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DOUBLE ELIMINATION

The double elimination tournament is one of the most popular tournament styles in both the SCA and collegiate sports. This format calls for a single combat for each fight. A fighter must lose twice to be eliminated from the tournament. When a fighter is defeated once, he goes to the losers bracket. Fighters are eliminated from the tournament when they have lost twice. The list progresses until all fighters but one is eliminated.

There are two ways of pairing the two brackets to determine a winner. The first method is to eliminate all but one fighter from both the loser's and winner's brackets. The final round is then fought between those two fighters. The fighter from the loser's bracket must win twice to win the bout. The other option is that two fighters from the loser's bracket come over at the semifinals and fight two fighters from the winner's bracket. They also must win twice to proceed to the finals. In this way each fighter has had a chance to be eliminated twice. These two options are illustrated at Option 1 and 2.

There are several concerns when running a list of this type for the SCA. The first is that a fighter will have to fight the same person several times. Because we want to provide the most opportunities for fighting, one method for preventing this is to rotate the list. What this means is that when a fighter goes into the losers bracket, they rotate the position on that bracket. Look at the tournament tree, Option 1a. If fighter 1 had lost in round II and crossed straight over, than they would have immediately refought the round I bout. Instead of going directly over and fighting fighter #2 again (under round IV), he is moved down to the bottom of the bracket and fighter #14. (All numbers are for reference only). By rotating the list, as a matter of course, you avoid the possibility of duplicate fights.

Another concern is what to do with uneven numbers. The only ideal numbers for a double elimination list are 8, 16, 32, and 64 (also 128, but I have only done that at Pennsic). If you have any other number of fighters, then you will have to use bye fights and possibly a round robin in the semifinals to get your two fighters. These concerns provide many interesting challenges to the list maker. If you have one number less then the ideal, then add a bye. The need for the bye will disappear after the second round. An example is provided at Option 3 for an odd number of fighters, in this case 13. Only 3 byes are needed for the tournament. The placement is important so that one person does not get a bye twice. In this example if #13 had won in round IV then the bye would have gone in a different place in the bracket instead of the top and the pairings for round VI would have been 13 and 10, 6 and bye. Thus fighter 13 would not get two byes in the same tournament (Option 4). The key here is for the list maker to be flexible and prepared to redraw the list during later rounds. But keep in mind that they should not alter the pairings for any other reason then to prevent two byes or duplicate fights. In this way impartiality is maintained.

Another way to handle odd numbers is to challenge into the list. If you have one or two extra fighters (9 or 10, 17 or 18) you can have those fighters challenge fighters on the list for their place. The way to do this is to draw the list up as normal. I am assuming that is a random draw. There will be one or two names left over. Those fighters then are

allowed to challenge another fighter for their place in the first round. If the challenger wins then they take the place of the loser in the first round and the challenged fighter then must challenge into the loser's bracket for the second round. If the challenger loses then they must be the ones to challenge into the loser's bracket. In this way, the integrity of the double elimination is kept and all fighters get to play. This method is best used with large number of fighters in the tournament. For a smaller tournament, it is best to use byes. Option 5 is one example of how to run a nine-person tournament using byes with a round robin the in V round. Option 6 is a 9-person tournament with a bye in the IV round. Again flexibility in construction of the list is vital. The note on Option 6, about how the position of the bye will change depending on the outcome of the previous bouts illustrates this. The list will change as different people win each round. Be prepared to redraw. Let me define redraw as I use it here. I refer to the physical drawing of the list tree. I do not mean that the pairings of the fighters change.
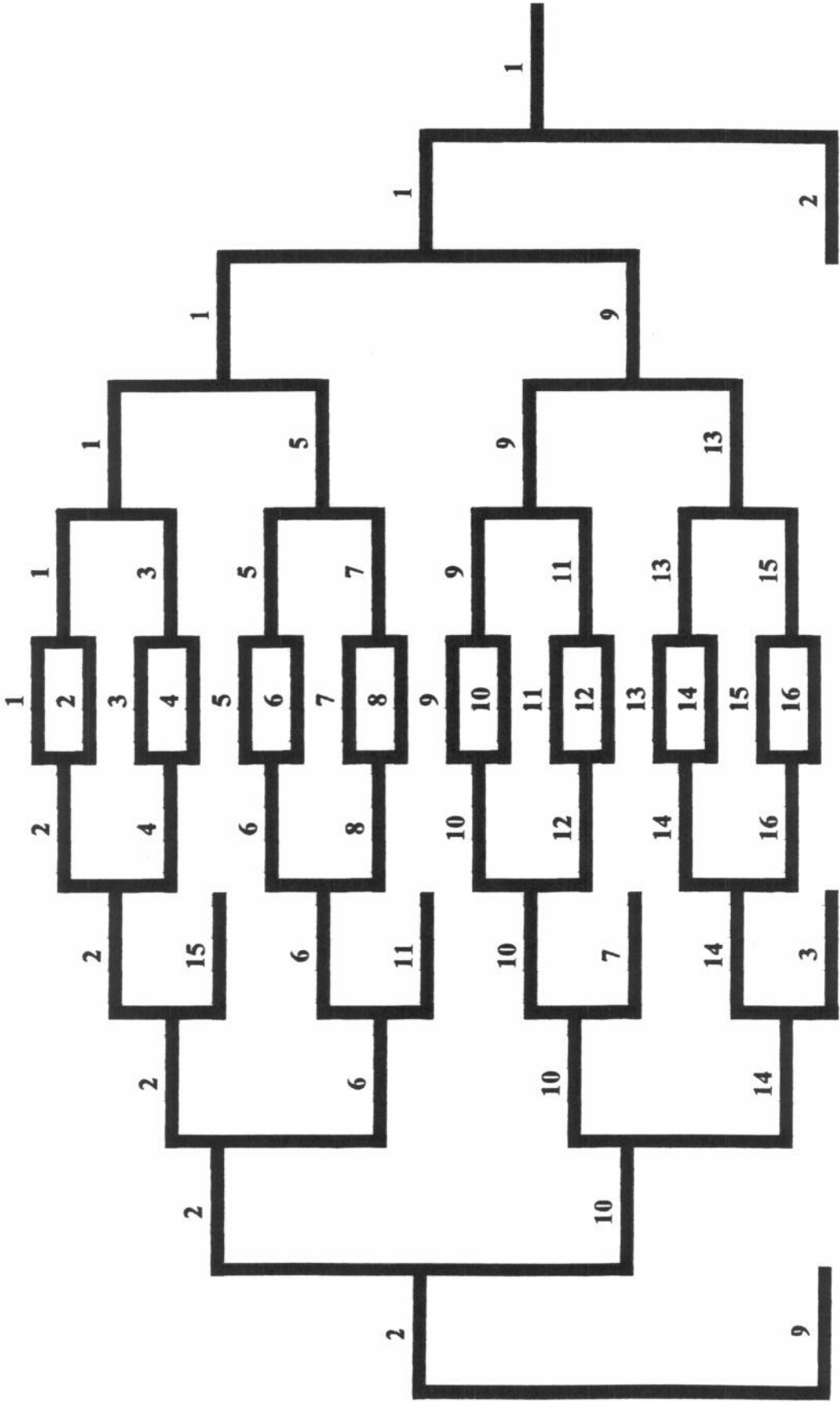
If you have to place a number of byes (more than 2), then make sure that they are evenly spaced throughout the initial bracket. It is important to visualize the list as it spreads down so that the byes fall away as quickly as possible. Never use a pen to draw out your list. With a number of byes, there are numerous possibilities in where to place them. As your experience grows then you will have a better understanding of placement.

An alternative to using a formal written list tree, when the numbers are large or uneven is to use cards. You place the names of each fighter on a card and pair the cards in your hand. As each bout is fought, the number of wins or loses is recorded on the card. When the fighter has lost two fights, then the card is removed from the deck and you continue. There are two alternatives in how to keep the cards. One method is to put all the cards in one deck and draw each paring randomly. This method does not take into consideration either repeat fights between the same fighters or whether the opponents are undefeated versus having one lose. The second method would be the divide the cards after the first round into a loser's and winner's stack. Then winner would fighter winner and loser would fight loser until the list is played out. It is absolutely essential to make sure that the proper number of fights is recorded on the cards. I would also highly recommend that you do not throw away the cards until after the tournament is completed. This is your only record of wins and loses and if someone thinks that they were eliminated by mistake or another problem arises, you need the cards as your back up. If you are an absolute glutton for work, than you can also do a triple elimination tournament using card method. Do not try a tournament tree.
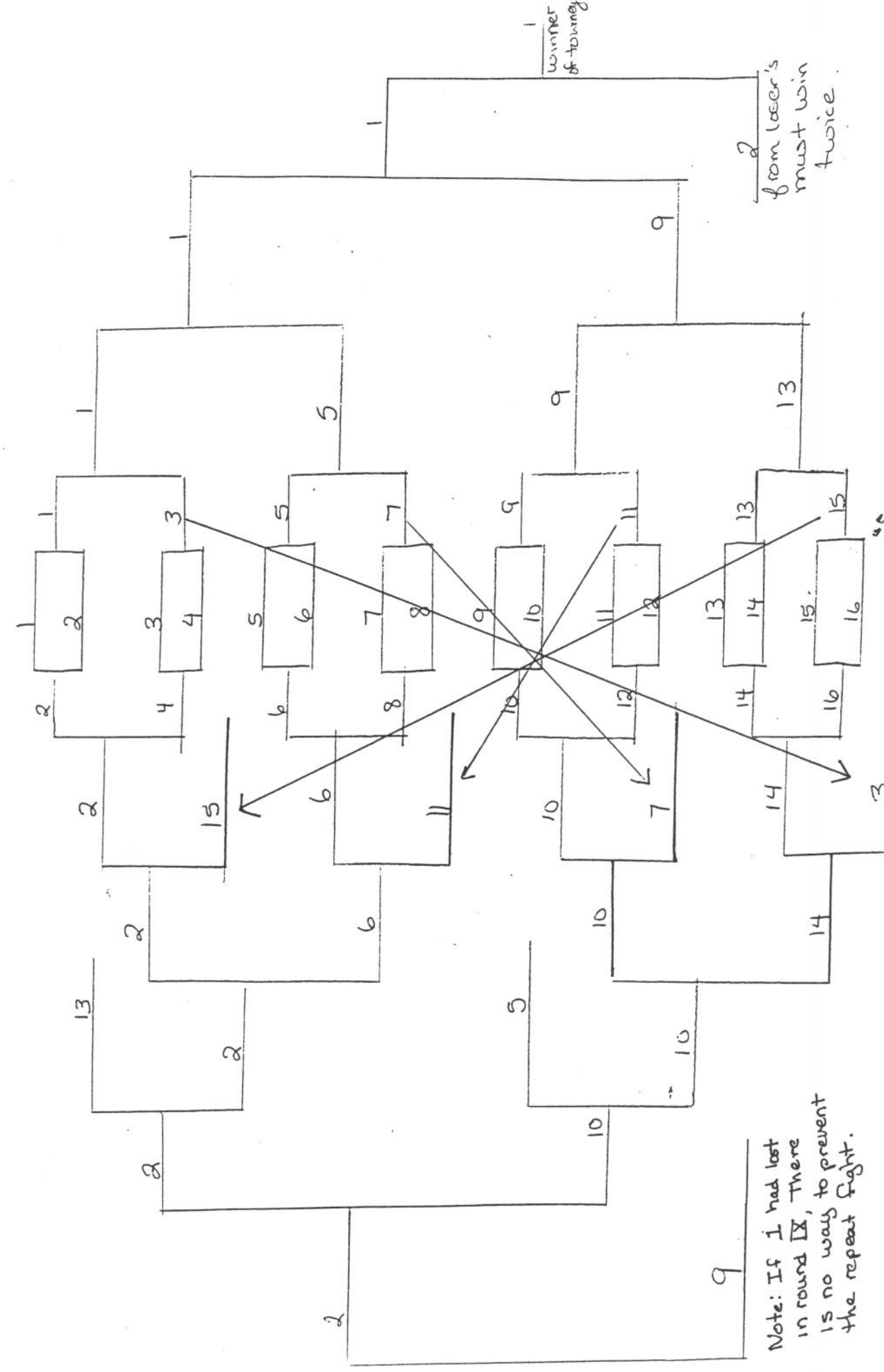
However you plan on doing the tournament, remember to work it out with the marshal ahead of time if possible. This will allow you time to prepare. Remember to bring to the event, pencils, erasers, pens, cards, rulers, paper and paperweights. These are the items necessary to run the table. Remember that you are the one running the physical list. It is the list maker's responsibility to accurately and quickly figure out the order of the fights and to get the information out on the field. The marshal is running the fighting. It is his responsibility to see that the bouts are fought. If you do your job well, you both come out looking good. The Crowns have the final word on any issue if they are present. This does not mean that you cannot disagree with them if you feel they are incorrect on an issue.

They cannot break the law and they should not rearrange the order of the list. This has not been an issue for quite some time and I doubt that you will have to deal with it. If it comes up, be polite and discreet and you will be okay.

STANDARD DOUBLE-ELIMINATION TOURNEY

XI

IX

IV

II

I

III

V

VI

VII

VIII

X

winner of tourney

from loser's must win twice

Note: If i had lost in round IX, There is no way to prevent the repeat fight.

Option 2

Final   Semi Final   V   IV   I   III   II   VI   VII

Winner

Can be best 2 out of 3 or just 1 bout

loser must win twice to advance to final

loser must win

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

13 2 10 14 5 10
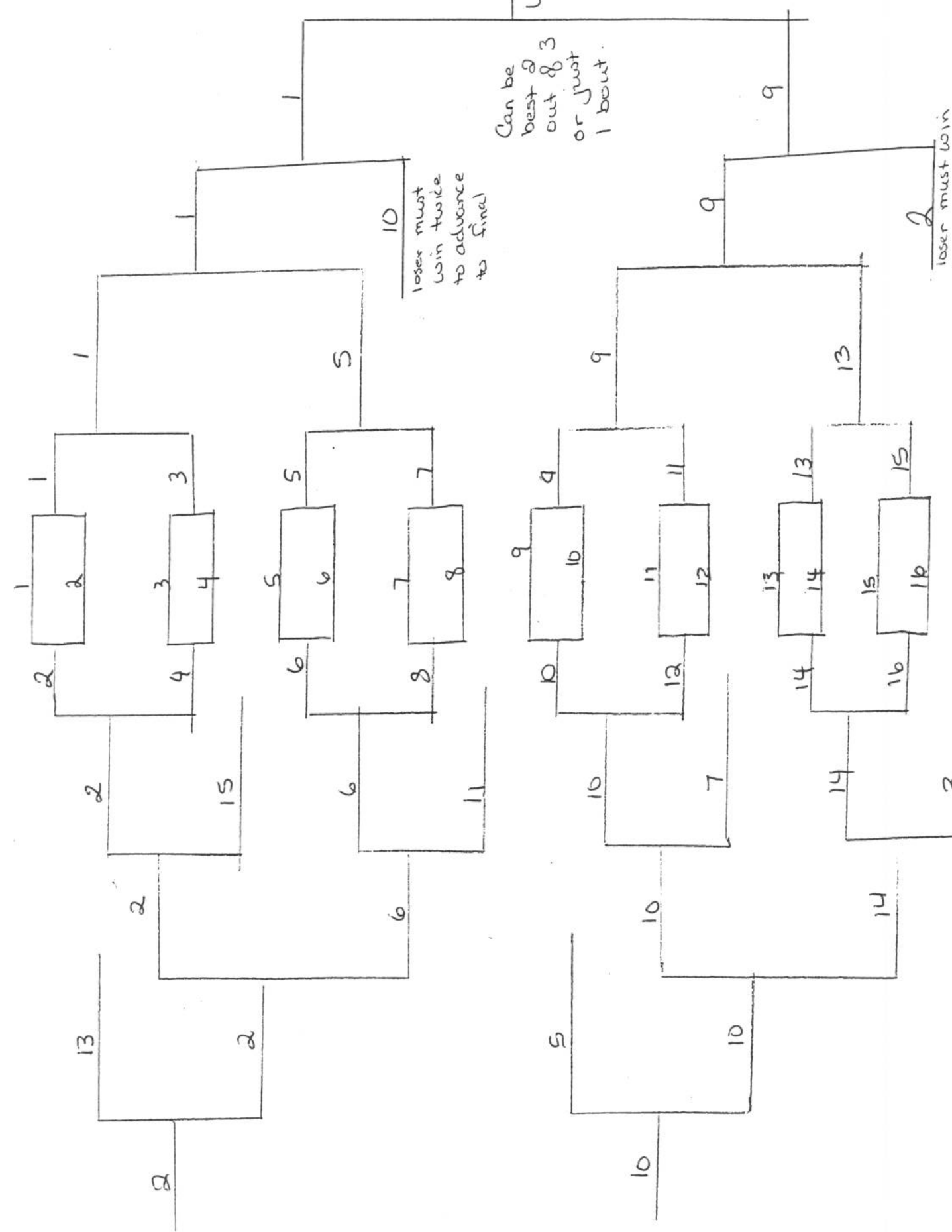
Odd number w/ Bye
Option 3

Winner

Bye

Semi-finals

Bye

Bye

VII   VI   IV   III   I   II   V

2

13

6

9

10

15

13

6

Bye

10

13

3

13

6

6

11

6

IV

VI

VIII

II

Option 4a

2

13

13

6

9

6

10

15

10

IV

13

10

13

3

13

6

Bye

6

11

6
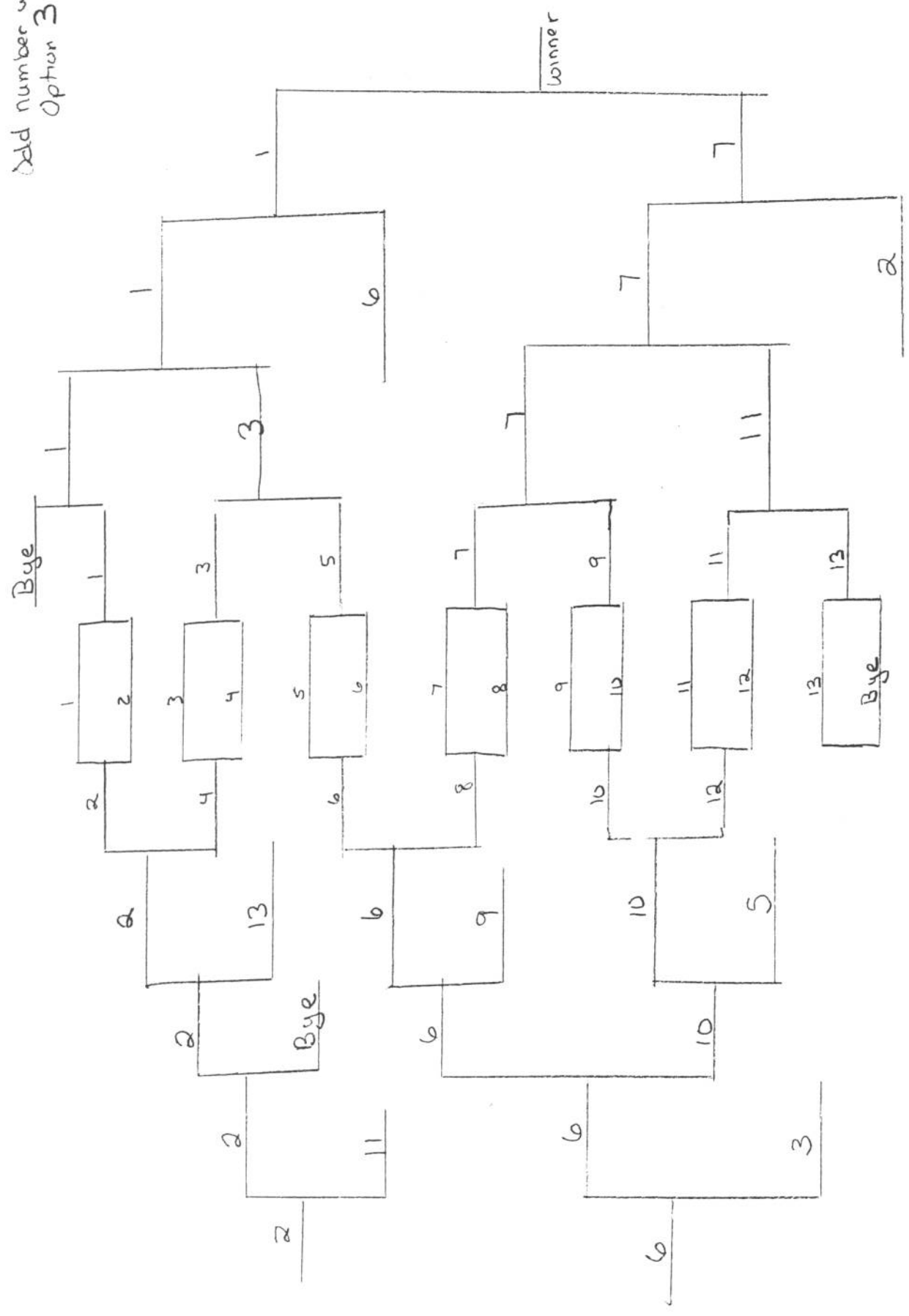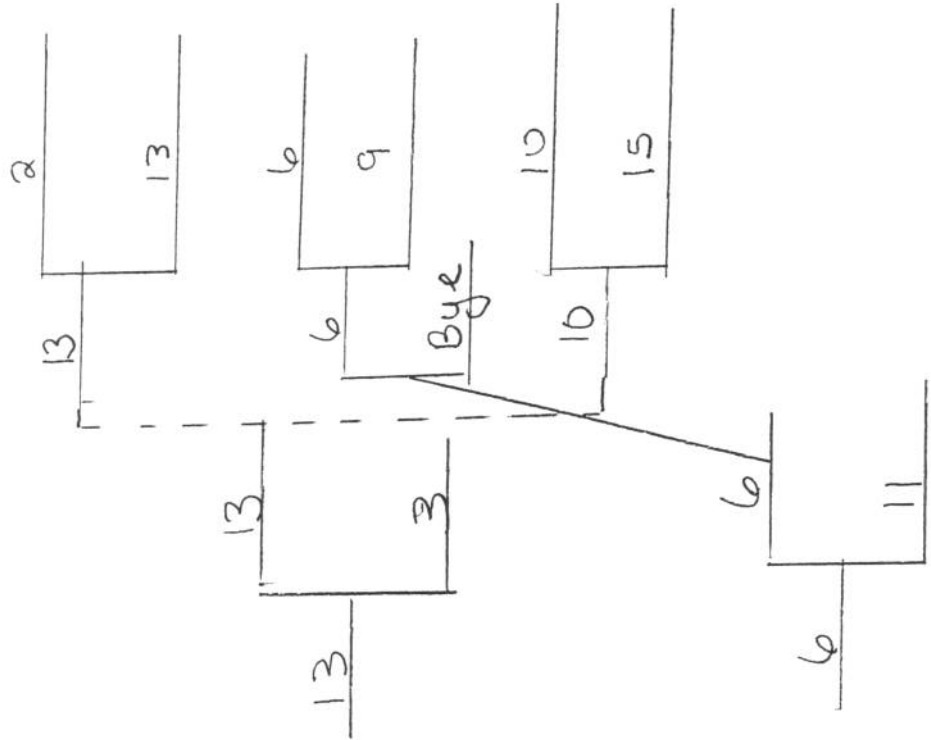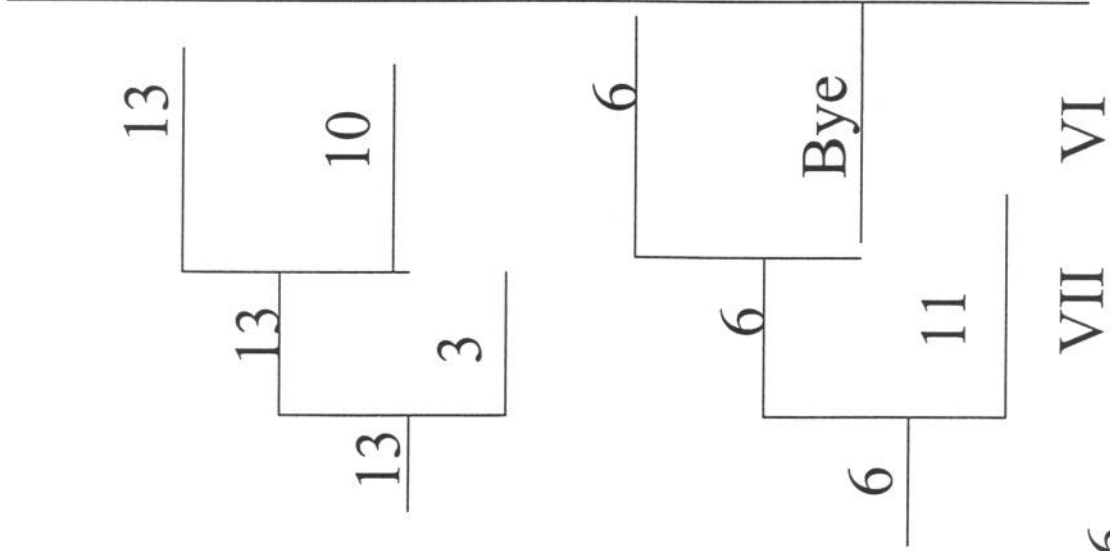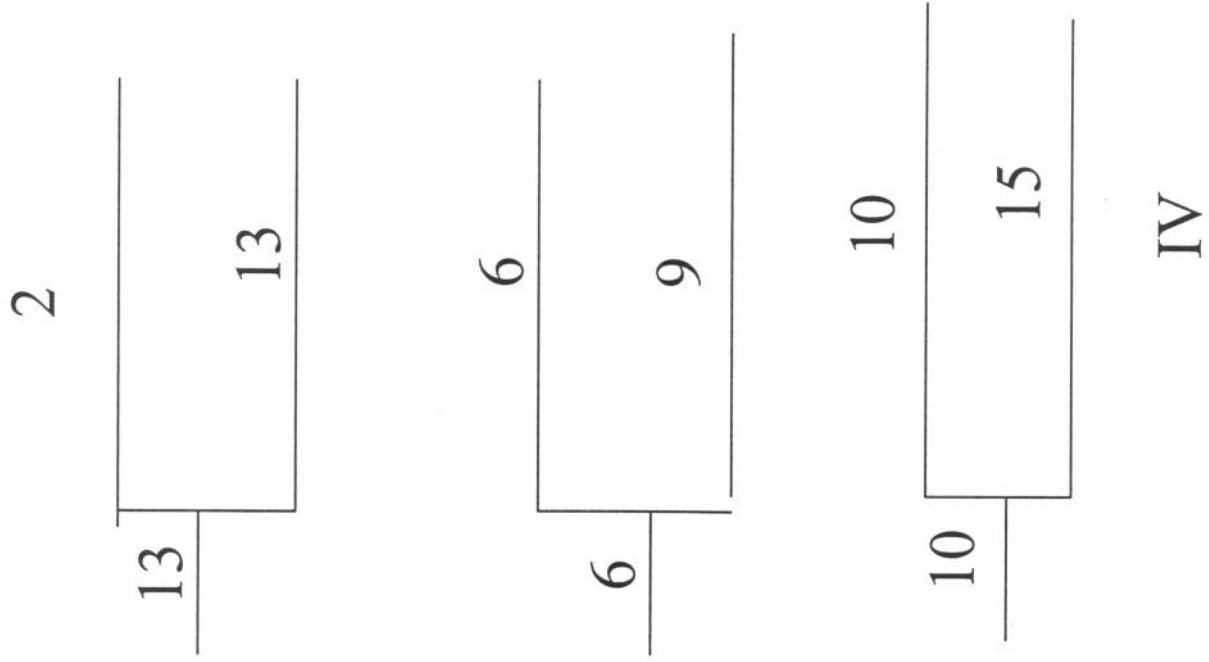
VII   VI

13 & 6
to winner's
bracket

Option 4b

Illustrates the different
placement of the bye

2

13

13

6

9

6

10

15

10

IV

13

6

13

13

11

13

10

Bye

10

3

10
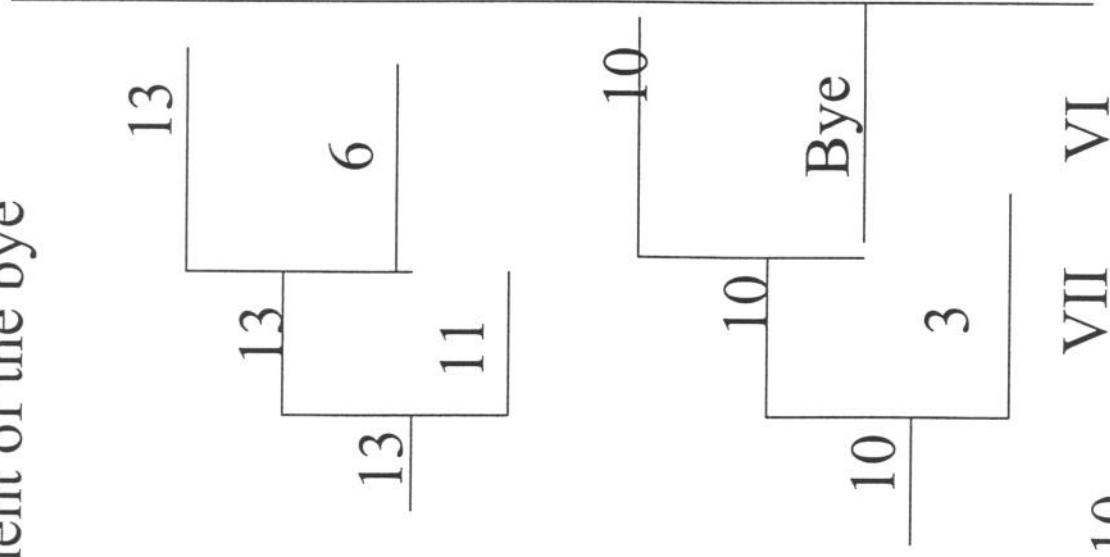
VII   VI

13 & 10
to winner's
bracket

9 person Option 5

Winner
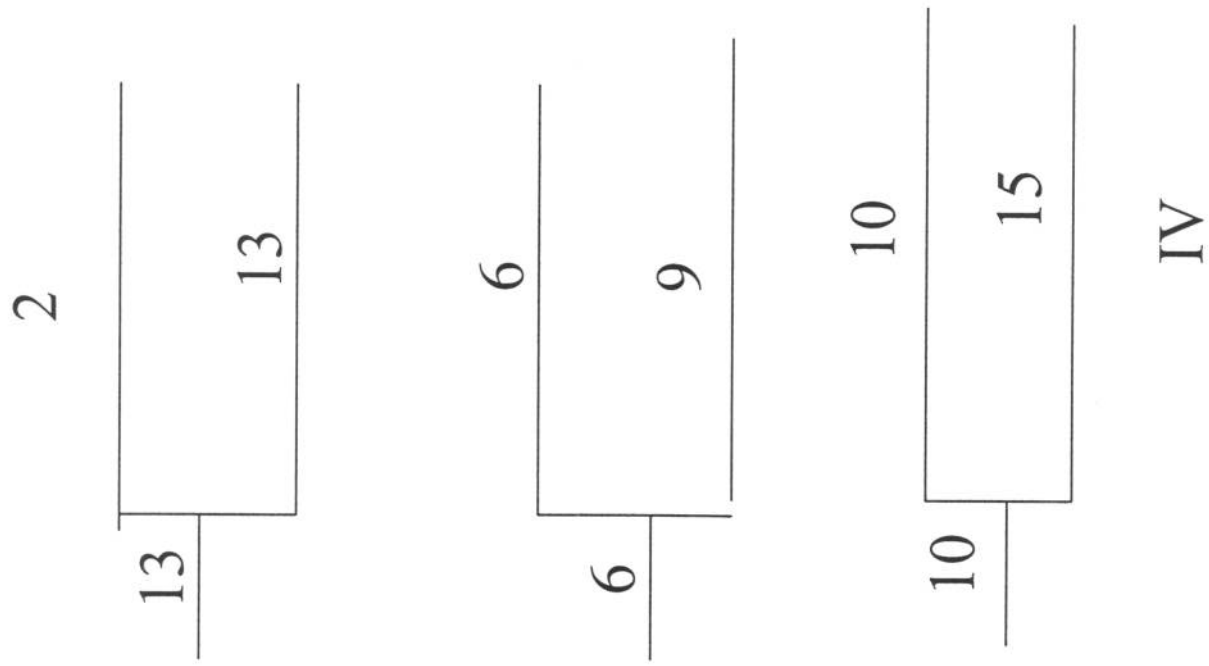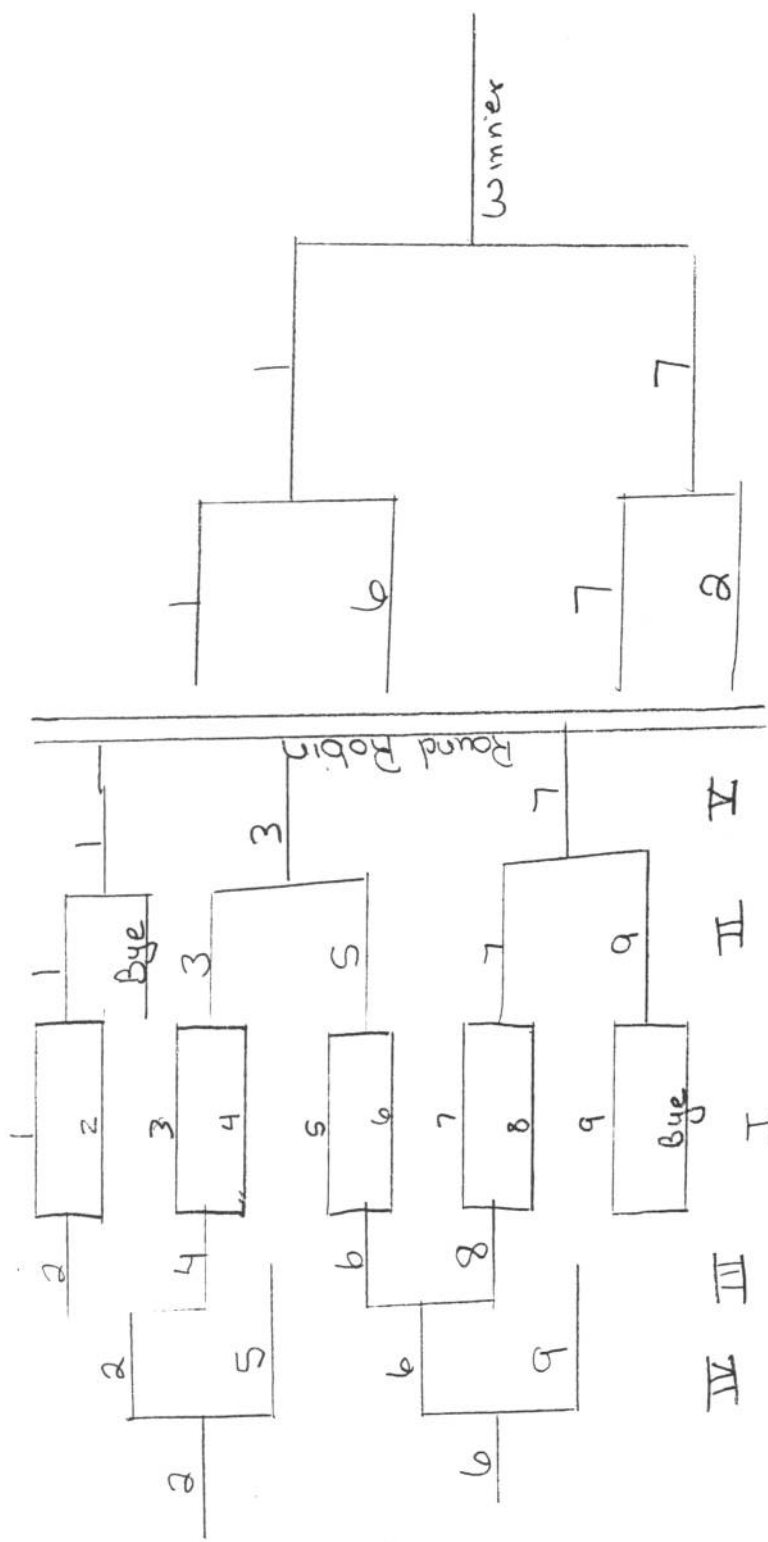
Semi's

1 vs 3
3 vs 7
7 vs 3

1 person will
lose twice
and be
elimated from
Tourney

Round Robin

V
II
I
IV III

Bye
Bye

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9

6
7
8

Round Robin as I
round should be
agreed upon by
fighters or at
least they should
be informed

4 person
option 6

V   III   I   II   IV   Semi   Final

Winner

1

2

1

1

Bye

3

3

5

5

2

4

6

8

7

9

Bye

6

3

Semi

Bye

6

7

7

7

7

9

Bye

9
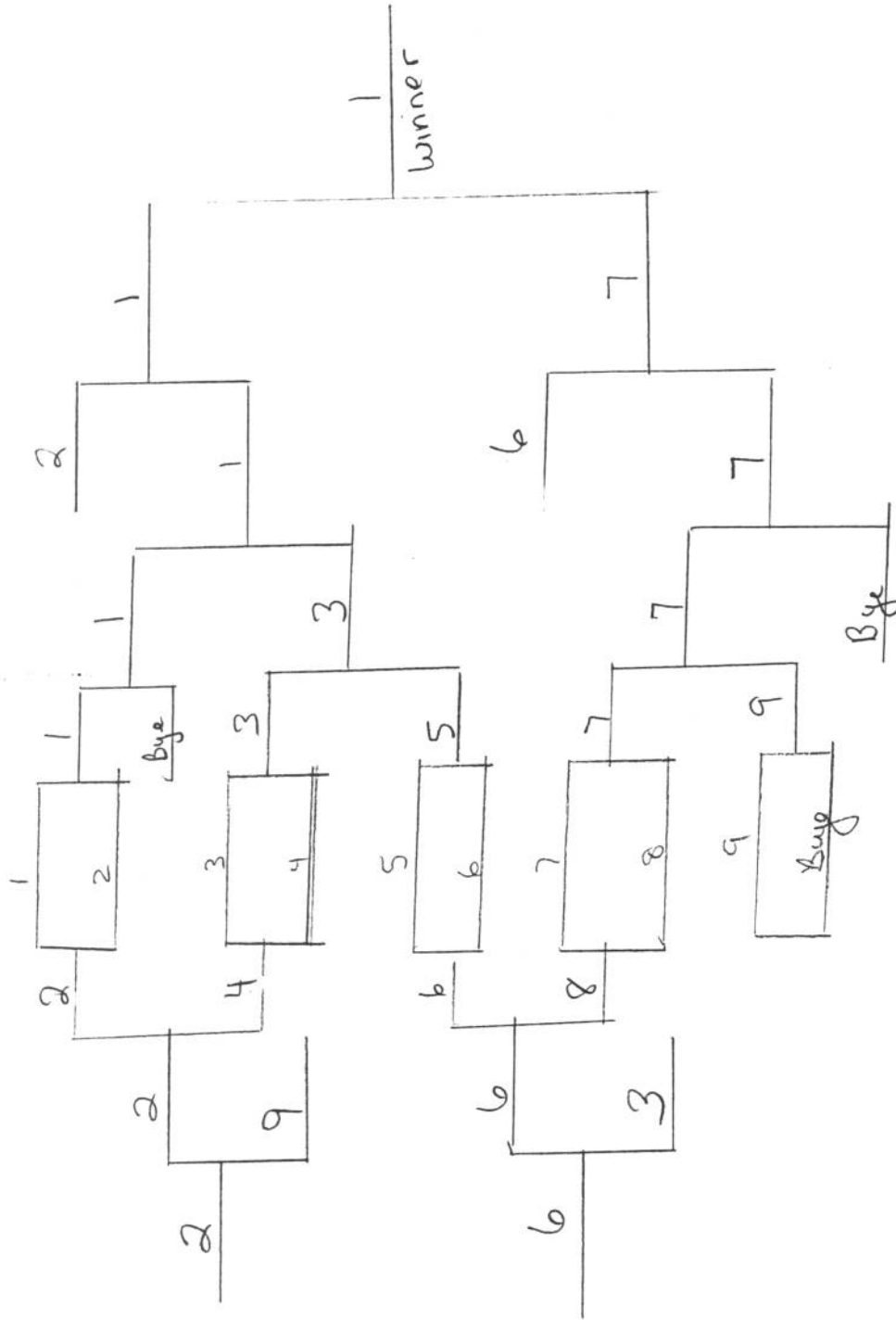
← as long
as 9
does not
win.
If 9 wins
then pairs
should be
1 vs 9
3 vs bye

ROUND ROBIN TOURNAMENT

This type of tournament is ideal for a small number of participants. The maximum that I would suggest is 10. Although, you must consider the nature of the tournament and the participants. In a round robin each fighter will fight one bout with each other fighter. There will be a total of # of fighters - 1 rounds. Example 10 fighter - 1 = 9 rounds.

In this example the fighter is given a number to ease bookkeeping. Write our the numbers by pairs. If you have an odd number add a bye fight to make it even. This is your first round. Your subsequent rounds are arranged by leaving the left top number in place and rotating the numbers around it. (See example at end)

Keep a list of the fighters so that you know what number belongs to the fighter. Also put that number of the herald's cards. As each fight ends, circle the winner's number for that round. Total up the number of wins for each fighter to determine the winner.

The advantage of this scenario is that each fighter gets a number of fights. The disadvantage is that the tournament takes time to fight to a winner if there is a large number of fighters.

An example of a round robin with 6 people

1 = Timoch   3 = Moe   5 = Garrick
2 = Michael   4 = Prothal   6 = Sven

I	II	III	IV	V
1 vs 4	1 vs 5	1 vs 6	1 vs 3	1 vs 2
2 vs 5	4 vs 6	5 vs 3	6 vs 2	3 vs 4
3 vs 6	2 vs 3	4 vs 2	5 vs 4	6 vs 5

To verify that you have done it correctly, rotate the numbers one last time. That list should be the same as the first round.
   Test
1 vs 4
2 vs 5
3 vs 6

If you have an odd number, just substitute a bye fight for one of the numbers.

If you have several fighters with the same number of wins, then you will want to do another round robin with just those fighter if there are three. If there are two fighters with the same number of wins, then you will want them to fight a final round. This can be a best two out of three or a straight one time fight. The list maker and the marshal should discuss what method they will use to break a tie before the tournament starts and then inform the fighters when the tournament begins.

Kappellenburg Tournament — April 5th 1986

Axel

Richard C.

Axel — Richard C.

Richard C. — Otto
Richard M. — Dafydd

Ærik — Axel
Richard C.
Uther — Otto
Richard M. — Nicholaus — Dafydd

Hiroshima — Axel — Ærik
Osmic — Eldrid — Richard C.
Morgan — Richard C.
Aerothane — Douglas — Uther
Uther — Ormar — Otto
Cedric — Gerald — Lupus
Tyrmak — Valdemar
Aranwald — Richard M.
Godric — Dafydd — Bye
Winifred — Antioch
Ragnar — Nicholaus
Bye

Richard M. — Axel
Marcos — Hiroshima
Axel — Ærik
Osmic — Eldrid
Osric
Morgan — Richard C.
Aerothane — Douglas
Uther — Ormar
Cedric — Otto
Gerald — Lupus
Tyrmak — Valdemar
Aranwald — Richard M.
Godric — Dafydd
Winifred
Antioch
Ragnar — Nicholaus
Bye

Otto — Axel — Axel
Nicholaus — Axel
Bye — Tyrmak — Bye
Eldrid — Bye
Aerothane — Cedric
Lupus — Valdemar
Tyrmak — Winifred
Antioch
Ragnar
Bye

Richard M. — Axel
Axel — Ærik
Morgan
Uther — Tyrmak
Cedric
Valdemar — Cedric
Antioch — Bye

Axel
Dafydd — Ærik
Ærik
Cedric — Antioch

Axel

List 1
Bill

List 2
Hilary

Forsal
Gaelan

VII   VI   V   IV   III   I   II   IV   Semi'   final

Geoffry
Garrick

Paul
Moe

Geoffry
Malcolm

Paul
Helmut

Lilith
Andrew

Geoffry

Paul

Lilith

Geoffry
Geffry
Moe

Var

Michael
Paul

Paul
Garrick

Lilith
Kudric's

Kennic
Eric
Byg

Geoffry
Moe

Andrew
Var

Orsmuyn
Michael A

Garrick
Helmut

Lilith
Helmut

Kudric's
Malco

Moe

Bye
Andrew

Orsmuyn

Garrick

Helmut

Malcolm

Eric
Eric

Moe

Orsmuyn

Garrick

Eric

Orsmuyn

Eric

Garrick

Paul

Garrick

Eric

Garrick
winner

Round Robin
Geoffry Paul
Geoffry   Paul
Lilith Paul
3 -

loser's brackets   winners bracket