# organising fixtures and competitions

# what is running**sports**?

The running**sports** programme has been created, and is funded, by Sport England for the benefit of volunteers working in sport.

The running**sports** programme provides products and services in a variety of formats to support the work undertaken by volunteers and sports development officers. From Role Outlines, Top Tips and Quick Guides through to workbooks, workshops, e-learning and qualifications, the range of resources supports three key themes of club and volunteer development:

- governance and administration

- finance and funding

- volunteers and volunteer management.

For further information about running**sports**, visit

## www.runningsports.org

or call 0800-363 373.

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

# contents

# why have competitions?

Sport is, first and foremost, to be participated in and enjoyed by all those that take part. 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 to the season in the form of leagues or tournaments. At some point, somebody will have to take on the responsibility of organising a team or competition. 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 you can consider, depending on which sport you are involved in and at what level and size; for example, first, you should decide if you are working with:

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

This will help you choose from a range of competition formats, including:

- 'friendly' matches

- knock-out competitions

- ladders

- leagues

- play-offs

- tournaments.

## what does an event organiser do?

The role of the event organiser is to effectively and efficiently create, plan and manage successful sports events. The event organiser has overall control of recruiting, motivating and managing the events team, ensuring each event runs smoothly, on time and on budget.

The main duties of an event organiser include:

- establishing the aims and objectives of each event

- establishing the financial viability of each event

- creating an event overview and timeline

- deciding the most effective timing, location, outline of event and personnel required

- recruiting an events team

- managing clients, potential relationships and new business opportunities

- managing and reviewing all financial aspects of pre- and post-event management, while adhering to budgets.
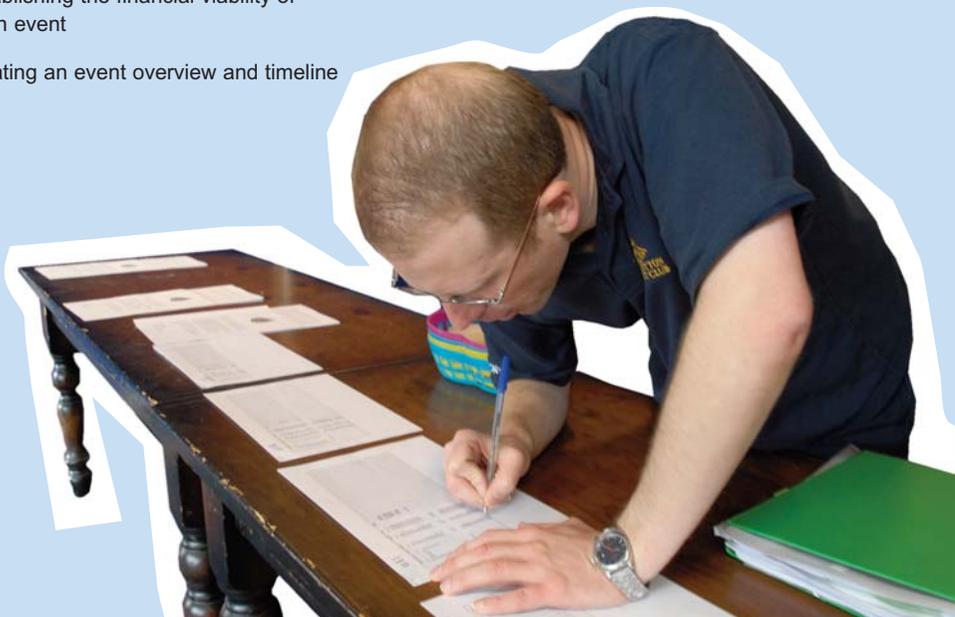
# what does a fixtures secretary do?

The role of the fixtures secretary is to plan and arrange all club/league fixtures, while liaising with other clubs/organisations and taking into account league and championship events. He or she would also produce and distribute fixtures lists for all members.

The main duties of a fixtures secretary include:

- arranging all club fixtures

- producing fixtures cards/lists for all members to diarise (and posting these on the club website)

- liaising with other clubs/organisations to arrange fixtures

- ensuring members are aware of the fixtures

- ensuring transport for away games

- attending committee meetings

- liaising with the registration secretary.

# what does a registration secretary do?

The role of the registration secretary is to deal with all aspects of registering teams and players for competitions, including their eligibility to play and any transfer requests.

The main duties of a registration secretary include:

- ensuring all teams and players are eligible to compete

- liaising with the membership secretary on the currency of membership of individual players

- dealing with transfer requests

- following up queries on registration and carrying out appropriate action.

Check out the running**sports** website at www.runningsports.org to download copies of the Role Outline for each of these posts.

# 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 is the traditional league system, in which every team plays against each of the other teams twice (at home and away).

The single round robin is an alternative league system where teams play each of the other teams once, which allows more sides to play in the same division without resulting in too many matches. A disadvantage of this system 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, if there is an even number of teams within the division, the teams play a different number of matches at home and away (eg 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 vice 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:

- one team fails to turn up or arrives late
- a match is interrupted, perhaps by bad weather, and 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 should they occur. Whatever procedure is chosen will ensure 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 are ways to get around them. If you can think of a way, you can be certain that somebody else will too!

The rules should ensure that no advantage could be gained from failing to play a fixture. For example, rather than a team winning a game or match by 'default', the fixture should be rescheduled for another time instead.

In any case, it is discourteous to the opposition and unfair to some of the other teams in the league whose positions may be affected by the result.

# fixture lists

Usually, the fixtures secretary has to work out the fixtures for all the teams in the league. He or she also needs to know how many matches a team must play and how many matches there should be in the division altogether.

Some leagues work very successfully even though teams may play a different number of matches against some teams compared with others (eg 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 fixtures list is that the league table can be distorted because some teams may have had a more difficult fixtures list than others. This problem can be overcome to an extent by finishing the season with **play-offs**. An uneven fixtures list followed by play-offs is used by the USA's National Football League (NFL).

### 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.

A formula for calculating a fixtures list is given here, but you may find another that suits you better.

Arrange the first series or set 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 a **'bye'** as shown (see Making the Draw). So, for a division of nine teams, the first series looks like this:

A v B

C v D

E v F

G v H

J v K or bye (If there are 10 teams use team 'K', but if there are only nine, include a bye.)

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 (eg within a squash club), there are no problems of home advantage and a single round robin format is perfectly fair and even.

The total 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**

| Number of Teams | Total Number of Matches | Number of Rounds | Matches per Team |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 4 | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| 5 | 10 | 5 | 4 |
| 6 | 15 | 5 | 5 |
| 7 | 21 | 7 | 6 |
| 8 | 28 | 7 | 7 |
| 9 | 36 | 9 | 8 |
| 10 | 45 | 9 | 9 |
| 11 | 55 | 11 | 10 |
| 12 | 66 | 11 | 11 |
| 13 | 78 | 13 | 12 |
| 14 | 91 | 13 | 13 |

The fixtures 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:

| Second Series | Third Series | Fourth 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 individual team's venue/ground, you will need to adjust the fixtures to give everybody the same number of home and away matches.

**Consider the following when producing fixtures lists:**

- Avoid matches in holiday periods (eg Christmas week, Divali or Eid) if this will be a problem.

- If two teams share the same ground, ensure the fixtures are not 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 the easiest way, is to work out the difference between the goals scored and conceded (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 check whether the tables are right, a simple test can be done; for example, if the table has been worked out correctly, the following should all be true for each of the teams:

- 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 balance out irregularities in the fixtures list and are used to determine promotion and relegation. Play-offs can also provide some very competitive matches and keep the whole season interesting for most or all of the teams. They can decide the league championship (eg the NFL Super Bowl) or be a separate competition. Play-offs often generate considerable spectator and media interest.

**Example of a top eight play-off:**
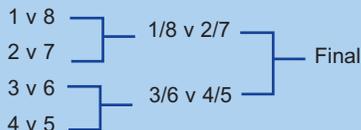


**Play-offs can be:**

- based on single games in which the team that finished higher in the league table gets the home advantage

- based on a two-leg aggregate score basis. The first match is really just the first half of the overall match. For example, the scores from the two legs are:

  **First leg: Team A 4–1 Team B**
  **Second leg: Team A 1–2 Team B,**

  so the aggregate score will be 5–3 in favour of Team A, meaning they win the tie. In some competitions, a tie is considered to be drawn if each team wins one leg, regardless of the aggregate score. Two-legged ties can be used in knock-out cup competitions and play-offs. 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 a 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 (if the teams have each won one match). Aggregate scores are disregarded, so this has the advantage that every match is competitive.
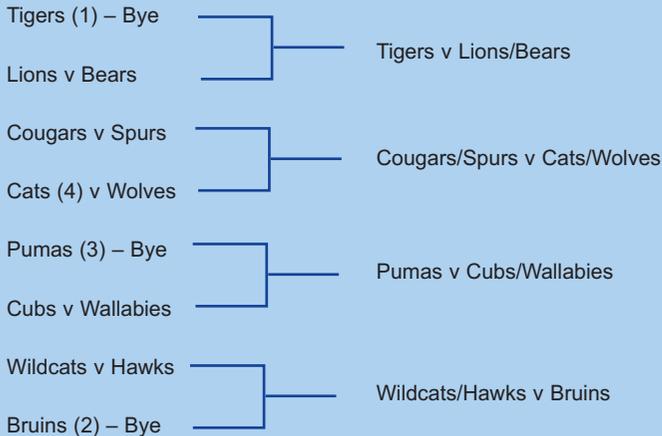
# knock-out competitions

The knock-out (or **cup**) format is one that 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 the Wimbledon tennis tournament and in The FA Cup. All matches are played to a result, using extra time, a replay or some sort of tie break if necessary (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 and Seeding).

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); although, frequently, you will have an awkward number and will need to fill up spaces with byes. For example, if you have 13 entries, you will need to add three byes to make the number up to 16 – the next highest power of two. The positions that are seeded would be placed in the draw and are shown below by the figures in brackets.

Tigers (1) – Bye
Lions v Bears
    Tigers v Lions/Bears

Cougars v Spurs
Cats (4) v Wolves
    Cougars/Spurs v Cats/Wolves

Pumas (3) – Bye
Cubs v Wallabies
    Pumas v Cubs/Wallabies

Wildcats v Hawks
Bruins (2) – Bye
    Wildcats/Hawks v Bruins

NB: The template on the next page provides a knock-out competition table template for your use (based on 16 teams).

# knock-out competition table template

| Competitors/ Teams First Round | Second Round | Semi-final | Final | Winner |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *eg Team A* | | | | |
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# 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

A bye is a free pass into the next round of a competition and is given to some players when the number of entries is not exactly the right number for the first round (ie 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 eventually play most matches, so it makes sense to give them one less match to play in the early stages.
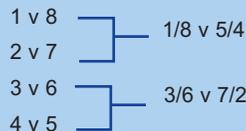
## Exemptions

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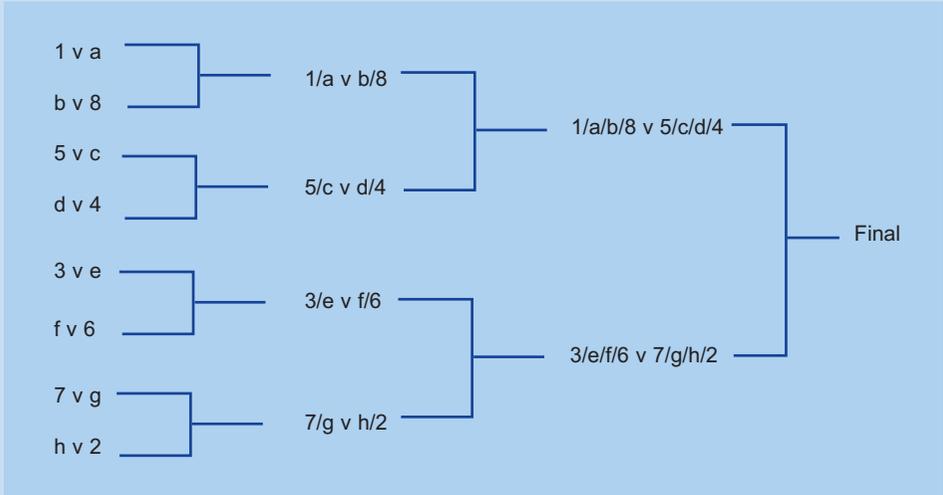
# seeding

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 teams 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 spread out in the draw in such a way that, when they first meet, the top seeds (ie the best players or teams) meet the bottom seeds (ie the less strong players). In the following example, the seeds are numbered 1–8 (ie 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 or players are represented by the letters a–h. So, if all the seeds survive to reach the quarter-finals, the matches would be:

1 v 8
2 v 7       1/8 v 5/4
3 v 6
4 v 5       3/6 v 7/2

For example:

```
1 v a ─┐
       ├─── 1/a v b/8 ─┐
b v 8 ─┘               ├─── 1/a/b/8 v 5/c/d/4 ─┐
                       │                        │
5 v c ─┐               │                        │
       ├─── 5/c v d/4 ─┘                        │
d v 4 ─┘                                        ├─── Final
                                                │
3 v e ─┐                                        │
       ├─── 3/e v f/6 ─┐                        │
f v 6 ─┘               ├─── 3/e/f/6 v 7/g/h/2 ─┘
                       │
7 v g ─┐               │
       ├─── 7/g v h/2 ─┘
h v 2 ─┘
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# 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. Usually, the competition features an abbreviated form of the sport (eg a tennis match comprising just two/three sets, a team game involving short periods or a small-sided game, such as rugby sevens).

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, which 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.

However, even when using the pool system, the best teams could be in the same pool and 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

quarter-finals so, the draw for the quarter-finals would be:

**A1 v B2**

**C1 v D2**

**B1 v C2**

**D1 v A2.**

The semi-finals also keep teams from the same pool separate; for example:

**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, there is a high chance of two or more teams finishing level and a method of resolving the tie must be decided, recorded and published.

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 the start of their team's first match as they may be travelling with the team and not arrive in time. Instead, use the officials from the teams involved in the first set of matches, and allocate the games taking place later in the day to the officials just arriving.

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 lines as those for team sports but you can be more flexible, as individual players can be organised more easily than teams.

A popular form of competition, particularly in racket sports, is the **American tournament**. This seeks to give everybody the same number of matches so, at the end of an afternoon, weekend or week, 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 this can be decided; a few of these are given below.

Friendly tournaments can be for players competing as individuals or 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 will be needed.

If the players are treated equally (eg 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:

| Figure | Court 1 | Court 2 | Court 3 | Court 4 |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 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 |

NB: Letters denote men; numbers denote ladies. The winners of each match are shown in bold.

If the number of players is 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 the competition gives everybody an equal chance of winning?

- Is it important to ensure the best team wins or is it more important 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 these 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 results are communicated to the organisers quickly and accurately.

- Circulate the results regularly or make them easily accessible on a notice or display board so everybody involved can follow the progress of the competition.

- Provide a good communications system (eg public address, notice board, hand outs) and advisory notes to announcers.

- Have a clear signal to start and stop play.

- If the location is large, invest in walkie-talkies to help with communication.

- Make sure the organisers are able to make prompt decisions on issues that arise.

- If the organisers are also playing in the tournament, make sure they stand down temporarily as an official if a decision needs to be taken that 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 the tournament is run over several sites/locations. A changeover can take 10 minutes or more. Teams may not always be ready (indeed they may still be playing another match) and they and the officials may have to get organised (eg warm up, choose ends etc).

- Ask teams to provide their own practice equipment (such as balls for use during warm-up).

- Make sure copies of the regulations are available at each of the tournament venues.

- In team tournaments, where teams have to wear different colours, ensure the team colours are noted on the entry form and tell teams to bring two sets (or bibs). State which team shall be responsible for changing colours when there is a clash.

- 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 arrangements for them (eg 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.

The running**sports** Quick Guide *Managing Events* provides further specific examples of organising larger-scale activities. To download a free copy or purchase this or other Quick Guides in this series, visit www.runningsports.org

# handicap events

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 concedes a number of points per game to the weaker opponent.

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

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 involves competitions that place restrictions on team selection and require each team to continuously field one or more weaker players. 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 korfball, mixed hockey)

- professional and amateur partnerships (eg golf 'pro-ams')

- adult and child (eg mother-and-daughter competitions).

# ladders and pyramids

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 upwards.

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, and so on.

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 to provide a framework for games; many leagues actually specify the dates for each match.

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

- If your club has a number of teams who all use the same facility, ensure 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 and players will be unhappy if they arrive for a match that has been re-scheduled 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 transporting young players, ensure you are aware of the child protection issues involved. For further information on this subject, sports coach UK [see Useful Contacts] runs workshops and produces 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 practice

- a second set of kit is available in an alternative colour, just in case there is a clash of team colours

- all members of the team have the appropriate playing kit and equipment (either provided by the club or themselves), club equipment is collected after the match, and appropriate arrangements are made for laundry

- refreshments are available, as well as anything else that is likely to be needed

- warm-up kit (tracksuits, waterproofs etc) is looked after if it is discarded by the players

- the equipment for the match (eg match ball, practice balls, nets, scoreboards, timing equipment etc) is provided and 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 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:

- the playing facilities are prepared, that they meet the necessary technical standards and 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 while 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 and 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!

# glossary of terms

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

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

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

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

**Knock-out competitions:** Also known as a **cup**; knock-outs are used where a large number of competitors or teams may enter and need to be eliminated until only two survive to contest the final (eg The FA Cup Final).

**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.

**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:** Matches normally played after the standard league fixtures have been played, to decide final promotion places.

**Seeding:** The best players or teams 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.

**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 sevens).

# useful contacts

**CCPR – One Voice for Sport and Recreation**
Burwood House
14–16 Caxton Street
London SW1H 0QT
Tel: 020-7976 3900
Website: www.ccpr.org.uk

**Child Protection in Sport Unit**
NSPCC National Training Centre
3 Gilmour Close
Beaumont Leys
Leicester LE4 1EZ
Tel: 0116-234 7278
Website: www.thecpsu.org.uk

**county sports partnerships**
For a complete list of county sports
partnerships, check out the Sport England
website at www.sportengland.org and search
for 'county sports partnerships'.

**English Federation of Disability Sport**
SportPark
3 Oakwood Drive
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 3QF
Tel: 01509-227 750
Website: www.efds.co.uk

**National Association for Voluntary and
Community Action (NAVCA)**
The Tower
2 Furnival Square
Sheffield S1 4QL
Tel: 0114-278 6636
Website: www.navca.org.uk

**National Council for Voluntary Youth Services**
3rd Floor
Lancaster House
33 Islington High Street
London N1 9LH
Tel: 020-7278 1041
Website: www.ncvys.org.uk

**national governing bodies of sport**
For a complete list of national governing
bodies, check out the Sport England website
at www.sportengland.org and search for
'national governing bodies'.

**SkillsActive**
Castlewood House
77–91 New Oxford Street
London WC1A 1DG
Tel: 020-7632 2000
Website: www.skillsactive.com

**Sport England**
3rd Floor
Victoria House
Bloomsbury Square
London WC1B 4SE
Tel: 020-7273 1551
Website: www.sportengland.org

**Sport Northern Ireland**
House of Sport
2a Upper Malone Road
Belfast BT9 5LA
Tel: 028-9038 1222
Website: www.sportni.net

**Sporting Equals**
1301 Stratford Road
Hall Green
Birmingham B28 9HH
Tel: 0121-777 1375
Website: www.sportingequals.com

**sports coach UK (general enquiries)**
114 Cardigan Road
Headingley
Leeds LS6 3BJ
Tel: 0113-274 4802
Website: www.sportscoachuk.org

**sports coach UK Workshop Booking Centre**
Tel: 0845-601 3054
Email: scukworkshops@sportscoachuk.org
Website: www.sportscoachuk.org

**sport**scotland
Doges
Templeton on the Green
62 Templeton Street
Glasgow G40 1DA
Tel: 0141-534 6500
Website: www.sportscotland.org.uk

**Sport Wales**
Sophia Gardens
Cardiff CF11 9SW
Tel: 0845-045 0904
Website: www.sportwales.org.uk

**Sports Leaders UK**
23–25 Linford Forum
Rockingham Drive
Linford Wood
Milton Keynes MK14 6LY
Tel: 01908-689 180
Website: www.sportsleaders.org

**Volunteering England**
Regents Wharf
8 All Saints Street
London N1 9RL
Tel: 0845-305 6979
Website: www.volunteering.org.uk

**Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation**
3rd Floor
Victoria House
Bloomsbury Square
London WC1B 4SE
Tel: 020-7273 1740
Website: www.wsff.org.uk

**Youth Sport Trust**
SportPark
3 Oakwood Drive
Loughborough
Leicestershire LE11 3QF
Tel: 01509-226 600
Website: www.youthsporttrust.org

# **more help from** running**sports**

This Quick Guide is one of a series that has been created to provide information about some of the key sports volunteer roles, and information and solutions on topics that have an impact on sports volunteers.

Log on to the running**sports** website to find everything you need to help you with:

- **governance and administration**
- **finance and funding**
- **volunteers and volunteer management.**

Network Members are able to download the guides for **free**. If you are already a Network Member, access the Quick Guides from the Network Member Intranet.

To become a Network Member, log on to the running**sports** website and click on the 'Register as a Network Member' icon on the front page.

For further information on this or other titles in this series, contact running**sports**:

- **telephone: 0800-363 373**
- **email: info@runningsports.org**
- **website: www.runningsports.org**

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