

SOME THOUGHTS ON HOW TO ORGANIZE A SUCCESSFUL BONSPIEL

The more the merrier! The best way to start is to post a notice for help and encourage your friends to sign up. Reliable help is so critical. Careful planning is essential. Also remember that in the end, most of the curlers are on losing teams and what brings them back every year is your hospitality and the fact that they had a fun time and enjoyed good food. Of course good ice is very important as well.

Have an initial meeting with your committee and set a budget for your bonspiel. There should be someone in charge of each section with a couple of helpers.

CURLING

- Book date with manager & notify icemaker
- Decide on type of draw: double knock-out, points etc.
- Decide on number of entries
- Establish entry fee
- Prepare a poster and entry form for advertising (paper & for web) as early as possible (web-OCA, OVCA, ottawacurling.com) can email to clubs or snail mail
- Sign-up sheet at club
- Prepare welcome letter for teams stating rules, food & entertainment times, etc.
- Registration before first game to collect money & hand out envelope of rules & food tickets (good to have a float) Out-of-towners should send in cheques before event
- Score sheets & pencils on ice if points spiel – something to hold cash if paid out after each draw
- Scorekeeper for points spiel and record keeper if some other draw
- Officials & timers if necessary

PRIZES

Cash is an easier way to go and is best for the more competitive open spiels but for fun spiels and community spiels gifts are preferred. For fun spiels consider making the prizes of equal value and having something for everyone. If you cannot afford the cost of all these prizes on your VISA ask the treasurer for some money up front which will be repaid by entry fees.

(Keep all the receipts!) Sponsors can be very helpful donating prizes.. Some companies will offer you a discount if you buy many prizes from them. I have found the Canadian Tire weekly specials great value and you do not need the coupon to buy them.

Some Options: prizes for everyone; prizes for winning team in each draw; prizes for 3 game, 2 game and 1 game high in points spiel.

FOOD

- Book caterer as early as possible.
- Morning snacks & coffee (can get this donated by sponsors)
- Candies on ice
- Water available on ice as well as tissue (usually the icemaker looks after this)
- Offer breakfasts & lunches as club money maker or include in entry fee

SPONSORS

Treat them well and they will continue to support your efforts. It must be worth their while to do so. Decide if you want cash or prizes from them. Be sure to have their signs and business cards on display and their names mentioned in the welcome letter to the teams. If you have a web site display your sponsors there as well. Take the time to personally thank your sponsors. In this age of emails, personal handwritten notes are appreciated. If a sponsor has supported a particular division of the draw you could take a picture of the team who won that division and frame it and give it to them for display in their business. You might also want to give them a pair of dinner tickets to thank them.

ENTERTAINMENT

Book well in advance (DJ's, live bands, karaoke.)

Make sure you check out the microphone(s) and sound system in the club to see if it all works.

You might consider doing your own music with iPods & club sound system to save money.

You can put on skits by club members. This is more appropriate for in-house bonspiels

ACCOMMODATIONS

Consider reserving a group of rooms well in advance for your event. Space can be very limited in Pembroke in November and the beginning of December because of the Silver Stick hockey tournaments.

DECORATING

Check that the club will be cleaned and floors polished before your event. It is a good idea to choose a theme and work from there. Tablecloths and centerpieces are especially nice for ladies events as well as a basket of toiletries in the washroom.

MEDIA

Send notices to the radio stations and web sites to publicize your event. Arrange for newspaper and if possible TV coverage during the event. Take pictures of the teams and give them each a copy. Take pictures of the winners and give them copies or email them. Put the winners up on the web site as well as pictures of the event. This often encourages future entries.

EXTRAS

Calcutta

Raffles

Loonie or Toonie tosses for a prize such as a bottle of Bailey's

Shooters

Free drives back to the motels & hotels