

Setting your numbers

How many participants can you provide for in each section of your tournament?

Consider the following points.

1. Hours your courts are available

When will play start?

When will it finish?

If you don't have lights, this will be affected by the hours of daylight at the time of your tournament. You can check the times of sunrise and sunset at any time of year at

<http://www.ga.gov.au/geodesy/astro/sunrise.jsp>.

If you do have lights, decide when play is going to need to finish.

Work out how many minutes are available to you.

2. Scheduling a meal break

It can improve the atmosphere and sociability of a tournament to schedule a break when all players are off the court at the same time. This time will reduce the hours available for play. Subtract this number of minutes from your time available.

3. Duration of games

Start with the length of time you are stipulating for each game in the Conditions of Play. In GC, you may have indicated that games are generally not time limited; however after an hour of play you have discretion to give a 15 minute warning, so you may decide to make your calculations on the basis of a game taking up to 1 hour 15 minutes.

Add on any time required to provide for:

- double banking
- play after the bell
- stopping the clock to allow a toilet break

Between games, you also need to allow time for players to report their results, complete their handicap cards, and draw a breath / have some refreshment.

Adding all these times together gives you an expected maximum duration per game.

4. Sessions of play

Now you should be able to calculate how many sessions of play you can offer in one day.

Take the total minutes available for the day, minus your meal break, if any, and divide by the maximum duration of games, including that interval before the next game.

You will probably need to make a separate calculation for the last day of the tournament, when you may wish to schedule finals and/or finish early to allow players time to travel home before dark.

5. Number of simultaneous games

How many games can you run simultaneously on the courts you have available?

Will games be double banked? If so, you can double your number of games (but as above you may need to extend the maximum duration of a game).

6. Maximum number of games per day

Start with the number of sessions as per point 4. Multiply the number of sessions by the number of courts you have available and then by the number of games you can run simultaneously.

7. How many participants?

Now you know how many sessions and games you can accommodate, you can decide how many participants you can accept in each section of your tournament.

To find out how many games are required for round robin play in a particular size of block, multiply the number of participants by the number of games each entrant will play, and divide by two. Decide if this is manageable given the total number of sessions and games you can run.

8. Options if your numbers don't fit

What do you do if the total number of games in a section exceeds the number of games you can accommodate?

1) Split your section into blocks.

Say you have 10 entrants.

If they play in a single block, you will require 45 games, with each person playing 9 opponents.

If you divide them into two blocks of 5 entrants, each block will require 10 games – a total of 20 games. Each person plays 4 opponents and has one round where they have a bye. You will then need to allow time for finals – maybe an additional four games.

2) Recruit more players and split them into blocks.

Say you aim for 12 entrants.

This will give you two blocks of 6 entrants. No byes – this may be good for some but unwelcome to others. Total number of games will be 30 (15 per block) plus finals.

3) Limit your participant numbers.

Create a waiting list. This can be a realistic option as it does often happen that players have to drop out at the last minute.

4) Increase the number of playing days

eg Split the tournament over two weekends

5) Rebalance the sections in the tournament

Adjust the handicap boundaries of each section to make numbers more equal between sections.

6) Run a modified round robin so that entrants do not play everyone in their block

7) Time limit games more stringently

8) Borrow courts from neighbours

Consider cooperating with neighbouring croquet clubs, bowls clubs, lawn tennis clubs.

9) Reschedule the tournament next time you run it

eg Choose a time of year with more daylight, or lengthen the duration of the tournament.