

Fixture Helper Spreadsheets

NoOppVenues.xls (Macros MUST be enabled)

This file finds how many times a 2nd team has opposite venues to a 1st team at each of the 14 matrix positions. Each team in a 14 team league can be placed in one of 14 positions. I usually label the matrix positions A through to N. It would take a very long time to do this by hand. You would have to look whether a 1st team was at home or away in the RFU leagues for all the 26 weeks, then look to see if the 2nd team was home or away in the NOWIRUL leagues for all 26 weeks. Do this for each team in every league. Extremely time consuming!! The spreadsheet can do one team in a few seconds and a whole league in 20 seconds. The numbers shown are the number of times that a 2nd team has opposite venues to a 1st team. The best matrix position for the 2nd team is the position with the highest number of opposite venues.

Of course the best position can be obtained by just looking to see which is the Golden Pair position and using that, but that only works when the two fixture matrixes have the same pattern and dates. When the 2nd or 3rd best position has to be used, because of clashes, or the matrixes and dates don't quite match then this brute force approach is the best method.

It is possible, whilst in the subsheet 'Input', by pressing Control and 'A' to set the sheet in motion to do all the NOWIRUL leagues and count the number of opposite venues at each matrix position in all 14 NOWIRUL leagues. It takes just over 3 minutes to do this. A bit faster with my new computer! **The output is copied to the subsheet 'Clashcopy'. Take all you information from the subsheet 'Clashcopy'.**

That is the easy bit. Before we get to this stage all the teams in the NOWIRUL leagues have to be put in their correct league lists in the subsheet labelled 'NWLeagues'. A fairly straightforward task!

Then put the teams in the RFU leagues in the subsheet labelled 'RFULeagues'. This is slightly more difficult in that the teams have to be put into their correct matrix positions to generate the correct RFU fixtures. The 14 team RFU fixtures are generated in the subsheet '14Mat', the 16 team RFU fixtures are generated in the subsheet '16Mat' and the 12 team RFU fixtures are generated in the subsheet '12Mat'. Other fixtures are generated in 'A14Mat, NLC and Cum for other Alternative 14 team leagues, North Lancs & Cumbria and Cumbria respectively. There is a column (Column 'D') in the 'Input' tab where the correct matrix for each league can be selected.

To look at the fixtures generated use cell 'A23' to select the matrix you want. For example if you are putting in the North 1 West fixtures put the number 4 in cell A23 to select the North 1 West league. Make sure you blank this cell before pressing Control 'A'.

These are the steps I go through to put in the teams in the correct places in the matrix.

1. Put the letters A, B, C, D etc through to N in the team list.
2. Look for a matrix position which has two consecutive away games in the first two weeks then look for a team in the list of fixtures which has two consecutive aways. It is position 'H', put the team at this position.
3. Look for a matrix position with two consecutive homes in the first two weeks, then look for a team with the same. It is position 'A'. Put the team at position 'A'
4. Then go through observing which matrix position plays which matrix position and which team plays which team until all the teams are in.
- 5 Often you will come up with a contradiction where teams will not fit. The possibility is the the matrix has been reversed.

Go back to step 1 this time with the matrix reversed. If it doesn't work this time, then it is a non standard matrix and the fixtures will have to be put in by hand.

Sometimes a matrix and date format is used which is not in the spreadsheet. In this case a new matrix sheet has to be inserted. The easiest way is to make a copy of an existing matrix. Right Click whilst in a sheet and select 'Copy' the sheet. Rename the sheet to the name of the new matrix. Put the Round numbers next to the correct dates. If the new matrix does not follow any recognised pattern then the fixtures will just have to be copied in by hand. You can usually make it easier by cutting and pasting from the copy of the fixtures you have. You may have to fiddle with them to get them in the correct format for copying? Make sure the spellings of all the teams are the same as the spelling in the NWILs.

Sometimes the RFU mess about with the fixture matrix and this season is no exception. Some of the leagues have had

the fixtures reversed in the fixture matrix. It makes it harder to spot where teams should go but it can be done. I've had to add a column in the subsheet 'Input' to indicate whether an RFU league has reversed fixtures or not. In column 'A' next to the RFU league list, put a '1' for a RFU reversed fixture league and a '0' for not reversed. The leagues this season which are reversed are every league except 'National 3 Midlands and Midlands 1 West'. There is a column (Column 'B') in the 'Input' tab where '1' can be put for reversed and '0' for not reversed.

Before we do the Control 'A' bit mentioned two paragraphs above, we must make sure that the team spellings in the RFU leagues and the NOWIRUL leagues are exactly the same otherwise it will give errors. One error which took me ages to find was the spelling of Leigh# where # was a space which I couldn't see. When it compared Leigh# with Leigh 2 up popped an error and I couldn't see why!!

There was also N. Manchester in the RFU leagues and N Manchester 2 in the NOWIRUL leagues. Adding a '.' after the 'N' solved the problem.

Right, we've pressed Control 'A' and got the number of times each 2nd team has an opposite venue to a 1st team at each matrix position.

Starting with the 'Premier League we put each team at its best matrix position to give the most opposite venues to the 1st team. Easy! Well, if we are lucky it will be, but if there are a few teams with the same 'best' position then the 2nd or 3rd best etc position will have to be used. We have to juggle around to get the best overall fit.

We go on down the leagues fitting in all the 2nd teams at their best positions to give the highest number of opposite venues to the 1st teams in the RFU leagues. I usually highlight the best position in a colour.

Outputting the fixtures

Fixout.xls

Now transfer all these matrix positions to the FixOut.xls sheet.

Before you start put in Column 'D' whether the league is a Conference or not. Also put in whether a league has a reversed matrix or not.

When you have decided which teams go where on each matrix then feed the positions into the sheet called 'FixOut.xls' on the subsheet labelled 'NWLeagues'. Put the appropriate letter to the left of the team name to indicate the matrix position of any particular team.

IT IS IMPORTANT that you put the letters next to the teams and not the teams next to the letters because there is a check for duplicated letters at the side where it says '!!ALL OK!!' or 'THERE IS AN ERROR!!'

There is no check for duplicated teams. #### Also there is less likelihood of the team names being misspelt..

Move on to 3rd and 4th teams but only for clubs who have a 3rd AND a 4th team. Leave the clubs with only a 3rd team but no 4th team until last because they can go anywhere because they don't have to match with a 4th team. Fit the 3rd and 4th teams on so called 'Golden Pairs'. Golden pairs for a 14 team league are:-

(A,H), (B,I), (C,J), (D,K), (E,L), (F,M), (G,N). These Golden Pair matrix positions give automatic opposite venues for the 3rd and 4th teams. Do the same for the one club which has a 5th and 6th team.

Fit in next on golden pairs the clubs with a 1st and 2nd team in our leagues. Then fit in the odd numbered last teams of clubs. EG the 3rd team in a 3 team club or the 5th team in a 5 team club. Lastly fit in the one team clubs.

If Clubs do not get a good match between 1st and 2nd teams then so that they get equal numbers of teams at home and away each week, try and put other teams in the club on Golden Pairs. eg if the 1st and 2nds don't get a good match then try using Golden Pairs to get other teams in the same club to match. Try and get an equal balance of homes and away games.

If a club has three teams with and the 1st and 2nds don't get a good match try getting the 2nds and 3rds to match or the 1st and 3rds etc.

The more teams that you fix into a position the more difficult it gets to fit in later teams and some things will have to be moved to allow later things to fit. You just have to suck it and see. Often you will come to a problem which you think cannot be solved, in finite time anyway!. Maybe instead of matching a 3rd team with a 4th team, match a 3rd with a 5th team, or as a last resort a 1st team with a 4th team. It is important to try and get the same number of teams at home as there are away each week.

Once all the positions are entered then by selecting the league you wish to output in cell 'B3' in the subsheet 'Input' you can output the fixtures in various forms. Putting '1' in 'B3' will select the Premier League, putting in '2' in 'B3' will select Division 1 etc. In column 'D' of the 'Input' sheet putting a '1' next to the league will select the 1st half of the season for a Conference system. (Only applies to the Premier League at the moment), all the rest have a '0' at the side of the league

The subsheet 'Printout' will give the fixtures in a form able to be printed on an A4 sheet, Portrait..

The subsheet 'PrLand' will give the fixtures in a form able to be printed on an A4 sheet, Landscape.

The subsheet 'Check' is a way of checking that each club has the correct number of homes and aways. Sort the sheet on the team name column (C) this will bring all the teams from one club together to make for easy checking.

The subsheet 'FixWeb' will output the fixtures in a form for input into the NOWIRUL website.

The subsheet 'FixRear' will output the fixtures in a form for input into a rearrangement helper spreadsheet.

The subsheet 'Iwk' is just a worksheet for calculating each team's individual fixtures.

The subsheet 'IndFix' outputs each individual team's fixtures as a list of opponents with home games shown in CAPITALS.

The subsheet 'HomeIndFix' outputs each individual team's fixtures as a list of opponents with home games shown in CAPITALS, just the HOME games. Useful for inputting into the MADREF database.

The subsheet 'IcalOut' outputs with suitable modification the fixtures and locations for importing into Google Calendar.

Fixoutcon.xls

Does the same as 'FixOut' for outputting the 2nd half of the season for the Conference system.