



Section 3.08 COMPETITIVE EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING IDEAS

There are several keys to running successful programs at your club. Regardless of the type of tennis club you have, the most important thing is to ensure something is offered for everyone. Your members all have different expectations that need to be taken into consideration. Programs and events should be catered to both adults and juniors, beginner to advanced levels, as well as the social player versus the competitive one. Everyone has paid membership dues and therefore has the right to expect quality programming.

If you want those courts resurfaced or those clubhouse upgrades, you must keep your members happy. If you don't, these members will go somewhere else, or worse, they may stop playing tennis. Thus, it is important to have strong programming with a constant variety of new programs and special events.

TOURNAMENTS

Tournaments serve a number of needs for the people involved. For some, they are a chance to broaden the base of people they play with and test their skills. Tournaments also serve a developmental purpose, particularly for juniors, as they provide the opportunity to learn to deal with the pressures of competition. Finally, tournaments may also serve a social need. This is particularly true of senior events where, for many entrants, the emphasis is on camaraderie rather than winning.

There are many different types of tournaments. The most competitive tend to be single elimination draw events. These are the events which we most often associate with professional tennis.

They are also very common in amateur tennis and each year the OTA sanctions over 300 events of this type throughout Ontario. These events are offered for Juniors in Under 10, 12, 14, 16, and 18 age categories. They are also offered for Adults in Open, A, B and C Class. Finally, the OTA also sanctions Senior events in age classes from Over 35 to Over 75. In this manner, there is something available for almost everyone who wishes to play some form of competitive tennis.

For those players who are less interested in pure competition, there are many other types of events. These are intended to give players an opportunity to meet other people and expand the group they play with. These events also tend to emphasize participation more than winning. As such, while clubs usually use elimination style events to determine a "club champion", these other types of events would tend to operate for an entire season or on a more frequent basis.

To keep people playing some kind of consolation event is helpful. You can have first round consolation, first and second round consolation or a full feed in consolation which places the first 6 players.



SOCIAL AND GET ACQUAINTED EVENTS

What better way to have your members mix and match, or have new members meet old members, than through organized events.

By organizing events, you will take the responsibility of the initial contact or introduction away from the member. You will create a social environment which will take the emphasis away from competition and winning. Well-run events encourage the members to have fun and to become more active in the club.

There are a variety of events which can meet this social objective. These include Blind Partner, Family, Handicap and Round Robin events. The following will provide a brief explanation of each type, as well as some useful hints for organizing them.

A. Blind Partner Events

The objective of this type of event is to have people play doubles with as many different partners and opponents as possible. Therefore, you should ensure there is a quick turnover of playing groups and an efficient system for rotating partners. In essence, this is a form of round robin.

While there is no one way to run an event like this, the following has proven to be successful.

Begin by establishing your pairings for the first playing groups. Depending upon the number of courts available and the number of players, you could use a variety of playing/scoring systems. If you have enough courts for all of your players to be involved at any given time, then we suggest each player serve a complete game using no-ad scoring.

Once this has been done, the two players who have been receiving serve in the right court would switch partners and four more no-ad games would be played. Each player would keep track of the total number of games won, out of a possible eight. A variation, in the event you have more players than you have courts, would be to limit each player's serve to two points, one from each side. In this situation, each player would keep track of the number of points which he/she and his/her partner won.

An example of this is as follows:

You have four players (**A**, **B**, **C** and **D**) and one court. Initially, **A** and **B** are paired together as are **C** and **D**. **A** and **C** are receiving serve in the right court for their respective teams. **A** would serve a complete game, followed by **C** and so on until all four players have served. If **A** and **B** have won three of the four games, each would carry a score of three into the next stage. Likewise, **C** and **D** would each carry a score of one into the next stage.

The next stage involves the switching of **A** and **C** such that your teams are now **A** and **D** versus **B** and **C**. Again, all four players would serve a complete game. If in this second stage, **C** and **B** won three games the final scores would be:



| Player | 1st Stage | 2nd Stage | Total |
|--------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| A | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| B | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| C | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| D | 1 | 1 | 2 |

If each player were serving only two points in each stage, the scoring would be based upon the total number of points, not games won.

Assuming you have more than one court and four players, you would be duplicating this format on a number of courts. Following each round, you would regroup the foursomes from each court and play another round. Where possible, try to ensure people do not go back out with any of the same players they played with in the original round. However, depending upon the number of people you have involved, this could be impossible to achieve. Concentrate on getting people back on the court quickly and do not waste time trying to determine the "perfect" set of combinations.

You could continue this format for a number of rounds keeping a running total of each player's individual score from each round. To finish the event, you could take your top four point scorers, pair them randomly, and have them play a pro set to determine the ultimate winner. This final stage is not necessary.

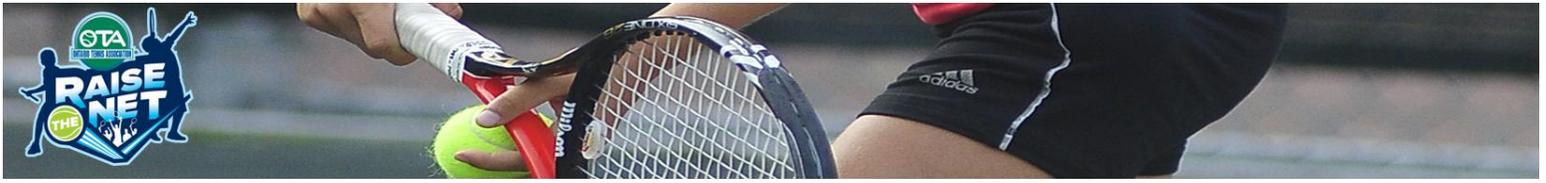
B. Family Events

These can be very popular weekend events at the club and can be accompanied by a family picnic or pot-luck lunch/dinner each day. The key is to create the possibility for family members to play together, in doubles events, against other family pairings.

There are a variety of events which could be staged. When we talk of family tennis, we usually have parent/child doubles pairings in mind. These could be mother/daughter (ladies' doubles), father/son (mens' doubles) or mother/son and father/daughter (mixed doubles) events. It would be best to offer all three to ensure you are not somehow excluding a family from participating. You might however, limit each person to entering only one event so you do not have to deal with complex scheduling.

The playing format is usually an elimination style draw event. However, if the intent is to offer a recreational event with broad based participation, you should consider having a consolation draw for first round losers or even use some form of round robin format. This way you can guarantee each team more than one match.

You might also consider having a procedure whereby members whose children or parents do not play tennis can adopt each other for the event and still participate. Under these circumstances, you would probably need to establish a rule regarding the minimum age differential between the



two players. For example, two non-related players would be allowed to enter providing there was at least a twenty-five year age difference between them.

C. Handicap Events

These events are designed to allow all members of the club to enter the same event and have a chance of winning.

The most typical form of handicap event is one where players are given a scoring handicap. For example, the best players in the club might be given a handicap of -30. This means they would begin each game at -30 and have to win two points just to get to Love (or six points to win the game). At the same time, beginners might be given a handicap of +30. They would start each game with a score of +30 and need only win two points to get to game.

These events are good for a number of reasons. To begin with, they allow for a broad based participation from all club members and no one should worry about being embarrassed by a much better player. The emphasis should be of a social nature and about having fun but with an element of competition.

For the better players, an event of this sort can be a good way to improve consistency and the ability to play the "big points". When you begin each game at -30 and your opponent has a score of +30, you will get a great deal of practice playing these important points. You will also quickly realize you do not have much leeway to commit any unforced errors.

For more information on different ways of handicapping please see item 3.3.8

D. Round Robins (RR)

Any event which involves playing a series of matches without the prospect of elimination can be classified as a round robin. As such, there are many different formats and types of RR's.

From a recreational point of view, RR's have the advantage of being easy to organize and highly social events with lots of opportunity to meet and play against other people. If the only objective for the RR is to have a social event, then a format such as the Blind Partner event described earlier is probably most effective.

However, if there is some interest in establishing a "winner", then in the interest of fairness, a more formal approach is probably required. This would involve each team playing against every other team with a cumulative win/loss record being used to establish the winner.

The problem with using RR formats for competition is that it requires a lot of matches to have each team play every other team. For this reason, the format is rarely used unless there are only a limited number of teams involved.



To make the running of a RR as easy as possible, one player/team should stay in the same 'fixed' place in the round schedule as the other players/teams move one position clockwise. This is best illustrated with the following RR schedule. We have chosen to show the set up for a 5 player/team RR (a bye - B, is needed with odd numbers). The same basic principles apply for any number of players/teams.

| <u>Round 1</u> | <u>Round 2</u> | <u>Round 3</u> | <u>Round 4</u> | <u>Round 5</u> |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 vs 2 | 1 vs 3 | 1 vs 5 | 1 vs B | 1 vs 4 |
| 3 vs 4 | 5 vs 2 | B vs 3 | 4 vs 5 | 2 vs B |
| 5 vs B | B vs 4 | 4 vs 2 | 2 vs 3 | 3 vs 5 |

For more details on RR formulas, we suggest you consult 3.3.9.

E. Progressive Doubles

A simple way of mixing and matching players. Players are divided into groups of 4 on the courts. They then play a designated number of games or for a specific time depending on how many changes you want to have. At the end of each “game” the winners move to the court next to them in one direction (towards the lowest court number) and split, the losers stay on the same court and split. There is one exception. The players on the lowest court number move differently – for this court the winners stay and split and the losers move to the highest numbered court and split. Partners are determined by the spin of a racquet.