

SPORT Operation

Introduction

SPORT is essentially a customised database application for running sporting events. It lets you keep track of a practically unlimited number of players in multiple competitions on a large number of courts/tables. Over the last few years it has become the de facto standard piece of software for running Table Football tournaments in the UK. See the developer's website at <http://www.sport-software.de/> for more information.

This document is intended to be a comprehensive guide for efficiently running tournaments using SPORT. It is particularly relevant to multi-event tournaments with events consisting of a group stages followed by double elimination.

It is not necessary for every SPORT operator to be totally familiar with all of this information. Everyone on the desk must have Level 1 knowledge. For large tournaments subject to time constraints, the desk should be under near-constant supervision by someone with detailed Level 2 knowledge. The tournament director must always be familiar with Level 3, and should have read and be able to refer quickly to any of the information in Level 4. For large national tournaments, it is strongly recommended to have at least one person other than the tournament director with the same degree of training.

Level 1 – Entering results and the basics of calling games

Below is the main screen in SPORT that the operators will be looking at for most of the tournament. *Running* matches have already been called, *Ready* matches are waiting to be called, and *Blocked* matches include players who are already busy in a Running match. The *Time/Break* column indicates how long a Running match has been going for, and how long a Ready match has been waiting.

To enter a result, click inside the green box and just type in the two scores (with the score of the team in the left-hand column first, regardless of who won or lost). SPORT will only accept a result that follows the format of the tournament (for example, it won't allow you to enter 7:9 as a score in a first-to-five game).

Running				Time	Event
1	1	Shong, Way (N) / Burdett, Tom (N)	Donne, Bill (A) / Ciminell, Vincenzo (N)	:	0 Amateur Doubles [1]
2	2	Leong, Kenneth (N) / Hamon, James (N)	Millington, Alex (N) / Millington, Andrew (N)	:	21
3	3	Boardman, Iain (N) / Wong, Caroline (N)	Pratt, Philip (A) / Kingston, Dan (N)	3:5	21
4	1	Phan, Hieu (N) / Lyall, Steve (N)	Whitelam, David (N) / Whitelam, Paul (N)	:	21
Ready				Break	Event
5		Kim, Sun-Ho (N) / Hampson, Thom (N)	Nguyen, Huy (N) / Cornish, Mark (N)		0 Amateur Doubles [1]
6		Latimer, Joe (N) / Grant, Tom (N)	Bellabarba, Niall (N) / Taylor, Robert (A)		0
7		Newell, Tom (N) / May, Julian (N)	Brown, Cath (N) / Hamilton, Joe (N)		0
8		Allen, Charles (A) / Webborn, Mike (N)	Taylor, Paul (A) / Badham, Dominic (A)		0
Blocked					Event

To call a Ready match, you must assign it to a table. To do this, click on the yellow box and type in a table number. The tables are indicated at the top of the screen, in yellow for an unoccupied table, green for one in use, and red for one with games stacked on it. It is unnecessary and confusing to have more than two games assigned to the same table at any one time. It is also of course counter-productive to stack games on some tables while one or more other tables are still free.

Running				Time	Event
1	1	Shong, Way (H) / Burdett, Tom (H)	Donne, Bill (A) / Ciminell, Vincenzo (H)	:	4 Amateur Doubles [1]
2	2	Leong, Kenneth (H) / Hamon, James (H)	Millington, Alex (H) / Millington, Andrew (H)	:	25
4	1	Phan, Hieu (H) / Lyall, Steve (H)	Whitelam, David (H) / Whitelam, Paul (H)	:	25
Ready				Break	Event
3	3	Kim, Sun-Ho (H) / Hampson, Thom (H)	Nguyen, Huy (H) / Cornish, Mark (H)	:	0 Amateur Doubles [1]
6		Latimer, Joe (H) / Grant, Tom (H)	Bellabarba, Niall (H) / Taylor, Robert (A)	:	0
7		Newell, Tom (H) / May, Julian (H)	Brown, Cath (H) / Hamilton, Joe (H)	:	0
8		Allen, Charles (A) / Webborn, Mike (H)	Taylor, Paul (A) / Badham, Dominic (A)	:	0
Blocked					Event

Level 2 – Calling games efficiently

Since most tournaments have bottleneck periods where there are more games ready to call than there are tables, it becomes necessary to choose to call one game over another. In large tournaments with limited time, this choice becomes significant in making the best use of the time available.

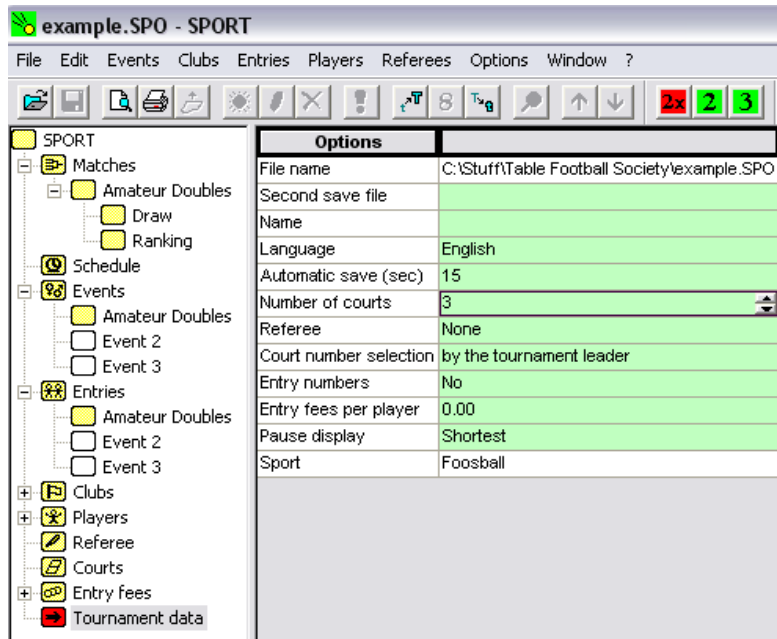
Match order is at its most complicated during group stages. Larger groups have many more games than smaller groups (although all groups should ideally be of the same size this is not always possible), so should take higher priority. For groups of equal size, we want to avoid any one group getting too far behind the others. SPORT splits group games into rounds (which go in a sensible order that minimises player-clashes in a group's closing stages), so we can help to keep groups in sync by calling games of a lower round in one group before those of a higher round in another group. The only remaining properties of an individual game are the players involved and their wait time. In a multi-event tournament, the director may have a list of players for you to fast-track over others. After this, the only distinction that should be made is to give preference to players who have been waiting longer.

In a multi-event tournament, the possibilities for player-clashes and the extent of their repercussions can be greatly increased. This is particularly the case when we are running double elimination events. Almost without exception, a game in the losers' bracket of a double elimination should be called above all else. After this, groups in their closing rounds (which can hold up the end of an entire group stage) should take priority. Apart from groups nearing their conclusion, winners' bracket double-elimination games should be pushed through.

In addition to games of different stages competing, there will be points in the day where games of several different events will be competing. Here, it is important to prioritise those players who are in the most events, particularly if they are likely to do well. Your tournament director should provide a list in advance of players likely to fall into this category, but there can always be unexpected high-achievers to watch out for. The director may also provide a list of preference for matches of different events, although this can only ever be a rule of thumb and given the number of other considerations in play it should not always be strictly adhered to.

Level 3 – Setting up events

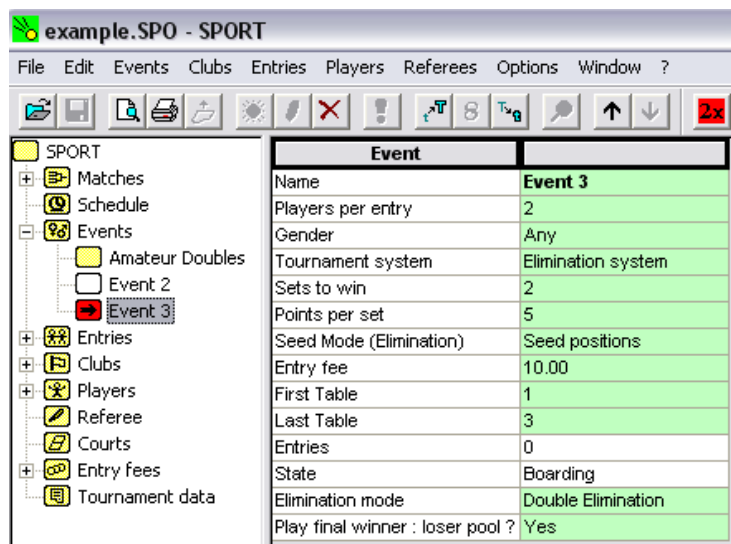
Before you get under way, make sure you set the number of tables correctly in the tournament settings:



You should also make sure that 'court number selection' is set to 'by the tournament leader'.

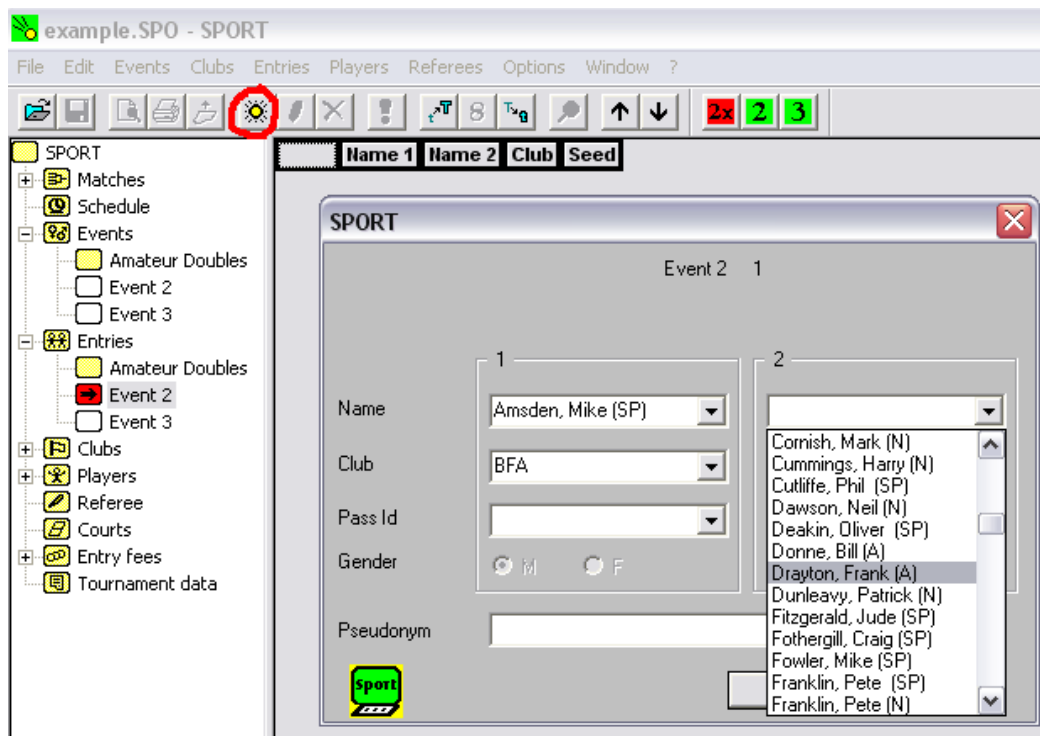
If you're starting from scratch then you'll first need to get all of your players into the SPORT file. Each player must be assigned to a club (whether you need this feature or not), so first go to Clubs > New and write in a name. Then go to Players > New and start adding your entrants. Alternatively you can import players from a hash-delimited text file by going to Players > Import. You can figure out the format for this file by making up a few players then exporting a text file (go to Players > Export). This also allows you to transfer players between different SPORT files after you've entered them all once.

The basics of setting up an event are very straightforward. Go to Events > New, and you'll be faced with this screen:

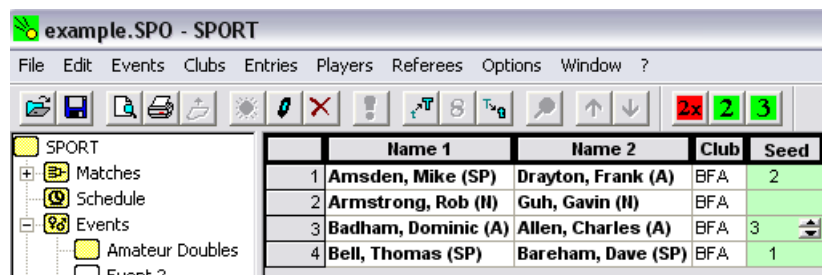


Most of the settings are quite self-explanatory, and some can be ignored. 'Sets to win' means 'games to win' for table football, so for best of three this should be set to 2, for best of five set to 3 etc. 'Points per set' means 'goals to win'. The only tournament systems we're worried about are elimination (double or single) and round-robin (groups). Selecting the round-robin tournament system makes the elimination mode setting change to a

'number of groups' setting. You should have in mind in advance how many players/teams you want per group, and choose a number accordingly. Once you've made an event, you need to let SPORT know who is entering it.



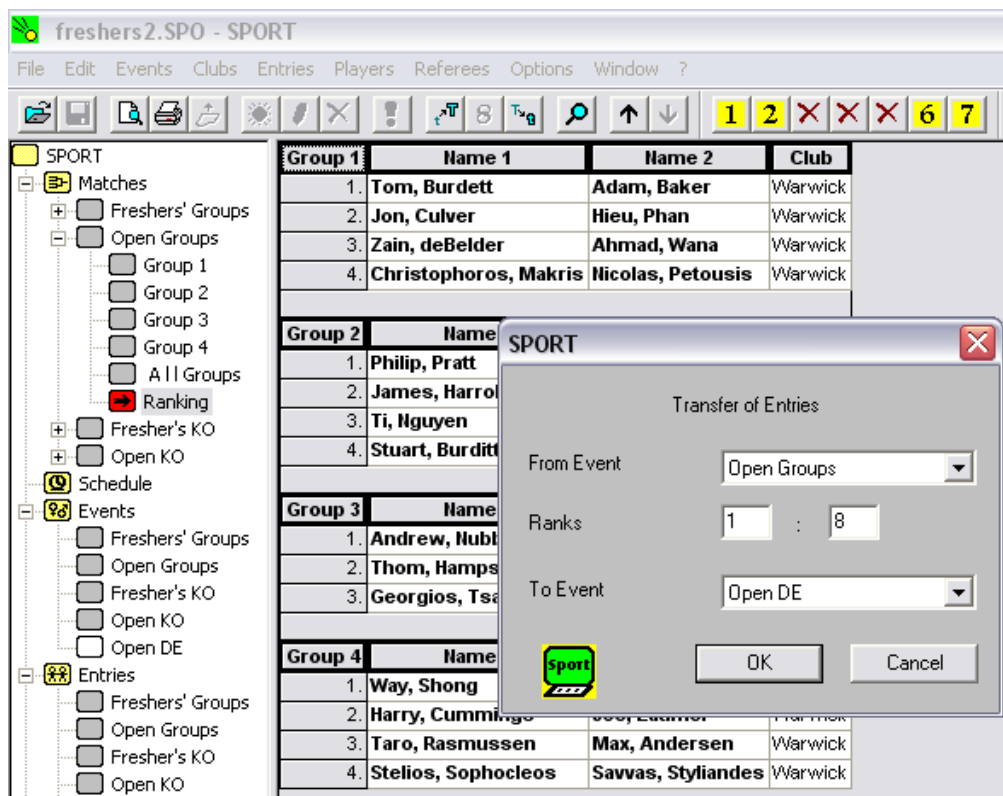
Expand the Entries branch in the left panel, and then click on the 'new' button at the top of the screen. The rest is self explanatory. Once you've finished with the entries, you can seed them if required:



Seed numbers are rank numbers, i.e. the best player/team should be seed number 1. You can give two or more players/teams the same seed number if you wish.

Level 4 – Advanced techniques

A few tips and tricks are always handy when trying to run a large event. The most useful one is SPORT's slightly hidden-away feature for generating the entries for one event from the results of another (for example knock-out round entries from the group stage results). Go to Entries > Transfer and you get this window. Note that 'Ranks 1-8' really means 'the top 8 players', although these two are usually the same thing. SPORT will automatically seed the transferred players based on how well they did in the first event.



If you have one or more players dropping out at this point (which happens) then just add that number to how many you transfer, and then manually delete the players who have dropped out from the entry list for the new event.

SPORT is quite well developed, but still has a few bugs. The most devastating one is that which 'locks' a player, showing them as blocked when they're not playing a game and refusing to release them. The workaround for this is as follows:

Go to 'Players' in the panel on the left. Find the locked player, click the edit button and rename them to something else. Add a new player with the name of the person who is blocked. Go to the entries list for each event and edit the entry with the now-renamed blocked player in, and select the new player in the drop-down box for that entry.

The tournament Schedule (accessible from left panel) provides a useful at-a-glance summary of how your tournament is going. It lets you know how many games are left in each competition, including those that haven't started yet (but have taken entries).

SPORT is also open to a few handy exploits. If you're running an event with different formats for different matches (e.g. losers' bracket and winners' bracket in a DE) then you can force SPORT to accept the proper results if necessary. Just go to the event set-up before entering each result and change the format to the appropriate one. The results entered so far won't be rejected even they are different format (unless you try to edit them). This is of course quite a time consuming workaround, so may not be feasible.

SPORT allows you to alter the ranking criteria for events. Go to Options > Ranking Criteria and you can set the priority of different criteria (e.g. Games won and goal difference). 1 being the highest and 0 meaning 'ignored'. Note that the settings here are tied to your installation of SPORT and not the SPORT file you're working on. So they won't transfer with the file, and won't return to the default values when you start a new file. For reference, the default values are: 1, 2, 0, 3, 4, 0, 5, 6, 0.