Manual for Fixture & League Table Generator (v13.01)

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1.0 Basic Description

The **SFS Fixture & League Table Generator** is an Excel-based software package designed to help organisers of sports leagues which use a **'round-robin'** type system. The software will generate fixtures, overcoming *some* common scheduling problems, and will create a league table allowing scores to be entered and the league table to update. It can incorporate a maximum of **12 divisions**. (if more than 12 are required contact us)

Please note that this fixture generator has limits. It is not the fully comprehensive system which we use for very complex scheduling problems. This generator solves some problems but falls well short of the capability of the technology we use in our scheduling service. If your competition has very complex scheduling requirements, our scheduling service may be more appropriate.

2.0 Requirements

The software requires a Windows operating system and Excel must be installed on the computer.

- Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8, Windows 10, Windows 11
- MS Excel 2000/ XP/ 2003/ 2007/ 2010/2016/Office 365 (32/64 bit)

Macros needs to be enabled. Note that the software is essentially an Excel file with macros. For the software to work, '**macros need to be enabled'**. The default of most computers will be to have macros enabled, but if not go:

Options – Trust Centre – Trust centre settings – Macro Settings – Enable all macros.

If may also be necessary to **unblock** macros specifically on the Fixture Generator

Step 1: Close the Fixture Generator containing the blocked macro.
Step 2: In the file explorer, browser to the location where the Fixture Generator is saved.
Step 3: Right- click the file and select properties from the context menu.
Step 4: In the properties dialog box, check the unblock box, and then click OK.

3.0 Producing a basic fixture list and league table

On opening the package for the first time, figure 1 below should appear.

➢ Type in the names of each division then click 'OK'. As the names are entered they should appear in the section on the right.

➢ Select a division from the right hand section and click 'MAIN MENU'.

Figure 1

Having clicked 'MAIN MENU' in figure 1 above, the form below in figure 2 should appear.

Figure 2

> ➤ Tick 'Create fixture list' and select the division where it says 'For which division'? And click 'OK'.

Having selected a division, figure 3 below should appear. This is where all the team, venue and date details for that division are entered.

Once the appropriate team, venue and date information is entered, a full fixture list with dates automatically calculated will be produced.

Figure 3

As details are entered they appear on the left hand side of the screen as in figure 4 below.

Premier

team	venue	no.	start date
1 Man Utd	Old Trafford	8	04/01/2020
2 Liverpool	Anfield		**play each team**
3 AC Milan	San Siro		twice
4 Newcastle Utd	St James's		
5 Inter Milan	San Siro		
6 Barcelona	Neuchamp		**free dates play matches? extra days**
7 Real Madrid	Bernabeu		every week
8 Arsenal	Emirates		

Figure 4

3.1 Entering team & venue details

➢ Type in the names of the teams and the venue of each team. That could be the name of an actual stadium or a pitch (eg 'pitch 1') or a time-slot ('pitch 1 10.00am').

If two teams play at the same venue it is important that the venue is spelt in exactly the same way.

Note that at any time you can remove a team, replace at team or switch two teams – see figure 5.

Figure 5

3.2 Entering date details

This will allow a full set of dates to be included in the fixture list.

➢ Enter the start date of the season.

➢ Enter any free dates when there are to be no matches eg dates when cup matches are to be played or dates around Christmas.

➢ Enter any extra dates when a *full* program of matches is to be played. This might be a Bank holiday Monday or a Midweek date.

➢ Enter the day of the week when matches are played. If matches are played on more than one day, more than one entry can be made. There is also an option for 'fortnightly'.

➢ Enter the number of times each team is to play the other -up to 4 times.

3.3 Create fixtures and league table

➢ Having entered all details, click the button to generate the fixtures and league table for that division.

A screen similar to the one shown below in figure 6 should appear.

Note that a league table is automatically created. Although the focus of the software is the creation of fixtures the user can also enter scores and see the league table update automatically.

Figure 6

Note also that if you return to the main menu there is an option to adjust the points systems for a win loss or draw.

The blue shading and the reference to clashes will be dealt with later.

3.4 Additional features

Having generated a basic set of fixtures, a range of features is available. This is without looking at ways of addressing some typical scheduling problems.

The following features are accessed from the places shown in figure 6 above.

1. **Switch group** – If you have more than one division, this button is a shortcut to moving from one division to another.

2. **Export fixtures** – This enables you to 'lift' the fixtures onto a separate file so that it can be added to another document, added to a website or emailed to interested parties.

3. **Print fixtures** – Fixtures can be printed off.

4. **Export Table** - This enables you to 'lift' the league table onto a separate file so that it can be added to another document, added to a website or emailed to interested parties.

5. **Print table** – The league table is printed off.

6. **Filter options** – Rather than have the whole fixture list it can be useful to view, export or print the fixtures for a specific team, the fixtures for a particular month or a particular week.

7. **Manual adjustment** – Having generated the fixtures there is nothing to stop you making manual adjustments. If a game is postponed, for example, you may wish to manually overwrite the date. Alternatively, you may wish to change the venue of a match.

8.

Further features can be accessed by clicking anywhere on the set of fixtures and 'right-clicking'. Four new options should appear at the bottom of your menu – see figure 7.
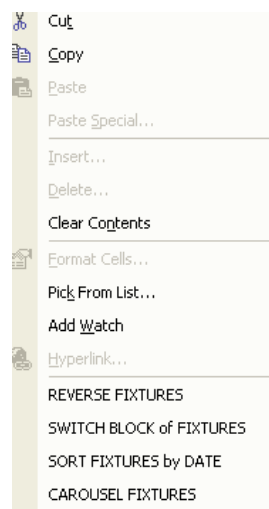
Figure 7

9. **Reverse fixtures (accessed by right-clicking)** This reverses the order of the 2 games that occur between 2 teams. Click on the home or away team of the fixture in question and '**right click'**. The menu shown above will appear and choose 'REVERSE FIXTURE'.

10. **Switch block of fixtures (accessed by 'right-clicking')** It is possible to switch two whole blocks of matches. Click the 'round' number of the block of fixtures you want to switch. 'Right click' then click on 'SWITCH BLOCK of

FIXTURES'. You will be asked for the number of the block of fixtures you want to switch with. Enter that number and click 'OK'.

11. **Sort date of fixtures (accessed by right-clicking)** It is almost inevitable that you may wish to manually adjust the fixtures. You may, for example, want some fixtures to be played midweek. The best approach to making manual adjustments is, having generated your fixture list, to find the fixture you would like to change and **change the date**. Having adjusted the dates, this may mean that your fixture list is no longer in chronological order. However, if you click anywhere on the date column and 'right click', the options in figure 7 become available and you can select 'SORT FIXTURES by DATE'.

4.0 Venue sharing issues

4.1 Teams in the same division share a venue

Referring back to figure 4, note that there were two teams in the Premier division who shared a venue – AC & Inter Milan share the San Siro. This is reflected in the fixtures shown in figure 6 where there are 10 occasions when the teams clash (both at home together) and these are highlighted in blue. Clearly this is a significant problem.

To address this, we need to return to the place where all the details are entered shown below – figure 8.

Figure 8

Rather than click the button on the bottom left, click the bright blue button.

This will automatically ensure that when one of the 'pair' is at home the other will be away. Essentially the computer puts those teams into a slot where only one is at home each week. For a league of 8 this can be done for 4 pairs of teams.

From figure 9 you can see that both Milan teams are never at home on the same day.

Premier

round	date					venue
1	Sat 04 Jan	Inter Milan	v	Newcastle Utd		San Siro
1	Sat 04 Jan	Arsenal	v	Barcelona		Emirates
1	Sat 04 Jan	Man Utd	v	Real Madrid		Old Trafford
1	Sat 04 Jan	Liverpool	v	AC Milan		Anfield
2	Sat 11 Jan	Barcelona	v	Inter Milan		Neuchamp
2	Sat 11 Jan	AC Milan	v	Man Utd		San Siro
2	Sat 11 Jan	Real Madrid	v	Arsenal		Bernabeu
2	Sat 11 Jan	Newcastle Utd	v	Liverpool		St James's
3	Sat 18 Jan	Inter Milan	v	Real Madrid		San Siro
3	Sat 18 Jan	Newcastle Utd	v	Barcelona		St James's
3	Sat 18 Jan	Arsenal	v	AC Milan		Emirates
3	Sat 18 Jan	Liverpool	v	Man Utd		Anfield
4	Sat 25 Jan	AC Milan	v	Inter Milan		San Siro
4	Sat 25 Jan	Real Madrid	v	Newcastle Utd		Bernabeu
4	Sat 25 Jan	Man Utd	v	Arsenal		Old Trafford
4	Sat 25 Jan	Barcelona	v	Liverpool		Neuchamp
5	Sat 01 Feb	Inter Milan	v	Man Utd		San Siro
5	Sat 01 Feb	Newcastle Utd	v	AC Milan		St James's
5	Sat 01 Feb	Barcelona	v	Real Madrid		Neuchamp
5	Sat 01 Feb	Liverpool	v	Arsenal		Anfield

Figure 9

4.2 Teams in different divisions share a venue

It is slightly more complicated if teams share a venue but are in different divisions.

To illustrate let us add to the previous example by adding another division – division 1. It has 6 teams. The team details of both divisions are entered and shown below.

Premier

	team	venue
1	Man Utd	Old Trafford
2	Liverpool	Anfield
3	AC Milan	San Siro
4	Newcastle Utd	St James's
5	Inter Milan	San Siro
6	Barcelona	Neuchamp
7	Real Madrid	Bernabeu
8	Arsenal	Emirates

Figure 10

Figure 11

Notice that there are 3 grounds which are shared across divisions – Old Trafford, Anfield and the Bernabeu.

When fixtures for division 1 are now generated in the normal way using the button –

the fixtures below in figure 12 will appear, with red indicating clashes at Old Trafford, Anfield and the Bernabeu.

Figure 12

To address this sort of problem, go back the Main Menu and chose the option 'More complex fixture constraints':
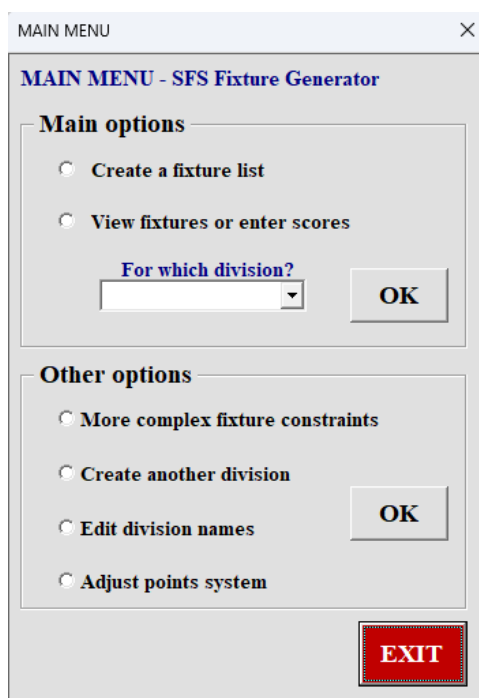

Figure 13

➢ Click 'Teams share a venue and are in DIFFERENT divisions' from figure 14 and click 'OK'.
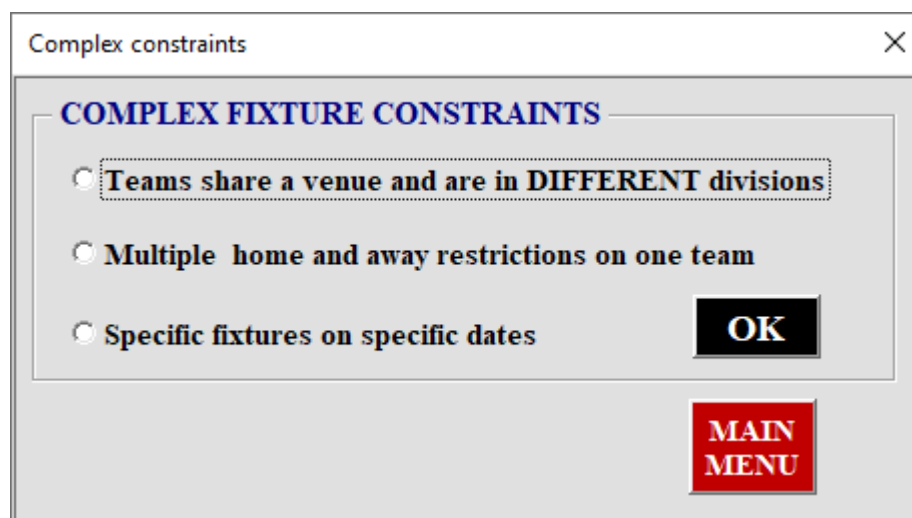

Figure 14

➢ This brings you to the screen shown below (figure 15), where the divisions and the names of the sharing teams can be entered.

➢ Select the divisions across which venues are shared as shown.

➢ Select the teams who share a venue.

Figure 15

When you click the 'create fixtures' button, the fixtures for both divisions are re-generated and all the red clashes should have disappeared as shown below (figures 16 & 17).

In figure 15 you will notice that as the pairs of sharing teams are entered, teams appear in blue below. The teams in blue are the teams whose fixtures are being moved in order to accommodate venue sharing. So in figure 15 above, on entering Man Utd (Premier) and Man Utd Res (division 1), the names Real Madrid and Everton appear below. This means that Real Madrid's and Everton's fixtures are being moved in order to accommodate the Old Trafford sharing issue. This may become important when your league has a lots of venue-sharing both within and across divisions.

Figure 16

Division 1

round	date		v		venue
1	Sat 04 Jan	Man Utd Res	v	Rangers	Old Trafford
1	Sat 04 Jan	Chelsea	v	Athletico Madrid	Stamford Bridge
1	Sat 04 Jan	Everton	v	Liverpool Res	Goodison
2	Sat 11 Jan	Athletico Madrid	v	Man Utd Res	Bernabeu
2	Sat 11 Jan	Liverpool Res	v	Chelsea	Anfield
2	Sat 11 Jan	Rangers	v	Everton	Ibrox
3	Sat 18 Jan	Man Utd Res	v	Liverpool Res	Old Trafford
3	Sat 18 Jan	Rangers	v	Athletico Madrid	Ibrox
3	Sat 18 Jan	Everton	v	Chelsea	Goodison
4	Sat 25 Jan	Chelsea	v	Man Utd Res	Stamford Bridge
4	Sat 25 Jan	Liverpool Res	v	Rangers	Anfield
4	Sat 25 Jan	Athletico Madrid	v	Everton	Bernabeu
5	Sat 01 Feb	Athletico Madrid	v	Liverpool Res	Bernabeu
5	Sat 01 Feb	Rangers	v	Chelsea	Ibrox
5	Sat 01 Feb	Man Utd Res	v	Everton	Old Trafford
6	Sat 08 Feb	Liverpool Res	v	Athletico Madrid	Anfield
6	Sat 08 Feb	Chelsea	v	Rangers	Stamford Bridge

Figure 17

Limits to this feature

1. When you have two divisions and there are pairs of teams who share a venue but are in different divisions, this feature can deal with a maximum of 4 pairs of sharers.

2. For this feature to work properly, the date details of each division must be the same ie the start date, the free dates and the extra dates must be the same in both divisions.

4.3 What if several teams all play at the same venue?

In many cases lots of teams may play at the same 'venue'. This occurs where a number of football teams play at the same playing fields or a number of hockey teams play at the same pitch. In such situations, there must be a **number of pitches** at the one venue or there must be a number of different **time-slots**.

➢ **The key is to view this as the same problem as Inter Milan and AC Milan (two teams in the same division sharing –see example above)**

➢ **Each pitch or each time slot at each venue should be treated as a distinct venue and 2 teams can share each pitch or time slot.**

Example 1.

There may be 6 football teams in a league who all play at Belfast Playing fields. They may be in the same or different divisions.

So when we enter the venue for each of the 6 football teams we should enter 'Belfast Playing field (pitch 1)'. You can assign two teams to each pitch and the software will automatically sort it all out. (for these examples you only need 3 pitches)
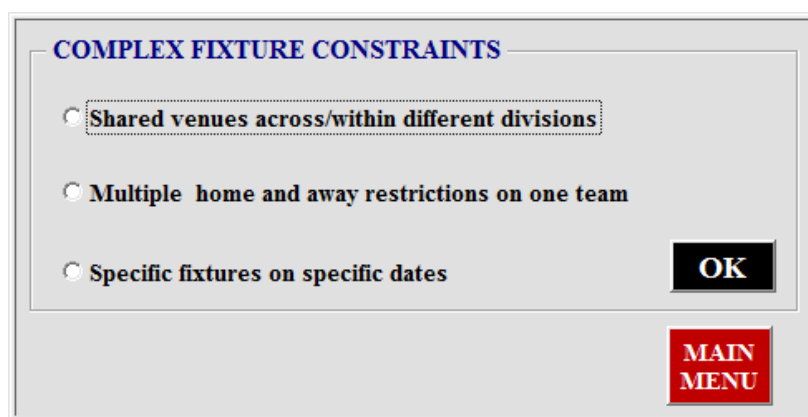
Example 2.

There is more than one time-slot at Belfast Playing Fields. At Belfast Playing Fields there is only one pitch but matches can be played at 10.00am, 12.00 or 2.00pm. So when we enter the venue for each team we should enter 'Belfast Playing Field – 10.00am'. Again 2 teams can be assigned to each time slot.

5.0 Fit specific fixtures to specific dates

You may want to ensure that the 'best' two teams in the league meet on a particular date. You may want derby games on particular Saturdays or Bank Holidays etc. Let us assume that it is decided that the two big derby matches should happen on the opening day of the season – Liverpool v Everton and AC Milan v Inter Milan.

In order to address this type of problem, you should access the 'Complex Constraint Menu':

- On Main Menu chose 'complex fixture constraints' and click OK.
- Click 'specific fixtures on specific dates'

You should arrive at the screen shown below.

Figure 18

- Indicate the division and the date on which the games are to be, as shown above, and enter the actual fixtures as shown.

- Click 'create fixtures' and the set of fixtures will now have the two derby games on week 1 as shown below in figure 19.

Premiership

match	date				venue
1	Sat 02 Jan	Liverpool	v	Everton	Anfield
1	Sat 02 Jan	AC Milan	v	Inter Milan	San Siro
1	Sat 02 Jan	Leeds United	v	Man Utd	Elland Road
1	Sat 02 Jan	Man City	v	Chelsea	Old Trafford
2	Sat 09 Jan	Inter Milan	v	Liverpool	San Siro
2	Sat 09 Jan	Chelsea	v	Leeds United	Stamford Bridge
2	Sat 09 Jan	Man Utd	v	AC Milan	Old Trafford
2	Sat 09 Jan	Everton	v	Man City	Goodison
3	Sat 16 Jan	Liverpool	v	Man Utd	Anfield

Figure 19

Please note that as with our other examples, what the software is doing is finding the slot for each team to fit the circumstance. If one team is moved to a different slot then another team is moved out.