

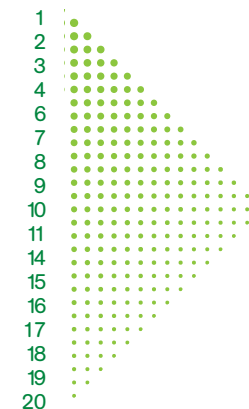
organising fixtures and competitions

what information do I need to know?



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glossary of terms

Leagues: Teams (or players or pairs in the case of individual sports) are formed into groups or 'divisions' and play against all the other teams in the division during the course of the season.

Play-offs: Are normally after the standard league fixtures have been played, to decide final promotion places.

Knock-out competitions: (Also known as a 'cup'). Used where a large number of competitors or teams might enter and need to be eliminated until only two survive to contest the final (eg The FA Cup Final).

Tournaments: Events that take place over a short period, often just a single day, weekend or week. They involve a relatively large number of teams or players playing lots of matches at the same venue. Often featuring a shortened version of the game, eg Rugby 7s.

Ladders: Version of a league in which players are ranked in current order of merit and can then challenge players just above them on the ladder. If they win, they change places with the person they have defeated.

Friendly matches: Organised between teams outside of organised competitions, normally out of season, eg pre-season fixtures.

Fixture lists: A season list of all the matches to be played, stating the date, place and teams that will play.

Seeding: The best players or team are predicted on the basis of previous results and placed in the draw at regular intervals. This prevents them meeting each other until the later stages of the competition.

Handicap events: Handicapping gives weaker players or teams the chance to compete on equal terms against stronger opponents.

A bye: A free pass into the next round of a competition due to uneven number of teams/players.

what is runningsports?

runningsports has been designed for volunteers working in sport. Volunteers are defined as individuals responsible for coordinating and managing other volunteers, or for undertaking an administrative role within their sports club or organisation.

runningsports provides specific skills, resources and support for volunteers in formats that are convenient for them to access, and will help them contribute to their club or organisation, to ensure its future success.

For further information about runningsports products

visit www.runningsports.org

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Throughout this Quick Guide, reference is made to 'sports clubs'. This term is used to include all sports organisations, such as leagues, county and area associations and other community groups that provide sporting opportunities, whether in an organised setting, or a more informal environment.

why have competitions?

Sport is first and foremost to be participated in, and enjoyed by all those who wish to. It provides great health benefits and other sources of enjoyment, including social interaction and friendships. However, for many it is important to have some sort of final outcome and structure in the forms of leagues and tournaments etc. Somebody will have to take on the responsibility of organising a team or some sort of competition at some point. What if this person is you?

The aim of this Quick Guide is to support people who are organising fixtures and competitive sport events. To download or purchase the other Quick Guides in the series, visit www.runningsports.org

There are various forms of competition that you can consider, depending on what sport you are involved in and at what level and size. For example are you working with:

- ✦ large or small numbers
- ✦ beginners, experienced performers or elite competitors
- ✦ recreational or professional players
- ✦ open or closed competitions
- ✦ adults or children
- ✦ individuals or teams
- ✦ people with disabilities.

There are various competition formats; some examples are listed below:

- ✦ Leagues
- ✦ Play-offs
- ✦ Knock-out competitions
- ✦ Ladders
- ✦ Tournaments
- ✦ 'Friendly' matches.



leagues

The classic league formula is probably familiar to you. Teams (or players or pairs, in the case of individual sports) are formed into groups or 'divisions'. They play against all the other teams in the division during the course of the season. Each team will typically gain two points (or in some leagues, three points) for a win, one point for a draw and no points for a defeat.

In some leagues, an additional point is awarded simply for playing a match (that is, three points for a win, two for a draw and one for a loss) to encourage a team to turn up, however, this can sometimes provide misleading league tables mid-season. Another way of encouraging teams to play all their matches is to deduct a point for every fixture that is not played by a certain date. Some leagues will accept non-completion of fixtures due to circumstances beyond their control (eg waterlogged pitches).

League systems

*The double round robin
(the traditional league system)*

Every team plays against each of the other teams twice (at home and away).

*The single round robin
(an alternative league system)*

Teams play each of the other teams once, which allows more teams to play in the same division without resulting in too many matches. A disadvantage is that a key match between closely ranked teams could result in an unfair advantage for the home team, who do not have to play against that rival away from home. Another problem to consider is that if there are an even number of teams within the division, the teams play different numbers of matches at home and away (for example, if there are 12 teams in the division, each team must play the other 11 teams. They would therefore have six home matches and five away matches or visa versa). A fairer method would be to have an odd number of teams in the division, but this means that one of the teams is left without a match each week.

League rules

The rules of the competition should state the arrangement that will apply if something unusual occurs, rather than waiting until it happens and then having to decide what to do. Typical problems that occur are that:

- ❖ one team fails to turn up or arrives late
- ❖ a match is interrupted, perhaps by bad weather and, therefore, is unfinished
- ❖ a fixture gets cancelled at short notice
- ❖ the referee fails to arrive
- ❖ a match simply does not get arranged
- ❖ an ineligible player is fielded by one of the teams.

Try to predict the things that are likely to happen and take a decision before the season starts to establish a standard procedure if they occur. Whatever procedure is chosen will ensure that everyone clearly understands the rules before playing.

The league regulations must be clearly stated so that they cannot be misread or misinterpreted. Carefully read the regulations and think if there is a way to get around them. If you can think of a way, you can be certain that somebody else will also.

The rules should ensure that no advantage could be gained from failing to play a fixture. In any case, it is discourteous to the opposition and could be unfair to some of the other teams in the league whose positions may be affected by the result.

fixture lists

The fixture secretaries usually have to work out the fixtures for all the teams in the league. These fixtures can be devised using a standard formula. They also need to know how many matches a team must play and how many matches altogether there should be in the division.

Some leagues work very successfully even though teams play different numbers of matches against some teams compared with others (for example, playing one match against half the teams and two matches against the other teams). This has the advantage of enabling the league to provide just the right number of fixtures, even if the number of teams in the league is not an ideal number. It also enables fixtures to be zoned to cut down travelling involved, or graded to give teams more matches against teams of a comparable standard.

The disadvantage of an unequal fixture list is that the league table can be distorted because some teams may have had a more difficult fixture list than others. This problem can be overcome to an extent by finishing the season with play-offs.

NB: An uneven fixture list followed by play-offs, is used by the NFL (the USA National (American) Football League).

Double round robin

The number of matches played in a double round robin is double the number of teams, minus two.

In a double round robin, competition try to:

- ❖ programme the matches played between two teams some time apart. This gives variety, maintains interest throughout the season and helps to avoid any build up of animosity that can carry over to the second match
- ❖ give teams a good balance of home and away matches. Ideally, these would alternate, but no fixture system can accomplish this perfectly.

There are various formula for calculating fixture lists. One is given here, but you may find another that suits you better.

Arrange the first series of matches. Any combination can be used, but make sure that all the teams are included. If there is an odd number of teams, add an extra 'team' called 'Bye' as shown. So for a division of nine teams the first series looks like this:

A v B
C v B
E v F
G v H
J v K or 'Bye'

Use team 'K' if there are ten teams, but 'Bye' if there are nine

NB: For a double round robin series it is necessary to reproduce the fixtures for the second half of the season with the venues reversed

Single round robin

If all the matches are played at a single venue (for example, within a squash club), there are no problems of home advantage and a single round robin format is perfectly fair and even.

The number of matches played by a team in a single round robin league is one less than the number of teams in the division. The total number of matches altogether in a single round robin league is shown below in Chart A.

chart A

No. of Teams	Total no. of Matches	No. of Rounds	Matches per Team
03	03	03	02
04	06	03	03
05	10	05	04
06	15	05	05
07	21	07	06
08	28	07	07
09	36	09	08
10	45	09	09
11	55	10	10
12	66	11	11
13	78	13	12
14	91	13	13

The fixture list for a single round-robin programme is produced by keeping the team in the top left-hand corner (team A) fixed and rotating all the other teams, as shown below:

2nd Series	3rd Series	4th Series
A v C	A v E	A v G
E v B	G v C	J v E
G v D	J v B	K v C
J v F	K v D	H v B
K v H	H v F	F v D

- ✦ When the required number of rounds has been produced (see Chart A) all the fixtures will have been selected for a single round robin. If the matches are to be played at a central venue there is nothing more to do.
- ✦ If the matches are to be played at an individuals' venue/grounds you will need to adjust the fixtures to give everybody the same number of home and away matches.

Consider the following when producing fixture lists:

- ✦ Avoid matches in holiday periods (for example, Christmas week, Divali or Eid) if this will be a problem.
- ✦ If two teams share the same ground, ensure the fixtures aren't both at home at the same time.
- ✦ Check that the right number of fixtures has been produced (see Chart A) and that each team has the appropriate number of home and away matches).

league tables

At the end of the season, the league points gained by teams are added up and the teams are ranked in order. If two teams gain the same number of points, there are a variety of ways in which they can be separated. The most common, and often easiest way, is to work out the difference between the goals (or sets or games) won and lost.

Teams that are level on points can be separated either by looking at all the matches played in the entire season by those teams, or by taking into account the balance of matches won or lost between the two level teams.

Promotion and relegation of teams between divisions often takes place at the end of the league season. The conditions need to be set out before the season begins and should stipulate how many teams from each of the lower divisions will move up one division, and how many teams from the higher divisions will move down. It is not always the case that the same number moving up will move down because vacancies can sometimes be created by a team withdrawing from a division before, during or at the end of the season.

As the season progresses, the fixtures secretary must work out the league tables. To test whether the tables are right, there are some simple tests that you can do. If the table has been worked out correctly, the following should all be true:

Total of all matches won =
Total of all matches lost

Total of all matches played =
Even number

Total number of matches drawn =
Even number

Total of all matches played =
Total (won + draw + lost)

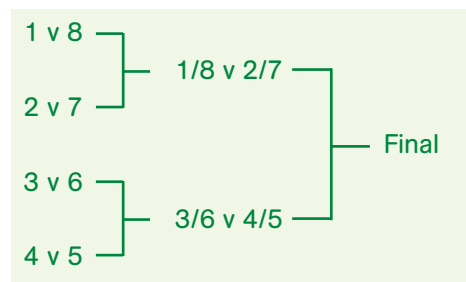
Matches played by a team =
Matches won + drawn + lost

Total goals/sets/etc. For =
Total goals/sets/etc. against

play-offs

Play-offs played after the normal league fixtures have been played, help to maintain interest until the very end of the season. They also help to balance out irregularities in the fixture list and can provide some very competitive matches. Play-offs can be used to determine promotion and relegation and keep the whole season interesting for most or all of the teams. They can decide the league championship (for example, the American Football Super Bowl) or be a separate competition. They often generate considerable spectator and media interest.

Example of top eight play-off:



Play-offs can be:

- based on single games in which the team that finished higher in the league table gets home advantage
- based on a two-leg aggregate score basis. The first match is really just the first half of the overall match. The higher-placed team in the league is at home in the second leg. In the event of a tie on aggregate at the end of the two legs, extra time or some form of sudden-death 'tie-break' takes place
- based on a best-of-two or more basis (eg cricket test-match series), when each match is played to a conclusion (with extra time or tie-break if necessary). The second match takes place at another venue, as does a third game (eg if the teams have each won one match). Aggregate scores are disregarded. This has the advantage that every match is competitive.

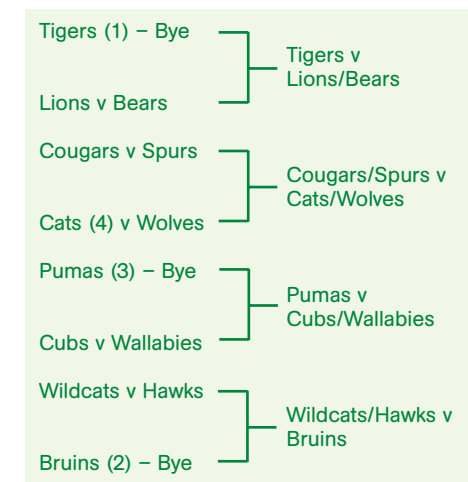
knock-out competitions

The knock-out (or 'cup') format is one which is used extensively in individual sports, where a large number of competitors or teams might enter and need to be eliminated until only two survive to contest the final. This format is used at Wimbledon and the FA Cup. All matches are played to a result, if necessary using extra time, a replay or some sort of tie-break (eg a deciding set in tennis or penalties in football). The loser is eliminated and the winner progresses to the next round.

The fixtures can be arranged in a variety of ways. In a completely open competition, all teams are entered into 'the hat', drawn out at random, and progressed from this point. Alternatively, the best teams could be given 'byes' into later rounds and/or 'seeded' (see Making the Draw).

It is only possible to produce a final of two teams if the number of entries is of the power of two (ie two, four, eight, 16, 32, 64, 128, etc).

Frequently, you will have an awkward number and will need to fill up spaces with 'byes'. So, for example, if you have 13 entries, you will need to add three 'byes' to make the number up to 16 – the highest power of two. The position that 'seeds' would be placed in the draw and is also shown by the figures (1) to (4).



NB: Template 1 (at the end of this resource) provides a blank knock-out competition table for your use (based on 16 teams).

making the draw

Wild card

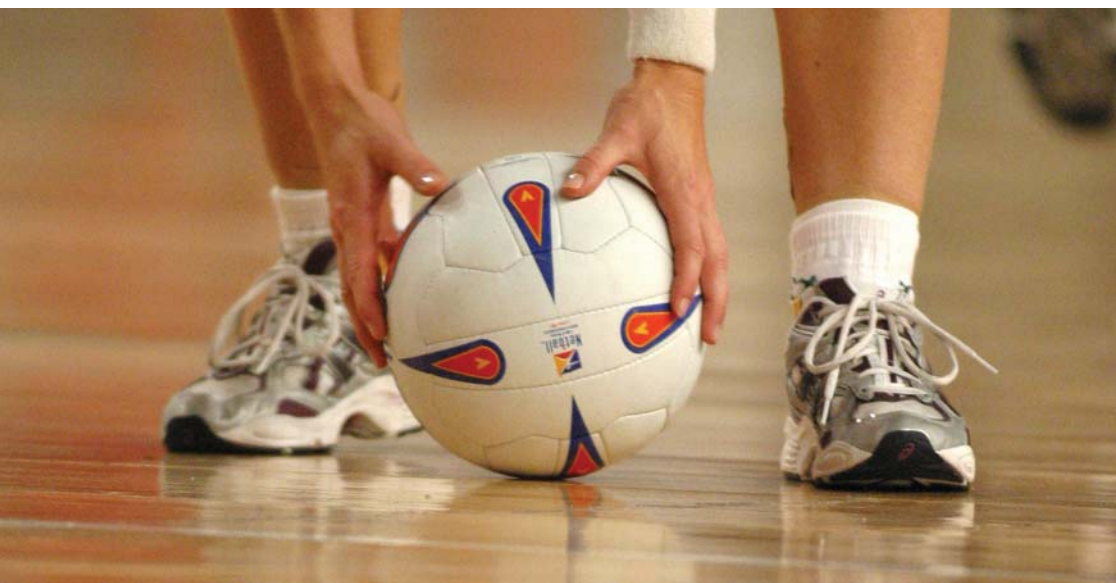
A 'wild card' is a right given to an organiser to select, by invitation, a player or team to enter a championship tournament (even if the normal method of gaining entry to the competition is by qualifying), based on either their past performance or their performance in a qualifying competition.

Byes

Byes are given to some players when the number of entries is not exactly the right number for the first round (that is, eight, 16, 32, 64, etc). This can be done randomly, but it is better to spread them evenly through the draw. If there are 'seeds' given, byes are allocated in rank order of seeding. The top seeds are expected to go furthest in the competition and play most matches, eventually, so it makes sense to give them one less match to play in the early stages.

Exemptions

Exemptions enable you to keep the best teams or players involved to the later stages and avoid unnecessary mis-matches in the early stages. The top teams or players are exempted from the early stages and join the competition at a later stage.

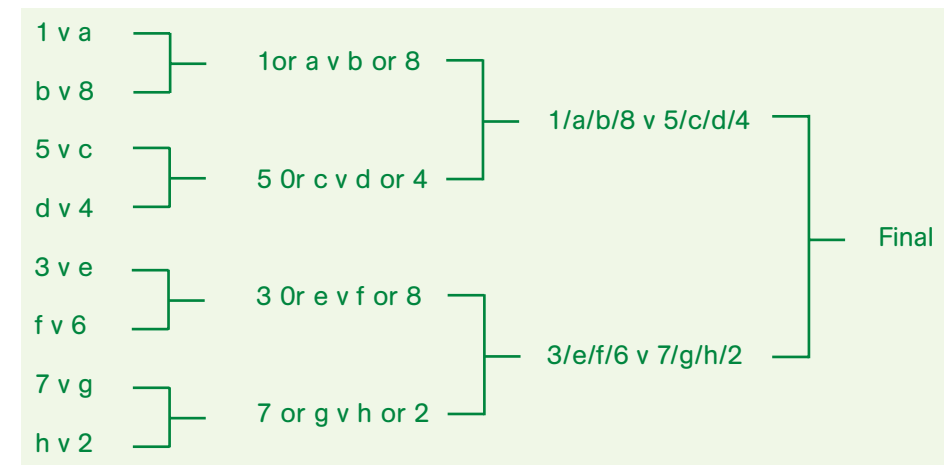


seeding

Seeding is a way of keeping the better players or teams apart in the early stages of a cup or knock-out competition. Many championships, especially in individual sports, are played using the cup or knock-out formula and seeding. If seeding is to be used, the draw for the entire competition is made at the beginning of the tournament, not after each round.

The best players or team are predicted on the basis of previous results, and placed in the draw at regular intervals. This prevents them meeting each other until the later stages of the competition. For example, if four players have been seeded, they would each be placed in one quarter of the draw and could then be expected to win through to the semi-final places.

The seeds are not placed in the draw in numerical order; instead, they are spread out in such a way that, when they first meet, the top seeds (that is, the best players or teams) meet the bottom seeds (the less strong players). Then, if all the seeds survive to reach the quarterfinals, the matches would be 1 v 8, 2 v 7, 3 v 6, 4 v 5; and, in the semi-finals they would be 1 or 8 v 5 or 4 and, 3 or 6 v 7 or 2. In the following example, the seeds are numbered one to eight (the top seeds are those seeded 1, 2, 3...the lower seeds are those with the higher numbers, eg 7 or 8) and the other teams/players are represented by a-h.



tournaments

Tournaments are events that take place over a short period, often just a single day, weekend or week. They involve a relatively large number of teams or players playing lots of matches at the same venue. Often the competition features an abbreviated form of the sport (for examples, a tennis match comprising just two/three sets, a team game involving short periods, or a small-sided games, such as seven-a-side rugby).

Tournaments can be organised on a knock-out basis, but, if they involve shortened versions of the game, many will have been knocked out before they have had the opportunity to play a match of reasonable length. A mini-league, pool or 'group' system ensures that all participants play more than one match, after which those at the top of their pool go through to a later knock-out stage, and this is usually more satisfactory. Another successful system is to run a consolation event (often called a 'plate' competition) for those who lose in the group stages.

Even when using the pool system, the best teams could be in the same pool and some eliminated in the early stages. This can be avoided by having more than one team qualifying for the final stages from each of the pools.

If the tournament ends with a knock-out stage, the teams that have qualified should be drawn in a crossover arrangement so they cannot meet teams from their pool until the final. If there are four pools labelled A, B, C and D, the top two from each pool might qualify for the quarterfinals and the draw for the quarterfinals would be:

A1 v B2
C1 v D2
B1 v C2
D1 v A2

The semi-finals also keep apart teams from the same pool:

Winner of A1/B2 v Winner of C1/D2
Winner of B1/C2 v Winner of D1/A2

You will need to decide whether you are going to allow extra time at the end of a drawn match. If not, you need to devise a simple tie-break method that will not take too long, or the whole timetable can be thrown out of balance.

In a small pool, the chance of two or more teams finishing level is high and a method of resolving the tie must be decided and printed.

Take account of the need for officials and equipment. Ideally, there will be a panel of neutral officials. Failing that, each competing team should provide one, to be allocated to some of the other matches. One or two neutral officials will still probably be needed in case any of the competing teams fails to provide an official, or one of the officials is injured or not of sufficient standard.

Do not expect an official with a team to be available to officiate prior to their team's first match. They may be travelling with the team and not arrive in time. Use the officials from the teams involved in the first set of matches, and allocate them to the other games at the time.

Tournaments often give a unique opportunity for underrated teams or players to play against highly ranked or prestigious ones.

In individual sports, tournaments can be organised along the same line as those for team sports, however, you can be more flexible, since individual players can be organised more easily than teams.

A popular form of competition, particularly in racket sports, is the so-called 'American tournament'. This seeks to give everybody the same number of matches and, at the end of the afternoon, the player or players winning the most sets or games is the winner. The difficulty with this sort of tournament is deciding who will partner whom and who will play against whom. There are various ways in which this can be decided and a few of these are given in the next section.

Friendly tournaments can be for players competing as individuals or as pairs. If players compete as pairs or play singles matches, all the normal arrangements for competitions apply. If they are competing as individuals, however, and are to have a different partner for each match, some special arrangements are needed.

If the players are treated equally (for example, a ladies' doubles tennis tournament), the choice of partner and opponents for the first round is decided by chance. After each match, the winning pair separates, one moving to each of the two neighbouring courts. The losing pair stays on the same court, but the players split up and each gets a new partner. The courts should be thought of as forming a circle, with two courts at either end of a row regarded as being neighbours in order to complete the circle. The choice of partner and direction of movement is decided by a toss-up. In a mixed doubles event, the winning men always change courts in the same direction (say, anti-clockwise) and the winning ladies change in the opposite direction. For example:

Round 1	A1 v B2	C3 v D4	E5 v F6	G7 v H8
Round 2	B7 v C2	D1 v E4	F3 v G6	H5 v A8
Round 3	C4 v H2	D6 v B1	F5 v E3	A7 v G8
Round 4	C6 v A4	B3 v H1	F7 v D5	G2 v E8

Letters denote men, numbers denote ladies. The winners of each match are shown in bold.

If the number of players is exactly divisible by four and there are sufficient courts, any number of rounds can be played. Otherwise, everybody should play four matches and take turns to sit out for a round.

If everybody is competing together, but there is a wide range of standards, list all the players in rank order. After the players for a match have been decided, set the pairings for that match by reference to the rankings – the highest ranked player partners the lowest against the other two. To give a good mix, move winners and losers to the next court alternately every other set, and mix them more thoroughly every so often if you wish.

Tournament tips

Decide whom you are catering for and what you want to achieve. For example:

- ✦ Is it important for everybody to have a lot of matches, or will they be quite happy with just one or two?
- ✦ Is the event going to take place at a single venue, or will different venues be involved?
- ✦ Is travelling time and cost a factor to be taken into consideration?
- ✦ Is it important that teams or players are evenly matched?
- ✦ Is it vital to ensure that the competition gives everybody an equal chance of winning?
- ✦ Is it important to ensure that the best team wins or is the most important thing to give everybody a chance to play?
- ✦ Who will take decisions when things go wrong or the unexpected occurs?
- ✦ What are the rules for the competition and how will they be publicised?
- ✦ How will the matches be arranged?

Now decide the type of competition to be used. You can devise a system to meet your needs, as long as you follow these rules:

- ❖ Print the timetable of matches, at least for the earlier rounds, together with the appointed officials, the rules of the competition and financial regulations. Circulate these well in advance to all competitors and officials.
- ❖ Ensure that results are communicated to the organisers quickly and accurately. Ask the winning team to do this (or the first names in case of a draw), unless there is a neutral official or helper who is responsible for the task.
- ❖ Circulate the results regularly or make them easily accessible on a notice or display board so that everybody involved can follow the progress of the competition.
- ❖ Provide a good communications system (for example, public address, notice board, hand-outs) and advisory notes to announcers.
- ❖ Have a clear signal to start and stop play.
- ❖ Invest in walkie-talkies, if the location is large, to help with communication.
- ❖ Make sure that the organisers are able to make prompt decisions on issues that arise.
- ❖ If the organisers are also playing in the tournament, make sure that they stand down temporarily if a decision needs to be taken which might affect them personally (eg one that relates to a family member).
- ❖ Provide an appeals structure that can hear appeals quickly, fairly and efficiently. It should require some commitment to lodge an appeal (such as a fee) to deter frivolous complaints.
- ❖ Try to give all the teams that reach the later stages of the competition an equal chance of play on the court or pitch on which the final will be held.
- ❖ Allow plenty of time for each new match to start, especially if run over several sites/locations. The changeover can take ten minutes or more. Teams are not always ready (indeed they may still be playing another match) and they and the officials may have to get organised (eg warm up, choose ends).
- ❖ Ask teams to provide their own practice equipment (such as balls for use during warm-up).
- ❖ Make sure that copies of the regulations are available at each of the tournament venues.
- ❖ In team sports, where teams have to wear different colours, have the colours noted on the entry form, tell teams to bring two sets (or provide bibs) and state which team shall be responsible for changing colours when there is a clash (for example, the first-named team).
- ❖ Take account of the location of the facilities and try to avoid too much unnecessary travelling for players and officials.
- ❖ If participants are likely to be accompanied by children, make suitable arrangement for them (crèche, junior coaching, etc).
- ❖ Be prepared for teams or players to withdraw, arrive late, simply fail to turn up, or turn up unannounced, and make contingency plans accordingly.

NB: The *runningsports* Quick Guide *Managing Events* provides further specific examples of organising larger scale events – to download a free copy or purchase the other Quick Guides in the series, visit www.runningsports.org

handicap events

Handicapping gives weaker players or teams the chance to compete on equal terms against stronger opponents. When it is done well, handicapping produces a very interesting and exciting competition, but take care not to distort the rules unduly, or encourage the stronger player to have to try to overwhelm the opposition completely in order to win.

In a handicap competition, the winner is not necessarily the best player or team, but the one whose performance on the day most exceeds expectations.

Examples of very successful handicapping are:

- ❖ golf, where the weaker player receives a number of shots per round from the stronger player
- ❖ horse racing, in which the faster runners carry more weight to slow them down
- ❖ tennis, in which the stronger player can concede a number of points per game to the weaker opponent.

When organising handicap competitions, try to make the teams or partnerships equal, rather than have specific handicaps for each individual match. This makes the competitions easier for people to follow and more realistic for the players.

A variation on handicapping are competitions that place restrictions on team selection and ask that each team continuously fields one or more weaker player. This enables weaker players to compete on equal terms with and against players of higher standard. Examples include:

- ❖ mixed doubles (eg tennis, badminton, table tennis)
- ❖ mixed teams (eg korfbal, mixed hockey)
- ❖ professional and amateur partnerships (eg golf pro/ams)
- ❖ adult and child (eg mother-and-daughter competitions).

ladders

A 'ladder' is a form of league in which players are ranked in current order of merit, and can then challenge players just above them on the ladder. If they win, they change places with the person they have defeated. The system has some drawbacks because there are only a few players who can be challenged, and it can take a long time to work your way upward.

The 'pyramid' is a similar system to the ladder. Players can challenge others on the same level as themselves (with the winner moving up) as well as those above (like in the ladder). The pyramid gets smaller towards the top, and when all the spaces are filled challenges can only be made upwards (like the ladder).

The numbers of spaces on each level are:

- ✦ Level 1 (top) – 1 space
- ✦ Level 2 – 3 spaces
- ✦ Level 3 – 5 spaces
- ✦ Level 4 – 7 spaces, etc.

The number of levels required depends upon the number of entries. New entries start on the bottom level.

arranging the matches

The fixtures for the season have to be arranged and confirmed. The easiest way to get a fixture list is to join a league. This provides a framework for games and many leagues actually specify the dates for each match.

If your team is not a member of a league, or simply wants some additional matches, contact other clubs to try to arrange fixtures. This is also necessary for league fixtures when there are rearrangement or postponements.

When arranging matches:

- ✦ agree the date for the match and the starting time
- ✦ decide which will be the home team
- ✦ book the facilities
- ✦ agree the colours that teams will wear
- ✦ ensure everybody knows the venue and has directions to it
- ✦ appoint officials (either directly or through an appropriate association) and give them the necessary information
- ✦ inform the fixtures secretary of any rearrangement
- ✦ if your club has a number of teams who all use the same facility, ensure that a new fixture is well publicised, or you may find that another team has arranged to play at the same place and the same time!

Nearer the date of the match:

- ✦ select your team and notify them of the arrangements
- ✦ confirm the match with the opposition and the match officials – a phone call or email confirmation will do
- ✦ arrange the refreshments
- ✦ make the travelling arrangements
- ✦ notify the media of the arrangements, if appropriate
- ✦ ensure that any change of date, time or venue is well publicised. (Spectators/players will be unhappy if they arrive for a match that has been re-timed or postponed.)



team management

It is important to ensure that:

- ❖ players are notified of team selection and replacements are found where necessary
- ❖ the travelling arrangements are made and everybody is informed (NB: If you are an adult transporting young players, ensure you are aware of the child protection issues involved. For further information on this subject contact sports coach UK – listed in the Useful Contacts – as they run workshops and produce resource materials in this area)
- ❖ players and equipment arrive at the right time and place
- ❖ facilities are obtained and equipment provided for pre-match warm-up and practise
- ❖ a second set of kit is available in an alternative colour, just in case there is a clash of colours
- ❖ all members of the team have the appropriate playing kit and equipment (either provided by the club or by themselves), club equipment is collected after the match and appropriate arrangements are made for laundry
- ❖ refreshments, and anything else that is likely to be needed, are available
- ❖ warm-up kit (tracksuits, waterproofs etc) are looked after if they are discarded by the players
- ❖ the equipment for the match (match ball, practice balls, nets, scoreboards, timing equipment, etc) is provided and is in good, working order
- ❖ first aid is available and injured players can be cared for.

Ideally, a team will have a non-playing team manager who will attend to many of these tasks. In most teams, however, the onus is on the players themselves to ensure that everything is provided.

NB: Allocate one or two roles to each player, rather than leaving everything to one person, or rotate the roles on a weekly or monthly basis.

on the day of the match

There are a number of things to be looked after on the day of the match. The hosts must make sure that:

- ❖ the playing facilities are prepared, meet the necessary technical standards, are safe and free from obstructions
- ❖ the visiting team(s) are met and directed to the changing rooms
- ❖ match officials are met and shown to their changing rooms (separate from the players if possible) and paid any fees or expenses due to them
- ❖ refreshments and hospitality are provided for the visitors and match officials if this is customary
- ❖ suitable accommodation is provided for the visitors and match officials whilst they are waiting to play
- ❖ suitable spectator accommodation is provided
- ❖ guests and VIPs are welcomed and looked after
- ❖ the media are welcomed and looked after (if they attend).

Often it is the team captain who is responsible for many of the tasks of organising the team. The captain is also responsible for the tactical and ethical performance of the team. In some sports, a coach or manager may play a significant role in determining the team tactics, but once the game is in progress there is a limit to what a non-playing official can contribute. The captain can lead by example and may have to make important tactical decisions during the match.

Finally, if the team is successful, it is the captain who traditionally collects the trophy and makes the speech of thanks and appreciation, which makes it all seem worthwhile!

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