

COMPETITION ORGANISERS WORKSHOP

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Organiser Notes

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ABOUT COMPETITION

WHY IS COMPETITION IMPORTANT ?

- In all sports players aspire to compete
- Competition makes learning meaningful
- Competition invokes a sense of achievement and aids progress
- The competition environment has an off court social element which is also enjoyable

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS FOR COMPETITIONS ?

- That they are APPROPRIATE for the players involved – the length, the scoring, the format etc
- That they are LOCAL – preferably within their own Club environment or nearby
- Most competitions for young children are for 'training' purposes only and should not be for any serious outcome. Early competition assists the LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT of a young player, winning is nice but not to be emphasised. Enjoyment for all is essential.

WHAT COMPETITIONS AND WHO CAN PLAY

All competitions can be singles, doubles or teams, 'Intra Club' or 'Open'
In Mini Tennis Competitions the emphasis should be on team and Multi-Sport competitions

Competition	Who can play
Mini Tennis Red	for Red players & early orange players
Mini Tennis Orange	for Orange players and early Green players, no tennis players or rated players
Mini Tennis Green	for Green players and early JNR Tennis players, no 7.1 rated players
Robinsons JNR Tennis Competitions (intra- club) –	for any junior tennis players in the club
Robinsons JNR Tennis Challenge	for lesser rated players in the club or from nearby clubs
Robinsons JNR Masters Series	for better rated players (requiring official referees)
'Matchplays' or Ratings tournaments	for all rated players
Age group sanctioned tournaments	for all rated players or any player 10&U

CONSIDERATIONS FOR AGE & STAGE

Competition is a gradual process. Consider each of the following in relation to age and stage with shorter and easier competition at Red progressing through Orange and Green building towards JNR Tennis

1. Length of competition	RED	ORANGE	GREEN	JNR TENNIS
	2-3 hrs	3 hrs	3-4 hrs	½ - full day

2. Length of matches	RED	ORANGE	GREEN	JNR TENNIS
	7-10mins	15-20mins	20-35mins	45-90mins

3. Who scores?	RED	ORANGE	GREEN	JNR TENNIS
	scorers	supervisors	self scoring	self scoring

4. Boy/Girl differences	At all levels organisers must be sensitive to the needs of girls being different from boys. Some girls are happily mixed with boys while others are not. Try to arrange girls competitions where possible or girls groups within a competition
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5. Prizes	All players should be given a small prize at end, bigger prizes for winners or group winners. Medals are very popular and inexpensive. Mini sweets good for small prizes. Certificates also good.
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6. Need for ratings	If players in a Robinsons Challenge Event are rated then the organiser should consider that it might be helpful to use a scoring system which would help them with their rating. Remember that 7.3 and 7.2 rated players do not benefit from 1 set matches for their rating.
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7. Role of parents	<p>Parents are a vital and readily available source of assistance and must be <u>wisely</u> used. A few golden rules:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use for scoring only at the lower stages of Mini Tennis • Brief the parents about rules, court lines and scoring method • Parents only score games which do not include their own children • Parents asked to avoid getting involved in coaching • Parents who are not helping to stay away from the courts <p>Parents must understand that they too are undergoing a gradual process of removing themselves from the matches. As the children progress the parents should be less and less involved and leave the children to play</p>
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COMPETITION FORMATS

Always choose formats which provide maximum participation for all players and which can be sensitive to the age and ability of the players.

The following formats can be used for team competitions or singles & doubles events

1. 'Challenges & Matches' – a series or circuit of fun challenge activities and short matches
2. Multi Sport – short fun matches in Mini Tennis combined with Mini Soccer, Mini Hockey etc
3. Matches - ROUND ROBIN alone
4. Matches - Round Robin followed by knockouts & consolations
5. Matches - Knockouts with playbacks with perfect draw of 8 or 16 (also called Two Way events)

Basic principles are

Short matches for the very young (5,6,7 years) mixed with skills or other sports - as they progress, matches get longer and fewer. Team competition is always better than individual events.

SCORING METHODS

Choose according to time, courts, age, stage and ability. Tie break scoring is the basis for Mini Tennis scoring and can be used flexibly. At the Mini Tennis Green stage the scoring can be tie breaks or abbreviated tennis scoring thus building towards scoring full tennis.

The table below shows the graduated nature of the recommended scoring methods and the average length of matches

	Scoring	Average time
Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie break to 7, 2 clear or sudden death • Extended tie break to 11, 2 clear or sudden death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 mins • 10 mins
Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie break to 7 • Extended tie break to 11 • 2 tie breaks (can produce a draw) • Best of 3 tie breaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 mins • 13 mins • 18 mins • 25 mins
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie break to 7 • Extended tie break to 11 • 2 tie breaks (can produce a draw) • Best of 3 tie breaks • One 'short set' to 4 with tie break at 4-4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 mins • 13 mins • 18 mins • 25 mins • 20 mins
JNR Tennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One set to 6, tie break at 6-6 • Best of 3 - 2 short sets & third set tie break 'game' • Best of 3 short sets • 2 sets to 6 with tie break at 6-6. Third set as tie break game* <p>*occasionally these matches can be much longer; be prepared for the odd exception</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 mins • 45 mins • 55 mins • 75 mins

ROUND ROBIN BOXES

Easily the most appropriate format for 'child friendly' competition – Round Robin boxes are best played as stand alone but where a winner is required such as in Robinsons JNR Challenge they can be played as qualifiers for a knockout draw with consolations

How many matches in a group ?

Group size	No of matches
3	3
4	6
5	10
6	15
7	21

Simple formula is

Group size x Group size less 1 and divide by 2 (2 players in each match)

Example for group of 6

Group size (6) x Group size less 1 (5) (=30)
Divide by 2 =15 matches

Sorting out the Groups

Option 1- when players are of different standards

- group players according to ability as you know it and they play RR only

Option 2 – when players are of similar abilities and you have reason to follow RR with knockouts

- put players in groups with 'seeds' and follow RR with a knockout and consolation knockouts so that everyone continues to be involved

Putting players into groups

Option 1 – find out as much about the players as possible and put like abilities together taking age and boy/girl into consideration also

Option 2 -

1. Placing 'seeds' in a box - put seed 1 at top of box and if you have a second seed put in the place that would mean they meet in their last match eg in a box of 5 at place D

2. Placing other players in boxes

- consider friendships, players from same groups/clubs, avoid putting players with same name into same box.

Transferring players to Knockout

- always try to put 2 players through to top knockout in case you have the best players in the same group. This is harder to do in JNR matches where matches are longer. Put all other players into consolation knockouts. Prepare KO sheets with all players (A1 is 1st in Group A, B2 is 2nd in B etc)

How to complete a Round Robin box - See sample on following pages

How to work out final positions in a box

Ties - In the case of a tie between two or more players in a group there are various methods of calculating the positions

- In tennis where proper scoring is used the recommended method is to work out a percentage based on games won as a percentage of games played.
- In Mini Tennis it is advisable to keep it more simple so that the players can easily understand it. The method as follows almost always has the same result as the tennis method but is easier for the players to understand (and the organiser will not need a calculator!!)

Ties in competitions where scoring is one tie break game of any length

1. The highest number of matches won
2. The highest number of points won
3. The winner of the match between the two tied players (presuming there are only two left) called 'head to head' OR if there are 3 players with the same number of points won and therefore the head to head rule cannot be applied then the lowest number of points lost.

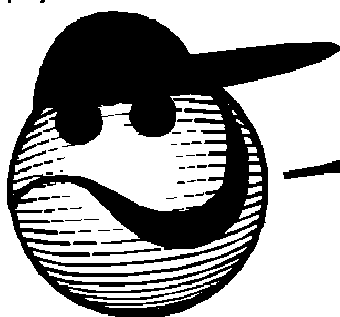
In competitions where scoring is 2 or 3 tie breaks

1. The highest number of matches won
2. The highest number of tie breaks won
3. The winner of the match between the two tied players OR if there are 3 players with the same number of points won and therefore the head to head rule cannot be applied then points won as a percentage of points played.

sample round robin box

How to use the Round Robin box

- Put players names in ABCDE boxes. If you have the need to 'seed' players they should be as following
 - Seed 1 in position A
 - Seed 2 in position
 This would mean they would play last.
- Copy players names into the court organiser's sheet below the box; tear off and give to your court organiser who can be responsible for organising the players onto court in the correct order
- It is important to follow the order of play to give the players the correct balance of matches



Completing the scores

- Work horizontally and put the players score in the left hand side of the diagonal box and the opponents score in the right hand side.
- When a score is more than 7 such as 8-6 or 10-8 you must record a score of 7-6. This is because a higher score would distort the points score in the case of a draw.
- To decide players' positions you must take the results in the following order
 - the highest number of match wins
 - the highest number of points for
 - the lowest number of points against
 - the result of the match between the 2 tied players
- There is only need to add the points if there is a draw in match wins. There is only a need to add the points against if there is still a draw. etc

Sample completion of a box

The following example is a round robin box for 5 players; scoring is one tie break game to 7 with 2 clear points. The group is called A which is necessary if the groups are followed by knockout. If not you could call the groups by fun names or colours

Group A	A	B	C	D	E	Wins	Points won	Points Against	Position
A Ahmed		5 7 W	7 5 L	7 3 L	4 7 W	2	23		3
B Brent	7 5 L		7 5 L	4 7 W	3 7 W	2	24		2
C Clarissa	5 7 W	7 5 L		4 7 W	3 7 W	4			1
D David	3 7 W	7 4 L	7 1 L		7 6 W	1	20	24	4
E Ellie	7 4 L	7 5 L	7 4 L	6 7 W		1	20	27	5

ROUND ROBIN FOLLOWED BY KNOCKOUT

Where Round Robin boxes are followed by knockout, the knockout sheet must be prepared with every player having a place in the main knockout (Wimbledon) or one of the consolation knockouts, depending on their results in the Round Robin Groups.

Example shows a knockout draw following 4 boxes of 5 where players are of similar ability

A1 represents the player who came 1st in box A, A2 is the player who came 2nd in box A and so on

WIMBLEDON

	Name			
A1		winner	winner	winner
C2				
B2		winner	winner	
D1				
C1		winner	winner	
A2				
D2		winner		
B1				

FLUSHING MEADOWS

	Name			
A3		winner	winner	winner
C4				
B4		winner	winner	
D3				
C3		winner	winner	
A4				
D4		winner		
B3				

ROLAND GARROS

	Name		
A5		winner	winner
D5			
C5		winner	
B5			

Notes about knockout draws

- Where there are less groups in a competition the knockout draw could include byes; in competitions
- Where there are more groups the knockout draw might have to have only one player from each box.
- Where groups are not of even standards, more players from the better groups could be included in the top knockout and fewer from the less able groups
- Make sure that knockout draws are a suitable size - bigger than 8 can be very long for young players
- In order to keep all players involved until the end, try to include 'playback' matches from the knockout as well. ie those who lose still get another match against others who also lose.

CHOOSING COMPETITION FORMAT AND SCORING METHOD

Principle considerations:-

- Age, stage and level of players
- Number of players
- Number of courts
- Time, allowing for warming up, changeovers and presentation at end

AND

- Try to keep all players until the end for final and presentation
- Be efficient with time management, arrange for quick changeovers by having next match always ready, short or no warm ups, children bringing scoresheets to organisers table etc

Examples

The following are formats for matches only – formats for 'Challenge & Matches' or Multi Sport Competitions can be found in the Mini Tennis Manual

stage	age	players	hours	courts	notes
Red	7or8&U beginners	24	2	4	No need for winner
Format: Round Robin groups of 6, one on each court, grouped by ability or boy/girl Scoring: Tie break to 7, sudden death at 6-6 Prizes: to winner of each group and everyone					
Red	8&U	20	3	4	Need for winner
Format: Round Robin groups of 5, one on each court, seeded groups, followed by knockout Scoring: Extended tie break to 11, 2 clear Prizes: to winner and runner up, and each consolation knockout					
Orange	9&U	15	3	3	No need for final
Format: Round Robin groups of 5, one on each court, grouped by ability Scoring: 2 Tie breaks to 7, 2 clear, sudden death at 10-10 Prizes: to winner of each group and everyone					
Green	10&U	16	4	4	No need for final
Format: 4 seeded Round Robin groups of 4, one on each court, grouped by ability Scoring: 'Short' set ' with tie break at 4-4 games Prizes: to winner of each group and everyone					
JNR Tennis	10&U	24	1 day	4	Need for winner
Format: Round Robin groups of 4, rotating on courts, groups seeded, followed by knockouts, perhaps staggered arrival of players Scoring: 'Alternative' scoring – 2 short sets followed by 3 rd set as tie break game Prizes: to winner and runner up, and each consolation knockout					
JNR Tennis	12&U	8	1 day	2	Need for winner
Format: Knockout with playback, players in seeded positions Scoring: 'Alternative' scoring – 2 sets followed by 3 rd set as tie break game Prizes: to winner and runner up					

ADAPTING FORMATS FOR TRICKY NUMBERS, MIXED ABILITIES AND THE 'UNEXPECTED'

Mixed abilities

It is important that every child in a competition has good matches and fun and leaves with the desire to play in more competitions. All Round Robin formats can be adapted to suit individual abilities. Knockout with playback is less suited to adaptation.

Tricky numbers

Many organisers face awkward numbers – just be imaginative and have groups of different sizes with different match lengths

The 'Unexpected'

The organisers nightmare is when everything is planned and then several players do not turn up OR you plan for 4 courts and get to the venue and find there are only 3. You must quickly adapt. Give yourself a little time to rearrange.

Adapting Round Robin competitions

- Mixed abilities - it is always possible to group children according to ability.
- Tricky numbers – arrange groups of different numbers but adapt scoring method according to size of group.
eg 17 players = 3 groups of 4 and 1 group of 5 with group of 5 playing shorter matches than the groups of 4.
- The 'unexpected' lack of court– do not panic and change groups unnecessarily; it may be possible to have one group which shares everyone's court and 'steals' match spots. Make the matches shorter rather than reduce the number of matches.
- The 'unexpected' no shows – rearrange the groups and give longer matches to those with smaller numbers. Be careful if you have seeded players.

Adapting Round Robin followed by knockout

- Mixed abilities - where Round Robin groups are followed by knockout, the transfer of players from the groups to the knockout draw has to be adapted

Example

22 players – mixed ability -Groups = 4 groups – A & B groups of 5 for the 'hot shots', C & D groups of 6 for the less experienced playing shorter matches. Transfer to knockout taking more players from groups A&B into top knockouts and others into lower knockouts

Wimbledon	Flushing Meadows	Roland Garros	Melbourne PArk
A1	A4		
B3	bye		
C1	C2	C3	C5
B2	A5	D4	D6
A2	B5	C4	C6
D1	D2	D3	D5
A3	bye		
B1	B4		

- Tricky numbers – if you have uneven group sizes or less than 4 groups you can use the 'Next best' idea ie From 3 groups to knockout; take 1st place of each group plus the player who was 2nd who had the best results of all the 2nds.

MINI TENNIS RULES

Mini Tennis is played in the same way as Tennis and rules are therefore the same as those applying to Tennis. For competitions and for coaching and teaching purposes the rules can be adapted according to the ability of the children and the space and time available.

Key tennis rules for Mini Tennis use

1. Rules about the serve

- (a) The server should stand with feet at rest behind the Red/Orange/Green baseline.
- (b) The service may be delivered overarm or underarm but the ball may not be bounced before being hit by the server.
- (c) The server should stand alternatively behind the right and left halves of the court according to the type of scoring used (ie. proper tennis or tie break style).
- (d) If service from the wrong side occurs and is undetected all play resulting from the wrong service or services should stand. The service side should be corrected immediately it is discovered.
- (e) The service must land within the diagonally opposite service box of the opponent's court.
- (f) In the event of the service not landing in the appropriate area, or the server missing the ball in attempting to hit it, a second attempt may be made but if this also fails the server loses the point (double fault).
- (g) The receiver must allow the service to bounce. If the receiver hits the ball before it bounces he loses the point.
- (h) 'The let in service' - If the service touches the top of the net and lands in the delivery area this delivery should be replayed.

2. When the ball is in play

- (a) During play (except when receiving service), players may hit the ball either before or after one bounce.
- (b) The ball should land within the appropriate area, which is the whole court.
- (c) In the event of the ball hitting the ceiling, walls or other obstructions, the hitter loses the point. This is also the case in serving.
- (d) In the event of the ball hitting a player, that player loses the point.
- (e) In the event of a player hitting the ball before the bounce that otherwise would not have landed in the appropriate area, the point should continue.

3. Playing doubles

- (a) All rules are the same for doubles except that the four players serve in rotation, one from each pair in turn. eg. Players A & B v X & Y – Player A serves from the right, Player X serves from the left then the right, Player B serves from the left then the right, Player Y serves from the left then the right. When a player serves they should serve one point to each of the receivers but receivers do not always have to receive on the same side as they do in tennis

The 'Tie break' game

Tie break style scoring is counting 1,2,3 etc with Player A first serving from the right hand side for one service point, followed by Player B serving first from the left hand side then from the right (ie. 2 service points). Players then continue to serve for 2 points alternately.

Players should change ends after every six points, and at the conclusion of the tie break game if appropriate. (Nb. Changing ends should only be included if the children are competent scorers or if the playing conditions deem it necessary).

In a normal tie break game a player who first wins 7 points, wins the tie break game provided the player leads by a margin of 2 points. If the score reaches 6-6 the game is extended until the 2-point margin is achieved. If time is restricted then it is allowable to impose 'sudden death' at 6-6 or later (eg. 8-8 or 10-10).

Where more than one tie break is played (e.g. best of 3) the player who received service on the first point of the previous tie break will serve the first point of the new tie break.

REFERENCES

For further information about running competitions you can refer to the following :-

The Club Mini Tennis Manual

'Running a Tournament' available from www.lta.org.uk/clubhelp

The Robinsons JNR Tennis Challenge Organisers Manual

The Robinsons JNR Tennis First Serve Manual for Clubs