

K **Bonspiels, Leagues & Funspiels**

How to Organize a Successful Bonspiel

Curling could not exist without competition. Within each club, healthy competition is needed between regular and experienced players, or play will fall to a discouraging level. Inter-club play is needed to try new competition.

The most important elements are planning, planning, and more planning, topped off by work.

1. You, of course have decided whether the bonspiel will be mixed, women, juniors, youth (little rocks) or men participating in the bonspiel. Your next decision is when to hold it. Check the local or area bonspiel calendar to determine a date that does not conflict with another event of a similar type. Once you are established, other bonspiel planners will try to avoid the date of you bonspiel. Make your bonspiel unique. Pick a theme, a name, a gimmick, or all three. You want people to have fun and you want them to remember your event.
2. How many entries should you take? Naturally, this depends on how much ice you have available, but do not forget your capacity limitations on the social side. Resist the temptation of accepting more entries than you should. Accepting too many can turn a bonspiel into an ordeal. Nothing can dampen a bonspiel curler's enthusiasm more than an 11:00PM start, three nights in a row.
3. Arrange for volunteer help where necessary – clean up, bar help, rink rats, etc. A bonspiel committee is a must. Pick people you can depend on. Instead of making it an ordeal for a few, it can be fun for many besides bringing people together by participating in club affairs. Assign responsibility for tasks such as draws, rules, entertainment, etc., to individual members. Avoid dumping jobs on the Club Manager. He or she has more than enough with his or her normal duties. Make up a duty roster to ensure at least one committee member is present during all activities to keep the draw up to date, answer questions, and solve problems, etc.
4. Keep a check list of things to be done. This will serve as a status reminder to you and avoid the possibility of something being overlooked.
5. Work out a budget. Each committee member with spending responsibility will then know where he or she stands. Most of the revenue will go into prizes, entertainment and food.
6. Print posters listing type of bonspiel, date, number of rinks, fees and closing date of entries. Email and mail posters to all clubs within your market and any other contacts you might have. A covering letter of welcome would also assist.
7. Develop a sponsorship package. Send all thank you notes/cards promptly to sponsors advising of the success and scope of entries (including any press clippings).

8. **Get the local business community behind you.** A bonspiel is good news for the entire business community. See if a local hotel would be willing to give out-of-town curlers a special rate on accommodations or whether the local Chamber to Commerce would be willing to provide free shuttle service between the rink and the hotel.
9. Arrange food and beverage specials and entertainment well in advance. Purchase prizes curlers would be thrilled to accept. Make up envelopes with instructions and other relevant information. Prizes (and trophies) should be displayed early on the final day.
10. Make up a fair and equitable draw. Notify skips well in advance with accurate information. Remember the GOLDEN RULE: do not expect to follow a schedule that you would not want to follow yourself. If you schedule a team for a late-evening game Saturday night, do not expect them to be back on the ice at the crack of dawn Sunday morning. If you are pulling in curlers from farther away than your immediate area, take their travel time into account when you are setting up the schedule. To keep things fair, have the teams play on different sheets of ice during each round. Anticipate all possible outcomes and decide ahead of time how ties will be broken and what will happen if some of the games are running behind schedule.
11. Make the spiel fun, but keep it competitive. The trend today is to classify bonspiels as either fun or competitive. This split is not necessary, If social activities or low cost rewards make the difference, then the “Brier” or the “Tournament of Hearts” could be called a fun bonspiels. Remember, competition (to most) is important at any level. Not enforcing rules, poor organization, etc., will degrade the function and turn people off.
12. Get your house in order (literally!). Spend a little time making sure that your house is in order before all your guests arrive. The lounge and locker areas should be spotless and organized. Remember you are showcasing your building! You want your Ice Tech to make “championship ice”. (There is an art to making ice that can stand game after game of curling.) Ensure that the rocks are well matched. (An experienced curler from your club should be able to help you with this important task.) Make sure your umpire is familiar with the most up-to-date rules – particularly important if the Free Guard Zone Rule will be used in your bonspiel.
13. **Good luck, good curling, great hospitality and have fun!**

Organizing successful league play (under construction)