

GRADING SYSTEM – replying to Dave Seeds' letter.

When I set up the grading system around 60 years ago it was a one hundred percent mathematical system largely based on the, then, British Chess gradings with one or two modifications. As such Dave's depiction of the bottom division being an average of 87 is totally impossible as it means the bottom player could be as low as 32 and it is impossible to fall below 50 individually.

This is why the system was set to make sure the lowest division was around 110 as an average grading but could not fall below 105. In recent years Division Five has been around the 90 mark or even slightly lower and this means all those players having a grading below 50 have to have artificial numbers bringing them above 50. The big snag with handicaps is that they will not receive quite the advantage they should.

Similarly it works at the very top with the top few in Division One having numbers impossible to arrive at mathematically. The bulk of the players in the middle last season were, on average, 28 below what they should be. Fortunately for handicapping they still compare the same against each other but, long term, the overall situation will become less and less accurate unless the initial "fail safe" measures are put back in place to bring the whole five divisions to an overall core average grading of 175. Last season it was 147.

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