

PREFERENTIAL BALLOTING

by
Gary Harmon

The first priority is the establishment of first place. Take the ballots and divide them into piles according to the names listed first on the ballot. Count the number of ballots in each pile and record that number for each candidate.

Piles of Ballots according to first place votes:

1. Brown	1. Smith	1. Wells	1. Jones
1. Brown	1. Smith	1. Wells	1. Jones
1. Brown	1. Smith	2. Jones	1. Jones
2. Smith	2. Brown	3. Smith	2. Wells
3. Wells	3. Wells	4. Brown	3. Smith
4. Jones	4. Jones		4. Brown

Analysis of the above Preferential Ballot:

	#1
Brown	4
Smith	3
Wells	2
least	
Jones	3
Totals	12

The totals of the first place votes cast indicate that Brown has a plurality for this round of balloting.

XXX This person is eliminated from consideration for 1st place due to receiving the fewest first place votes in this first round of balloting.

Next, take the pile of ballots with the least first place votes (in this case Wells) and reassign them to the remaining piles according to the second place votes on those ballots. One should place the reassigned ballots at the bottom of the remaining piles. This will allow easier identification of the piles and avoids confusion. (In the case of our example, it would be Wells with only two first place votes. The majority of the chamber has, thus, indicated that they do not prefer Wells for first place.) After reassigning the low pile, count the number of ballots in each pile and record.

Note: Remember that just like in counting Single Ballots, if the combined vote of two or more of the lowest candidates is less than the candidate immediately above them, then those candidates below may be dropped. However, unlike the Single Ballot, if a tie exists for the lowest candidates and their total is equal to or more than the candidate immediately above them, then you must use the tie breaking procedure outlined below.

Balloting

The counting of ballots in Student Congress is done by one of two methods. For elections needing a single result (as in the election of Presiding Officer), a series of single ballots is used. For

elections requiring multiple results (as in the election of Superior members), a preferential ballot is used. In both cases a majority of those voting will determine the rank or ranks of the candidates.

Single Ballot Method

The ballots in the single ballot method will be counted as follows:

1. Use as many ballots as necessary to elect by a majority.

2. Each member's ballot should contain only one vote.

3. Divide the ballots into piles containing like votes. For instance all the votes for Jones are placed in one pile, and all the votes for Brown in another, etc.

4. Eliminate the one person receiving the least number of votes and have the chamber then vote for the remaining candidates. Continue this process until one person receives the majority.

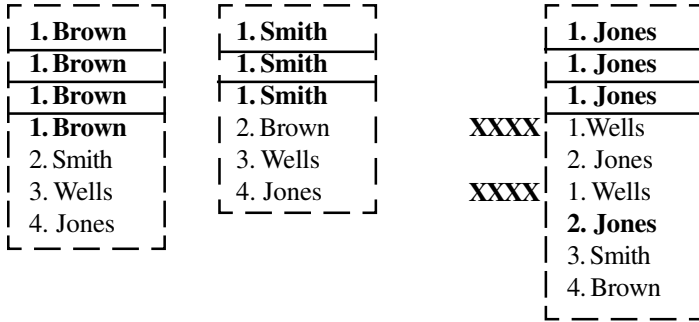
5. More than one can be eliminated if: the combined vote of two or more of the lowest candidates total less than the candidate immediately above them, then those candidates below may be dropped.

6. If a tie exists for the lowest candidates and if their total of votes received adds up to more than the candidate immediately above them, then have the chamber vote for the tied candidates to break the tie. If the chamber is still tied on its preference, have the Chamber keep voting. After three votes, have the candidates speak to the Chamber outlining reasons why they should be elected. Have the chamber vote again. If the chamber is still tied continue the voting. If after five castings of ballots the chamber can not break the tie, use the parliamentarian's ballot to break the tie. (The Parliamentarian should fill out a Preferential Ballot for all candidates nominated before the start of Chamber voting. The Parliamentarian ballot is to be used only in the tie breaking process.)

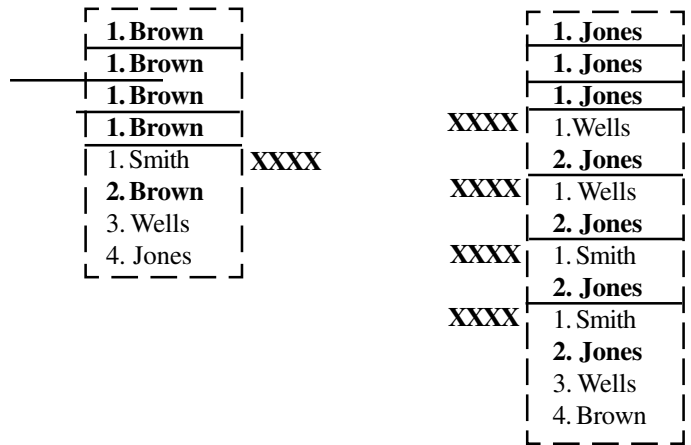
7. The candidate that receives a majority vote of the total chamber at any time shall be declared the winner.

8. This method only determines the first place. Simply labeling those who drop off as 6th place, 5th place, and so on, is not even close to accurate. To determine 2nd, 3rd, 4th and on, you **MUST** start all over after electing and deleting the name of the 1st place winner and proceed as you did for first place. This process takes a long time. Thus, the Preferential Ballot is used to determine multiple placings.

2nd Distribution of Ballots:



3rd Distribution of Ballots:



Analysis:

In order to show the process, the reassigned ballots are shown above. Notice that the people who voted for Wells first, voted for Jones second. This changes the vote tally, but is still an indication of how the chamber feels about who is the better choice of candidates. The new totals now show Brown with 4 ballots, Smith with 3 ballots, and Jones with 5 ballots (Jones now owns Wells 2 ballots because they preferred Jones over everyone except Wells.) Wells has been eliminated for consideration of first place.

Remember, a candidate must receive a majority to win.

Further Analysis:

	#1	#2	
Brown	4	4	
Smith	3	3	XXXX Smith is now eliminated from consideration for 1st place due to receiving the least ballots.
Wells	2	XXXX	XXXX Wells was eliminated from consideration for 1st place in the previous assignment of ballots.
Jones	3	5	XXXX Jones has a plurality but not a majority for this round of balloting.
Totals	12	12	

The process now repeats itself. Take the pile of ballots with the least number of votes and reassign them to the remaining piles according to the second and third place votes on those ballots. It might be helpful to place the reassigned ballots at the bottom of the remaining piles. This will allow easier identification of the piles. (In the case of our example, it would be Smith with only three total votes. The majority of the chamber has thus indicated that they do not prefer Smith and Wells for first place.) After reassigning the low pile, count the number of ballots in each pile and record.

Analysis:

In order to show the process, again the ballots have been reassigned above. Notice that out of the people who voted for Smith first, one voted for Brown second. Brown now owns that ballot and it is distributed to his/her pile. Two voted for Jones second and those two votes are now owned by Jones and they are distributed to his/her pile. This changes the vote tally, but is still an indication of how the majority of the chamber feels about who should be in first place.

Further Analysis:

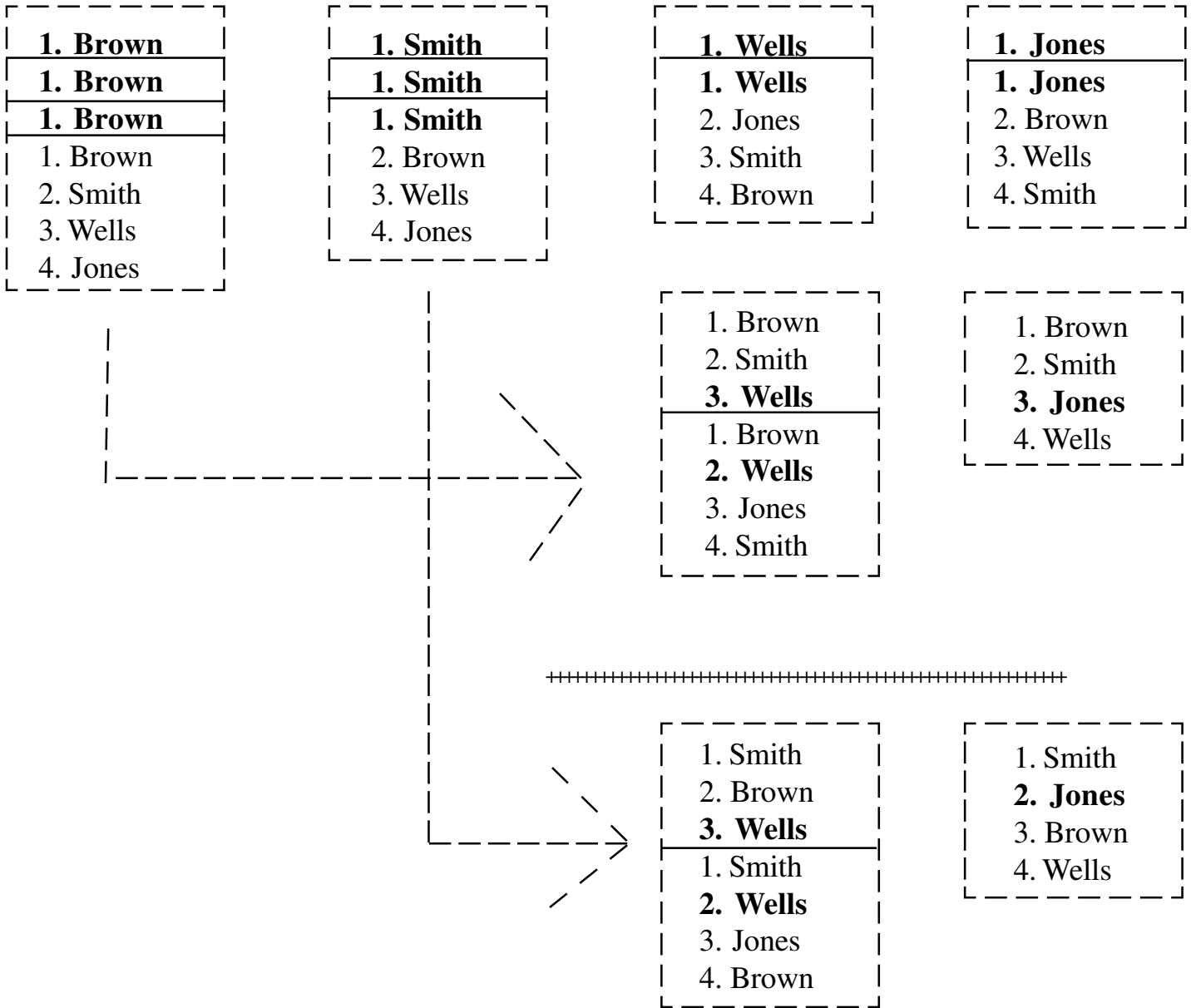
	#1	#2	#3	
Brown	4	4	5	
Smith	3	3	XXX	
Wells	2	XXX	XXX	
Jones	3	5	7	XXXX 1st Place on a vote of 7 to 5, a Majority of the Chamber. (7 members of the chamber preferred Jones over Brown.)
Totals	12	12	12	

At this point we have determined first place. Now, to get second place, we take a pencil and draw a line through the first place vote recipient and start again from the beginning. The process is repeated until you get placings for every student. In this manner you can determine the chamber's will for every place.

(Gary Harmon, Director of the National Congress and former NFL Coach at Topeka High School (KS).)

Tie Breaking Procedures for Preferential Balloting are as follows:

1. Chamber's preference (This is accomplished by reassigning preferentially all the other ballots not in the tied piles to the tied candidates.) The low vote recipient is reassigned.



Analysis:

Brown's 3 ballots are distributed as follows: 2 to Wells because Wells is ranked higher than Jones on them and 1 to Jones because Jones is ranked higher than Wells on it. That gives Wells a total of 4 ballots and Jones a total of 3 ballots. Jones is then eliminated. Brown and Smith, and Well's piles are restored and Jones' pile is redistributed to the remaining three candidates as appropriate.

If they are still tied:

Procedures Continued

2. Number of first place votes. (Lowest total reassigned.)
3. Number of 2nd place votes; 3rd place votes; etc. (Lowest total reassigned.)
4. Parliamentarian's preference, if single parliamentarian is used..

When following these tie breaking procedures, always use the method that allows the chamber to break the tie when possible. In a three way tie, make sure that it is a majority decision, not a plurality.