



Tournament Managers Guide 2026

Introduction

Managing tournaments can be very rewarding and gives people a chance to give something back to the sport. The key to tournament management is in the preparation for the event. The aim of this guide is to provide managers with a checklist of all the key activities prior to and during the tournament.

This document is primarily a guide for managers who are managing tournaments that are open to non club members and advertised in the Croquet England's tournament directory. However, much of the information should prove useful to those managing internal club competitions or corporate events.

Remember, you are not alone! Prior to the event do not hesitate to ask other club members for help on any topic you may be unsure of and to consult other players for advice if unexpected conditions occur during the event.

Changes from earlier version:

- None – first issue

Key Roles

The Manager will need to interact with the following key people:

- Tournament Secretary – This is the person who manages all of the Club's entries in the Croquet England's Tournament Entry System (TES). The tournaments that the club will run in the following year are finalised in Nov/Dec. They have rights to view and make certain types of modification to the Clubs tournaments once the directory for the following year is published. The appointed Tournament Manager also has some admin rights to the event.
- Catering Organiser – This is the person who organises catering for the event. They need to be kept informed of the numbers of people requesting lunches and any special dietary needs.
- Grounds Support –for issues concerning the lawns being used for the event and hoop setting.

At the time of issue:

- Tournament Secretary: Martin Burger
- Catering Organiser: Rose Gebhardt for the GC 1 day events, Chris Osmond for the others
- Grounds Support: George Noble & Andy Dibben
- Amendments to Lawn Bookings: Andy Dibben

Summary of Manager Duties

The following is a checklist of the Managers duties. Subsequent sections provide further detail on key activities.

When first appointed Tournament Manager

- Familiarise yourself with the TES entry conditions. For example, the max number of players, the format of the event, catering provision, any specific dress code requirements (in general Surbiton is fairly relaxed about dress code)
- If the TES has stipulated a particular format for the tournament, this must be followed -unless, for example, the number of entrants or weather conditions prevents it.
- Check that the lawn booking system has booked out the required number of lawns for the event.
- If you are unsure of anything then ask a member of the committee for help!

4 to 8 weeks before the event

- The TES entry will have an 'Allocation Date', the date when all those who have entered are formally accepted (unless the tournament is over-subscribed; see below). This date is normally about 8 weeks before the event to give time for players to arrange travel and (if necessary) accommodation. Where an event is oversubscribed, the Tournament Manager is responsible for deciding which players to accept based on the criteria stated in the TES entry. Common variants are: the highest ranked players, or date order of entry. GC Series events have strict criteria for determining who is accepted which cannot be varied.
- Check that the Tournament Secretary has sent out the allocation confirmation and informed anyone who has not been allocated that they are on the reserve list.
- About a month before the event, if there are many spaces still available, liaise with the Tournament Secretary on how to promote the event to try and get more entrants.
- At the same time check the entries to see how many are requesting lunches and whether any special dietary needs have been identified. Pass this information to the catering committee. If the final tournament catering numbers are less than about 12, agree with the Catering Organiser if we need to notify entrants that catering cannot be provided due to low numbers. While the club can cater for vegetarians and vegans, if there are any other dietary needs, discuss with the Catering Organiser whether these can be met. The club should not attempt to cater for anyone who has a severe allergy as we cannot guarantee that any food provided will not contain traces of that allergen.

The week before the event

- Send an email to all entrants confirming that the event is on and providing any additional info that you think may be useful – e.g. start times, how long players are expected to play, catering etc. In particular any proposed changes to the advertised format due to expected lawn conditions or changes to expected numbers (See subsequent sections on examples and using TES to get players email addressed)
- If there are an odd number of players or, in the case of a knockout – several people have byes, then ask/notify those that have a late start and state the time that they should arrive. GC games can be quite short and so it should be no more than 30mins after the standard start time. Although AC games can often go for 3 hours it is normal to ask them to arrive no later than 1 hour after the others.
- In the unlikely event that there are any U18 entrants, you will need to confirm with them that they will be accompanied at all times by a responsible adult (See section on U18's)

Surbiton Croquet Club

- Update Catering and Grounds support on any changes to numbers taking lunch or the number of lawns required. For most events, double banking is expected and so request spare lawns are freed up for member use rather than using more lawns but only single banked. It is a good idea to make sure you can cope with a last minute entry – so if you have 21 entrants it is sensible to keep five lawns booked rather than four.
- If you are expecting others to open up the clubhouse, put out the lawns etc, then reconfirm with them that they are doing so.
- Prepare any instructions, sheets, tables etc that will help you manage the event. In particular, detail how a winner will be determined in the event that there is no clear winner.
- The day before the event, check weather conditions. See section below if there is a chance that weather will significantly disrupt play.

At the start of the event

- On the day of the event, you should aim to arrive before the majority of the players start arriving – at least 45 minutes before play is due to start.
- About 15 mins before play is due to start brief the players on the days program. See separate section on common topics. Players should then have about 10 mins practice before starting their first game. Players should not be allowed to practice before this time.
- If someone has a late start they should be allowed 10 mins practice – preferably not on the lawn that their first game is on.
- It is recommended that tournament managers do not also enter the event. If you are playing as well as managing then, adopt a format that requires minimal continuous management and ensure that you check at least every 15-20 minutes that there are no issues to resolve or games to schedule. Player managers normally ensure that they play all their games on lawns 1-3 so that they are near the clubhouse to quickly resolve issues.
- Remember that, if unexpected conditions arise, under the Tournament Regulations the Tournament Manager has significant powers to change the format. It is sensible to consult players on different options but stick to your final decision irrespective of what some of the players may want.

After the event

- If the tournament involves level singles play then the results need to be submitted to Croquet England so that they can be applied to the Rankings system. This is done by emailing Results@CroquetEngland.org.uk with the following info:

Surbiton XYZ AC/GC Event
Date: DD/MM/YYYY
A beat B +XX
C beat D +XXt (ie game went to time
.....

An alternative is to use Croquet Scores to enter the results as the tournament progresses and at the end of the event use the function in the application to submit all the results for you. See section below on Croquet Scores

The Tournament Entry System (TES)

Any subscriber to Croquet England can view entries for an event by:

- logging on to the CqE website,
- clicking the 'Compete' box,
- clicking 'Fixtures Calendar' (in first paragraph under the 'Tournaments' heading,
- selecting the 'info' icon next to the event and selecting the 'entries' tab.

As Tournament Manager you will have access to:

- a column that identifies whether they have requested lunch and any special dietary requirements.
- an 'envelope' button at the bottom to enable you to email all the entrants. Selecting this opens up your default email and pastes in the email addresses of all the entrants. Note, depending on your email provider this may not always work very well. Use of the 'CSV download' function is often better.
- There is a 'CSV download' button at the top of the list of entrants. This provides all the information on the entrants as a 'CSV' file that you can open in a spreadsheet program (eg; Microsoft Excel, Google Docs). This can be very useful in producing lists of entrants for managing the event. A cut and paste of the list of email addresses is an alternative way of getting to email all players.
- At the bottom of the list there maybe a section entitled 'Ex Directory'. This identifies any entrant who has requested that their details (including email) is not visible to other subscribers. Be aware that the email list may include these people
- You should check the entries regularly in the days preceding the event as there are often late withdrawals. However after the closing date, further entries can only be made by the Tournament Secretary, who will inform you if there are late changes.

Sample Confirmation Email

The following is a sample of an email that should be sent to all entrants about 5-7 days before the event. You may also want to attach a list of players and handicaps and the first round of games – if scheduled in advance.

If there is an odd number of players, it is best to decide in advance who gets a late start due to lack of opponent. It is best to ask for volunteers, but if necessary, you can just choose one.

We look forward to seeing you at the <event> at Surbiton on <dd/mm/yy>

Parking is available at the club, but when full there is plenty of free parking in Alexandra Drive. Be careful not to park over the white line on the side of the road with 'on kerb' parking.

There will be a player briefing at 09:15 each day followed by practice before games commence at 09:30

<There will initially be no time limit on games / games will be played to a X hr time limit ****Select as appropriate****>

Lunch, for those who have requested it, will be available <from 12:30 to 13:30 ****agree timing with cooks around the expected playing schedule – it should be limited to 1 hour****>. Please let me know before the event if you have changed the option selected in TES or wish to bring a guest who would like lunch.

The format of the event will be **<** as in TES or explain why it will be different **>**

Players will be expected to play **XX** games on the Saturday and we expect to finish around **XXpm** on the Sunday.

< change is different rules apply **>** Dress code for Surbiton events is the standard 'Whites' – ie, Flat soled shoes must be worn and clothing should be predominantly white, clean and in good condition.

Any last minute issues please contact me on **07XXX XXXXXX**

Bad weather Conditions/ Cancellation

- If there are large puddles on the lawns the day before the event and further rain is forecast overnight then the lawns are unlikely to be playable for most of the following day and you will probably want to cancel the event.
- If the lawns are OK the day before the event but heavy rain is forecast overnight, the best plan is usually to email entrants the day before, noting the possible cancellation, that a final decision will be made and communicated the following morning, and they should check their email before leaving. As players may be an hour or more's drive away, next morning's communication needs to be made by 8am.
- It is ultimately the Tournament Managers decision whether to cancel an event or not or to delay the start. When evaluating the conditions, use the Webcams to view the current lawn conditions. Feel free to consult other Tournament Managers, e.g. Andy Dibben, George Noble or Nick Parish to get advice and additional views on the chances of lawns being playable the following day.
- The decision to cancel or not is sometimes a really difficult one, and there is no guarantee you will get it right, but it is important to make your best judgement. It is infuriating for players to travel if weather conditions meant there was never any realistic prospect of play.

CroquetScores

<https://croquetscores.com/> is a website for setting up croquet competitions and to record results. The site supports competitions in the Knockout, Block and Swiss formats. A competition can consist of several of each type (ie, Initial Blocks, a knockout for the block winners and a Swiss for the players not in the knockout)

It can be used from a PC, Tablet or Smartphone.

On the site the 'Help' section explains how to set up an account and subsequently set up and manage a tournament.

If you have never used CS before you should first sign up for the '(TRY) Croquet Scores' website <https://try.croquetscores.com> which allows you to insert fictitious tournament data and familiarise yourself with the system before using the real Croquet Scores website."

Additional Information

- The Croquet England Tournament Regulations <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/regulations> contains information on different types of events. Section M concerns Tournament Management.
- The Oxford Croquet site has a section on Tournaments <http://www.oxfordcroquet.com/manage/index.asp>