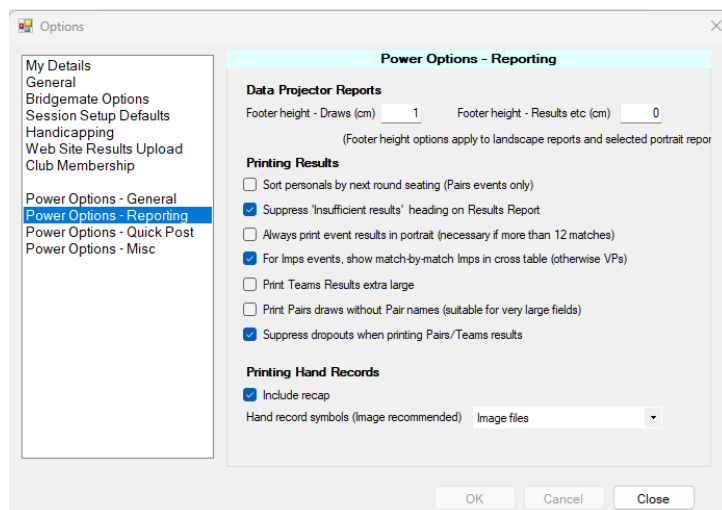
- There is the ability in **Power Options - Reporting** to control the bottom margin on display reports, with different margin heights for draws and results. Use this to balance up multi-page reports so that each page is roughly similar in height. That way you avoid having just one or two lines on the last page (the pairs/teams coming last or second last don't need this broadcast to the world!), and it also allows you to increase the report size when each page is a lesser height.
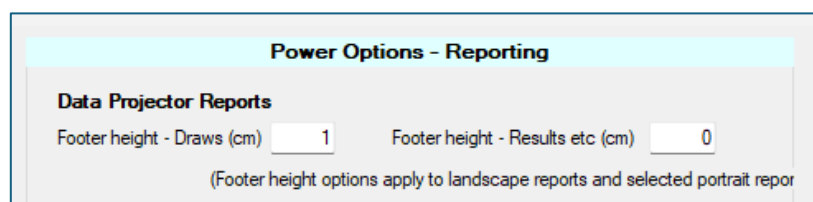
- If you are running external displays from your PC, don't do this from your main scoring Compscore3. Launch **Remote CS3** under the Processes menu. This a cut-down version of CS3 with purple colouring to differentiate it. Remote CS3 gives you just 3 options – you can show saved reports, slow tables and the timer and that's all. (There's also an option tro launch remote BCS's but that's only when you have a very large venue.) If you ran these functions from the main program, Compscore3's desktop workspace would extend across 2 screens, and some popup dialogs and other forms might appear on the display screen instead of your PC. This is undesirable because (a) you might be blissfully unaware of a popup dialog on the display screen that is awaiting your answer, and (b) you might have opened a form with sensitive data (e.g. a deal) that is displaying to the whole room.

- For Teams events, if you don't need to ask for players names each match, there is an option under **Options | Power Options – General** to show team rank and VPs on
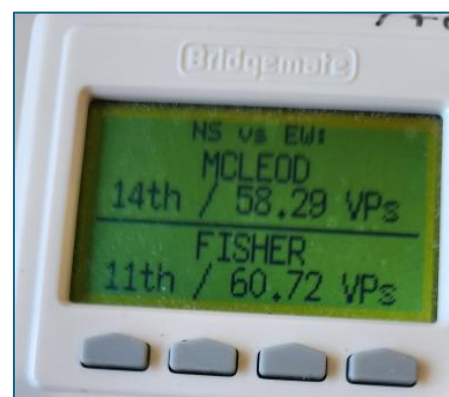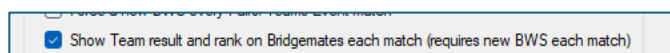
the Bridgemate screen at the start of each match.

- When running graded or other multiple events concurrently, your PC screen can get very cluttered. There is a button on the Setup tab of the event to set a colour for the event, and this colour is used by any form spawned from that event, so it is very clear which match forms belong to which event. I also use an additional monitor for these sorts of events to increase my screen real estate, set up as Extended Desktop.
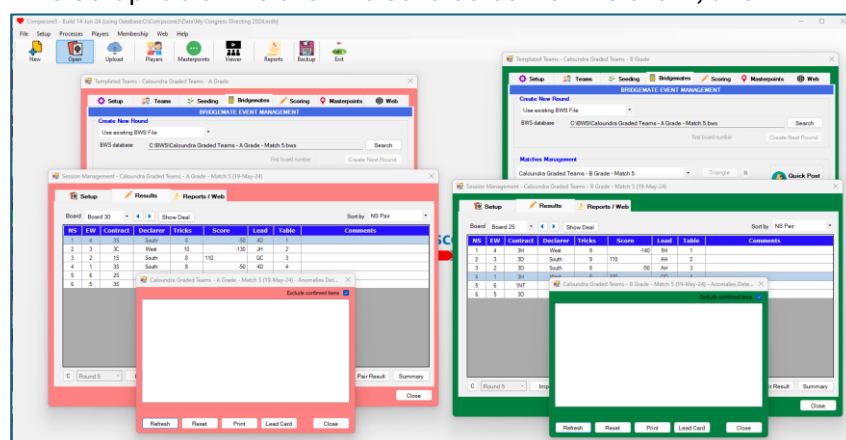
- When doing anomalies, if you find a strange result like 4H going of 7 or 4S with a 3 card fit, don't flag this for checking immediately. If the total tricks made is comensurate with the contract, it will be a bidding error and players don't need to be embarrassed a second time.

- Always load the deal file into each match of an event, via Advanced Functions | Deal File. This can be done from a PBN file, a TXT file produced by DealMasterPro, or a BRI file, though the BRI filee won't hold makeable contract details. This loads the deal into the match (or session) and uses it when perfiomling anomalies tests. It also includes it as part of the Bridge Austalia export CSV file and / or the XML file, which eliminates the need upload deals files separately.

UPLOADING TO A BRIDGE AUSTRALIA WEB SITE

- Activate the flashing warning for when upload files are pending (under **Options | Web Site Results Upload**) – it's easy to forget to upload, particularly in graded events, and there are many outsiders who watch the web site results through the day with interest.

- After first upload of the event, check the web site results and also drill down all the way to board details (each section in graded events), Do the same check at the end of the event, and after the end of each day in multi-day events. It's better to find and fix problems here rather than waiting till you get home.

- Calculate masterpoints after finalising last round and make the last match web CSV again with the masterpoints box ticked, then upload.

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- If anything goes wrong with the Bridgemate at the start of a round, it is often easier to simply close the BCS, delete the round in CS3, recreate the round using a new BWS file, and launch.

- Whenever you are running an event at a non-bridge club venue or you're using a mixture of your equipment and someone else's, it's wise to create a test session before you start. By setting up a 1 table, 1 board, 1 round Mitchell, you can launch the Bridgemates, test names entry by ABF Numbers if necessary, test the entry of a result, and check that this imports into Compscore3. You can also use this to check the reach for any remote tables in big venues. This will reassure you that the Bridgemate options are as they should be and will also confirm that data is flowing into the BWS file and through to Compscore3 properly. This exercise will detect any communication issues between the Bridgemates and the BCS – these issues can invariably be resolved, but it is better to discover this at 8.30am, not at 9.25am.

- Launch the Bridgemates for the first round of each session as early as possible. This gives you more time to resolve any technical issues. I typically launch the morning session an hour before, and the afternoon session as soon as I've finalised the last round of the morning session. If you're worried about last minute changes to the field, it is simple to delete the match, shut down the BCS, and create the first match again with a new BWS.

- For events where the players don't need to enter their names to the Bridgemates, test a couple of Bridgemates in the room after launching to make sure the correct names and board numbers appear. The Bridgemate can then be reset to return it to its initial state.

- When using a mixture of your server and club Bridgemates or vice versa, check version compatibility. The BCS can be more recent than the Bridgemate and Bridgemate server firmware because it is always downwardly compatible, but the server firmware must be equivalent to the Bridgemate firmware. At the time of writing, this is 3.1.1 and 3.1.1d.

- If there are communication issues between Bridgemates and Bridgemate Server, check to see if it's just one table or several. If just one table, it is probably a Bridgemate issue – if a reset or fine tune don't fix it, swap a new Bridgemage in. If several or all Bridgemates are affected and you've checked the usual version numbers, channels etc, try changing the channel in the Bridgemate server and all the Bridgemates. This can be done as a "hot change" - no need to relaunch. This will resolve the problem if there is some local RF interference.

- Make sure the Bridgemate channel is higher than 20, as lower channels can be affected by mobile phone signals. This interference problem could also be the cause if the "fail to communicate" error suddenly appears, after a period of normal communication and simply requires a channel change in the server and Bridgemates.

- When creating a new match using the existing BWS in Pairs events, the Bridgemate should automatically say "Waiting for next move..." at the conclusion of the previous round. When you create and open the next round, players can press OK to see where each pair moves to. If it shows "Bye", it usually means that the system is overloaded – just tell the players to press Cancel and then press OK again. This can also be done if someone have moved off that movement page too quickly and the names of the next table occupants are already showing.

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