



Section 2.02 COMMUNITY CLUB STRUCTURE

Overview

A community tennis club, like any organization, requires some form of management structure and hierarchy. This provides a framework within which the business of operating a club can be completed and individuals can volunteer to provide leadership. It confirms the decision making power of those individuals and determines how the actual work will be allocated amongst the volunteers. Finally, a structure leads to accountability both for the activities and resources of the club.

As with most organizations, this management structure takes the form of a committee consisting of a number of individuals with defined positions and responsibilities. This committee is the Board of Directors or Executive of the club. The process for determining the members of the committee, and the length of their term, should be addressed in the **by-laws** or constitution of the club. Most often, they are elected by the membership, at a General Meeting, for a term of one year.

The committee positions required by any club are a function of the size and activities of that club. As a minimum, to meet the requirements for incorporation, a club should have a **president vice-president, secretary and treasurer**. However, most clubs require further executive positions to ensure that all functions are properly addressed and that no one individual is so burdened with work that he/she does not have a chance to actually play and enjoy tennis or are discouraged from volunteering. Community tennis clubs need **volunteers** to ensure that they continue to function as low cost, high access delivery points for tennis.

Additional executive positions often found are: **membership, promotion/publicity, facilities, social, competitive and junior development**.

At some clubs, there may only be one person taking responsibility for each of these additional functions. At other clubs, there could be more than one, or a committee of people, to ensure the job gets done. Regardless, the directors would have the final responsibility and would represent the interests of their constituency on the club's executive.

As clubs become larger, there is often the need to add some **paid positions** to the structure. The most common ones are **court monitors, club instructors and club managers**. These people are all there to assist the volunteers in performing the job of day to day management of an active facility.



President

The President should be providing leadership to the club and the club's executive. This person's specific functions are chairing meetings of the executive and managing the other volunteers and paid staff. He/she is also usually responsible for external relations such as dealing with the local municipality and the hiring of any staff positions the club may have. The President should also be involved with all the policy and major business decisions of the club and work with the Treasurer in the overall financial management.

However, the reality of the position can be quite different. Club presidents often find themselves taking on whatever extra jobs or problems arise during the course of the season. This often leads to hours of extra work assisting other executive when they are particularly busy with their own specific functions. The President is also the member of the executive most likely to fill in for another when that person is not available for reasons of vacation or other responsibilities.

In short, these additional functions probably fall into the category of providing leadership or doing what has to be done to ensure the job of operating a community tennis club gets done.

Strong leadership, decision making, communication and management skills (including volunteer management and the ability to delegate) will lead to success in this position. Also, a strong knowledge of, and experience with, the operations and function of the club, plus a good knowledge of tennis will be helpful.

Vice-President

The Vice-President does not have a specified function. This is often the person who has been identified as the successor to the current President. Thus, the time as Vice-President is often seen as a period of apprenticeship and training. This person is required to fill in for the President when he/she is not available. This would include chairing meetings and any other jobs which are usually assigned to the President. Vice- Presidents should also be involved in policy and management decisions.

While this function seems appropriate, the reality is that it is often not a real job. Depending on the ability of the President to delegate, the Vice-President may go through an entire season with no real function. This is not wise as it is important that all volunteers have some specific responsibility which they can take on to ensure they remain interested in both the position and volunteering within the organization.

Two specific functions suggested for the Vice-President are volunteer recruitment and to serve as a club liaison person for the Ontario Tennis Association and the Regional Association. These two functions are suitable and important for the following reasons. To begin with, volunteer recruitment is often a problem at the community club level. Recruiting new people to take on the often thankless tasks of operating a community tennis club is not easy. If the Vice-President accepts this function, the process of continually finding new volunteers will



become formalized. As well, since the Vice-President is likely to succeed the President, it will allow that person to bring together his/her own team to take on the various executive tasks.

With respect to serving as a liaison person with the OTA and Regional Associations, they are involved with many different programs and services. Most of these have some specific application at the club level and are continually attempting to be communicated these to member clubs. Often, the information is not getting to the appropriate person at the club level or clubs feel they receive too much information from both areas.

If one specific member of the executive was designated as the contact and it was his/her responsibility to pass the information on to other members of the executive, these problems might be reduced. It would also serve to educate the Vice-President about the various programs and services offered. Thus, when that person becomes President, he/she would have a better knowledge of the OTA and Region and be better positioned to manage the members of his/her executive in taking advantage of the club's membership in the Association.

The qualities which a club should be looking for in recruiting a Vice-President would be similar to those listed for the President.

Secretary

The Secretary's primary function is recording, preparing and circulating the minutes of executive and general meetings of the club. The minutes are extremely important to ensure that decisions made at these meetings are properly recorded for future reference.

As well, the Secretary is often given the responsibility of preparing external correspondence on behalf of the club. As with the President and Vice-President, this person is one of the senior members of the executive and should be a part of the policy and management decision making process.

This person should have exceptional written, communication and organizational skills. Access to a personal computer and competence with word processing software might also prove to be factors in succeeding with the position and help avoid becoming overwhelmed with the physical task of preparing professional looking minutes and correspondence.

Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the financial affairs of the club. As noted above, for reasons of internal control, this is usually done in conjunction with the other senior members of the executive such as the President, Vice-President and Secretary. However, the Treasurer has the ultimate responsibility to ensure that proper accounting and control procedures are in place so that all of the club's funds are properly accounted for.



The Treasurer usually serves both a bookkeeping and controllership function for the club. This means taking responsibility for the orderly receipt, recording and depositing of funds, as well as the orderly payment of obligations and the recording of all cash disbursements.

The Treasurer should also prepare regular financial reports for the organization so that all members of the club have an understanding of the club's financial position. The Treasurer should take responsibility for working with other members of the executive to prepare the club's annual operating and capital budgets.

Needless to say, this is a position of tremendous responsibility. In the interest of proper internal control, we suggest that no funds be disbursed without the knowledge of the Treasurer. As well, all disbursements should require two signatures (one being the President's and the other either the Vice-President or Secretary).

Knowledge of accounting and finance principles and procedures as well as strong organizational and business skills should be considered in choosing this person. This is another position which can be made easier through the utilization of computerized systems.

Membership Director

This person is responsible for managing the registering of members for the club and ensuring that membership targets are met. This function includes preparing and circulation of membership registration forms to old members as well as any new enquiries. This person would also receive all registrations and ensure the club's membership files are properly updated and accurate. He/she would also take responsibility for distributing membership cards and shoe tags to members as they register in addition to preparing each member's court booking tag for clubs which use this type of booking system.

In performing the membership registration function, this person is often the first member of the executive to handle any payment of membership fees. As such, it is important that this person works closely with the Treasurer to ensure that these funds are passed on quickly for deposit to the bank, and that proper notation is made as to which member's fees these are. For most clubs, it would be advisable to keep a computerized database of the membership registration. This will facilitate the process of preparing labels for the purpose of circulating newsletters to the members as well as registration forms to the prior year's membership each spring. It will also make it easier to track non returning members for follow up. Compiling this database could also be a responsibility of the membership director.

This position requires strong organizational skills. Access to and knowledge of computers and simple databases would also be an asset in the position.

Promotion and Publicity Director



This person is responsible for **Promoting your club** externally, as well as the promotion of club events internally. This person must work closely with the Membership Director in preparing posters and or brochures to promote membership. In conjunction with the Membership Director, this person should be responsible for ensuring that membership targets are met.

This person must also work with other members of the executive to ensure that club events and programs are properly promoted to the membership through both posters and newsletters. As a final function, this individual might also take responsibility for securing local level sponsorship for the club's events and programs.

The position requires creativity, marketing and strong communication skills. Artistic ability may also be an asset.

Facilities Director

This person is responsible for the general upkeep and maintenance of the facility. This usually includes organizing the annual putting up/taking down of nets and windscreens, occasional minor repair of club facilities and/or equipment and dealing with local contractors for jobs which are large or require specific expertise.

This person should have some basic technical knowledge or aptitudes. For clubs with clay courts, a knowledge of the specialized maintenance requirements would be beneficial. They may want to become involved with Clay Court Tennis Ontario (CCTO) at www.tennisonclay.com.

Social Director

This individual is typically responsible for organizing recreational/social events at the club. Depending on the size of the club and the interest of the members, this may well be one of the busiest people on the executive.

Typically, this person works in conjunction with other members of the executive and the staff with respect to planning events, preparing promotional information and specific event delivery. One of the major responsibilities of the Social Director is the organization of refreshments for these events. Again, depending upon the event, this may range from doing some basic shopping and food preparation, to coordinating contributions of prepared food from a number of volunteers, or dealing with professional caterers.

This person needs to be well organized, attentive to details, financially responsible and creative. Someone who really enjoys organizing and hosting functions would do well in this position.

Competitive/Tournament Director



This individual takes on the responsibility of organizing competitive events and programs at the club. This includes house leagues, inter-club league teams and try-outs, ladders, club tournaments and any OTA sanctioned tournaments which the club might host. This person should be able to provide members with information on competitive tennis in the province.

This person is usually one of the keener competitive players at the club with a strong interest and experience in both league and tournament tennis. A strong knowledge of the rules governing competition and prior experience organizing tournaments would be assets.

Junior Development Director

This individual is responsible for ensuring that a junior program is in place at the club and that it is functioning properly. This person should serve as an advocate for junior needs and concerns at the executive level. We would suggest that this person be involved in the process of hiring the club's pro.

Suggested programming which the Director should consider having in place would include lessons and camps, house leagues, ladders, inter-club leagues, tournaments, and varied junior social programs. This person should also be able to provide members with information on more advanced programs and competition for juniors and have a knowledge of present initiatives in the area of youth development.

A strong interest in, and commitment to, working with young people might be the most important qualities to look for in a Junior Director.

Paid Positions

Beyond the volunteer executive positions, there are also paid positions within the structure of many community tennis clubs. The need and ability to afford these positions are usually dependent on the size of the club. The more paid staff there are, the more the volunteers can delegate some of the tasks of their various positions.

Typical paid positions are; manager, instructor(pro) and court monitor. A brief description of the function of each position is included below.

Manager

This person is paid to operate the club and ensure that the members' and directors' wishes are carried out on a day to day basis. While not specifically on the club's executive, this person is usually required to attend executive meetings.

As a member of the executive, however, it is important to remember this person is an employee



and not the boss. The following are just some of the functions which the Manager may fulfil: running club tournaments, round robins and other events; ensuring that the facility is staffed during regular operating hours; ensuring the facility is kept neat and clean; ensuring that the rules and regulations of the club are enforced; supervising the other paid staff, etc.

This person typically reports to the club executive. In the interest of good management, it is not advisable that an employee report to many different bosses. Therefore, accountability should be established between the manager and one specific executive member, most likely the President. In most circumstances, other executive members who have a concern about the Manager should address these through the President.

Club Instructor (pro)

This person is responsible for the delivery of instructional and coaching services to the club's members. We would refer you to the document **2.03 Hiring A Pro** for more specific detail on the responsibilities and typical qualifications for this position.

Even a smaller club should be able to have access to the services of a certified instructor or coach. Often, the contract with this person does not call for a retainer but simply gives the designated instructor exclusive rights to offer group, semi-private and private lessons to the membership at certain designated times of the week. Therefore, one person may well be working at different times at a number of different facilities with payment coming directly from the members who use the service and not from the club.

Court Monitor

This position is usually the first one which a club is able to afford. Often, some of the older junior members would be interested in positions like these. This person would be responsible for overseeing the clubhouse and use of the courts during regular operating hours. Clubhouse duties could include opening and closing the clubhouse, answering the telephone, keeping the clubhouse neat and clean etc. In the case where the club has a Manager, the monitor would report to him/her, otherwise they would report to the executive. In the absence of a Manager, the monitor would be responsible for collecting guest fees, selling tennis balls and handling any membership enquiries which might be made by people dropping by the facility.

This position does not require any specific technical skills. It would generally be well filled by a person whom the executive is confident will be responsible, trustworthy and capable of handling the court booking system properly.