

Chapter 5 – Tournament Preparation

1. General. A tournament committee of the proper size shall organize, publicize, and run the tournament. The committee should be large enough to share the workload without being so large as to be cumbersome. Each member must have specific, clearly understood tasks, with the tournament director coordinating all aspects of the tournament.

2. Tournament Committee. Members of the sponsoring club should be assigned to specific functions on the tournament committee. Officers of the club, operating under the direction of the tournament director could be assigned tasks as follows: (The functions must be done by some member of the committee).

- 2.a. President - Referee, if qualified in accordance with Chapter 4.
- 2.b. Secretary and membership chairman – Register players at the beginning of the tournament and at the beginning of the second day's play, if applicable. Someone must be designated to register players who arrive for events that start later in the day.
- 2.c. Treasurer – Assists in player registration as necessary and handles all financial matters to include providing cash necessary for registration, change for refreshments, payments to umpires, and writing checks for cash prize winners. If two signatures are required on checks, the tournament director co-signs.
- 2.d. Program chairman – Arranges a party if desired and makes any necessary arrangements for refreshments at the tournament or schedules trips to local restaurants for players unable to leave the hall for meals.

3. Type and Date(s) of Tournament. This should be determined several months in advance in accordance with an annual schedule. The schedule must be coordinated and approved by the USATT regional tournament coordinator and should be listed in "the USATT National Publication" to give as much notice to players as possible.

4. Promotion. One member of the committee should be designated to arrange for advertising tournaments. Promotion should be scaled to the scope and objectives of the tournament and may include:

- 4.a. A notice in "the USATT National Publication" and the USATT web site.
- 4.b. Notices in local weekly papers (recreation, counties, etc.).
- 4.c. Notices and results in the local newspaper and on local TV.
- 4.d. Advertisements in any of the above media.
- 4.e. Posters and/or exhibitions in shopping malls or sporting goods stores, city, county and school recreation centers.

5. Commercial Sponsorship. The committee member handling promotion should also obtain and coordinate commercial sponsorship when appropriate. Prior to any action to get commercial sponsorship the committee shall establish specific objectives and requirements. No attempt should be made to obtain commercial sponsorship if such sponsorship will detract from long term table tennis promotion. Short-sighted, one shot sponsorship, is not worthwhile. Commercial sponsorship should normally be limited to the larger tournaments, in size or importance. Based on the local situation, that could include two star tournaments and city or state championships.

- 5.a. Select a good salesman who knows the sport and, if possible, something about the company you're contacting to sponsor the tournament.
- 5.b. Be positive but don't promise the Chinese national team and a gallery of thousands for a local event.
- 5.c. Approach it from the sponsor's point of view; sell it on the basis of how he can help his business; e.g. exposure to players and/or the public, advertisement in the entry blank or program, etc.
- 5.d. Invite your contact to the tournament; allow him/her to make some of the award presentations.
- 5.e. Thank the sponsors publicly at the tournament and give them a memento of the event such as a paperweight or T-shirt with the tournament name.
- 5.f. Always write a letter of thank you immediately after the tournament. This is an absolutely necessary step to indicate that you do appreciate the sponsorship. It also makes it easier to go back the next time you need a sponsor.

6. Venue. Firm arrangements must be made to secure a location for the tournament. This should be done several months in advance and verified in writing unless your club owns the facility. An annual tournament schedule with dates and venue should be prepared and verified for availability of facilities.

- 6.a. Playing area. Each table should have a minimum area of 20 x 40 feet with lights at least 11 feet high. *(See Chapter 4 for detailed requirements)* The minimum distance between tables is 10 feet. The above dimensions are specified as minimum by USATT regulations. In the event that they cannot be met, any deviation must be specified in the entry blank. To provide playing conditions appropriate for a USATT sanctioned event, the length of the playing area must be at least 30 feet with a minimum of 10 feet between tables. *There should also be 6' between a table and a wall.*
- 6.b. Barriers 30-36 inches high should be placed around the playing area. They should be placed around each table if possible, otherwise around groups of

tables. Barriers add greatly to the appearance of the tournament and speed play by reducing lets caused by balls from other matches intruding into the playing area and by reducing time retrieving balls hit outside the playing area. If there is a shortage of barriers, one 6-10 foot section between tables at each end of the playing area will stop most balls. An additional barrier between tables, even with the net will stop balls going off the side of the table near the net.

- 6.c It is frequently desirable to remove some tables after the first day of a two day tournament to provide greater distance between tables. The second day's play normally consists of late round singles matches and may include a great number of doubles matches. One or two areas should be prepared for staging a finals program. These playing areas should be completely enclosed by barriers and should each contain a table and scoring indicator and chairs for the umpire and assistant umpire.

7. Entry Blank. See Chapter 3 – Tournament Sanction.

8. Awards. Trophies or other awards should be ordered as soon as the entry blank is completed. Request delivery one week before the tournament to permit inspection and correction of any errors.

9. Equipment. Prepare an equipment list and include the person responsible for each item (see example, page 5-5).

10. Receipt Of Entries. As entries are received, the tournament director should verify the player rating and membership status from the rating list and underline the players on the rating list. The USATT Ratings Chairman (USATT Headquarters) should provide a current rating list of regional players before the entry deadline. For a closed tournament such as a state closed the rating list provided can include only players from the state. The club must request the rating list and must include what area players are expected from.

11. Draw. The draw should be conducted at least two days after the entry deadline to allow for late arrival of entries that were mailed "on time". Draw procedures are covered in Chapters 6 (Draw Procedures for Single & Double Elimination) and 7 (Round Robin Competition).

- 11.a. The draw should normally be held on Wednesday before a weekend tournament. This will allow completion of all necessary paperwork on Thursday without interfering with a Friday night setup.

- 11.b. Time scheduled tournaments.

- 11.b.1. The draw should be held one week earlier with the time scheduling done the next night (Thursday). This will permit written notice to players of scheduled matches. Large open tournaments should have the earlier deadline and draw even if not time scheduled. This will permit written acknowledgment of entries and a more orderly preparation of

the paperwork.

11.b.2. For small tournaments it is a good idea to prepare a time schedule for use by the desk crew but don't publish it until you are confident that it will work. Players like to know when they will play. However, they are likely to get more upset if you get behind schedule than if you don't announce the schedule. After running the same tournament more than once you should be comfortable with publishing the schedule.

11.c. Computer draw. If the draw is to be done by computer times can be adjusted based on the requirements dictated by the computer availability and experience with the system. Unless you are very experienced and have very reliable equipment, a computer draw should be scheduled early enough to permit drawing by hand in the event there are unforeseen problems.

11.d. All entries should be acknowledged by e-mail if an e-mail address is available for the player. *Consider whether or not to provide information on the draw with the acknowledgement. Showing the players entered can draw additional entries. However, if prize money is offered, some players may come up with late emergencies if several stronger players are entered to knock them out of the money.*

12. Setting Up. Invite people by name to help. An open invitation to "Come help set up" doesn't get results. A personal invitation is harder to turn down. Depending on your club situation you might consider:

12.a. Paying or waiving entry fees for a set-up crew consisting of either adults, older junior players, or both.

12.b. Providing a free clinic for the set-up crew.

12.c. If you are setting up the night before the tournament and the tables will be used for practice that night, leave the nets off until the whole area is set up. People will be more willing to help get ready so they can get in some practice.

This page is intentionally blank