

Walking Football Tournament Manual



December 2024

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Introduction

This Walking Football Tournament manual has been designed by the WFFA tournament committee, as a reference guide for WF clubs and tournament directors and committees, to aid in the planning and implementation of WF tournaments. Please use this Walking Football Tournament manual in conjunction with the Walking Football Tournament checklist to check your progress as you prepare for, conduct and review your WF tournament.

Feel free to customize these suggestions to meet the specific needs of your club and Walking Football tournament. If you have ideas or additional items that could enhance a WF tournament, please share them with us at WFFA. Your input will help us update this manual to benefit other clubs and organisers in the future.

If you have any questions or would like a second opinion on planning and organising your WF tournament, please don't hesitate to reach out to any of the following individuals who are happy to assist.

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1. ESTABLISH A WALKING FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

- Appoint a small number of people in your Group to run your WF tournament
- Divide up the items 2- 19 below between these people based on their interests and skill sets.
- Recruit and assign volunteers to some of the key roles that will be required on the day. These may include:
 - Parking.
 - Set-up, location of gazebos, awards presentation, etc.
 - Time-keeper & runners, collecting scoresheets from referees after each game to update scores and competition tables.
 - Liaising with others, eg St John Ambulance, radio and TV personnel.
- Identify and address issues to enhance the feeling of “inclusion” for players and spectators in your WF event. Consider such things as:
 - Wheelchair access and disabled parking.
 - A prayer room in line with religious requirements.
 - Vegetarian food options.
- Take the opportunity to talk with people from these groups, within your local community, to help identify a suitable and practical option, e.g. perhaps a tent or gazebo with sides may be suitable for a prayer room.
- More information regarding the need for, and requirements of, a prayer room for Muslim WF players can be found at the following link: <https://www.centralcoastwalkingfootball.com.au/policies/muslim-prayer-room>



2. MARKETING AND PROMOTION

- Post a “Save the Date” notification / flyer on social media, and send to all WF contacts six months before your WF tournament. Details in the flyer could include: Tournament title, venue, date, start and finish times, age groups, men’s, women’s, mixed, social, competitive, goalkeepers - yes or no?
- Determine the number of games that can be played at your venue, e.g. 2 games per hour per pitch. This will allow you to determine how many teams you can have in your tournament. If you think more teams will want to play, you will need to consider running your WF tournament over more than one day.
- Post and send a second flyer about four months before your WF tournament. This should include: registration costs per team and or individual, date registration commences and ends, and an expression of interest form for teams. Provide link to registration system and the tournament director contact details.
- Make sure the tournament director has the time to respond to any email or telephone enquiries.
- Thereafter provide an update to all participants; monthly, fortnightly or weekly as appropriate, on WF tournament progress. Include updates on numbers of teams and players registered to keep them interested in your WF tournament.
- Talk to your local radio and TV stations a few months in advance and let them know that your WF tournament is being held on a given day(s). They may be interested to promote your WF tournament for / with you.



3. TEAM AND PLAYER REGISTRATION

- Decide what divisions / groups you are going to conduct in your tournament: Competitive and/or Social; Men's/Women's and/or Mixed?
- What age and gender groups will you offer for players to select? Men's 50+, 55+, 60+, 65+ and 70+; Women's 40+, 50+, 60+ and 65+; Mixed Teams Under 60, Over 60+, etc. Should the social division have a minimum age limit? How many women should be the minimum in a mixed team - two or three?
- Decide what variations to the age and gender categories you are willing to accept, e.g. can a player who is one year younger than the age category play in that age category? If so, how many players will you accept? How many men and women must be on the field in a mixed team at any time? Remember, the aim is to encourage as many people as possible to play in your WF tournament. It is also important that, as far as possible, all players have fun, enjoy your tournament and want to come back again.
- If you don't get enough teams in some age groups you may need to combine teams from different age groups in order to create enough teams to make it enjoyable for all. Everyone loves to play, so let them, but award trophies / medallions to the winning team in each age group you invited people to play in, NOT just in the combined division you created.
- Decide if it's going to be team registration or player registration or both.
- Decide how the team and / or player registration fee will be paid. If you have a club bank account, advise those interested of the payment details including the bank account name, BSB and account number. Ask them to use the reference section to tell you which team or player the payment relates to.
- Create a registration form for players to complete. If this is a digital form, link it to a spreadsheet so that you can see all the information you need from every player in one place. You can use Google Forms, "GameDay", "Tournify", "OpenSports" or other similar apps to create these forms and tournament draws, results records and competition tables.
- Gather information on the registration form that is necessary for contacting the player and for confirming that they are in the right division / group: Name, Age, Email Address and Phone No.
- **DO NOT COLLECT INFORMATION FROM PLAYERS THAT IS NOT REQUIRED OR UNNECESSARY.**



4. PLAYER PAYMENTS AND TOURNAMENT EXPENSES

- Calculating the team or player registration fees should be based on a budget that you have prepared for your WF tournament.
- If you understand what your costs will be, and decide what profit, if any, you want to make from running your WF tournament, then you can set your registration fee to cover your costs and achieve your profit target.
- Tournament expenses may include:
 - Fees for the venue
 - Insurance costs for the tournament
 - Payments, if any, to referees.
 - Cost of purchasing trophies and / or medallions.
 - Cost of prizes you may want to give to selected players, etc.
 - Food, water or drinks that you may provide or subsidise.
 - Purchase of footballs, bibs, referee whistles, score sheets, pencils, etc.
 - Cost of a marquee or gazebo(s).
 - Purchase of an air horn, loud speaker, etc.
 - Cost of having a physiotherapist or St John Ambulance available at your tournament.
 - Goals and line markers / flat discs (as required).
 - Cost of hiring WF tournament dinner venue and any VIP Special Guests.
- Tournament revenue may include: player fees, team fees and sponsorship income.
- Based on the number of teams or number of players that you estimate will attend, you can set a team or player fee for your WF tournament that will help you achieve your target profit.
- It is wise to conservatively estimate the number of players who will attend your WF tournament. This will give you a buffer should player / team numbers be lower than you would have liked, and still give you a chance to cover your costs of running your WF tournament.
- Set a closing date for registrations and registration fee payments prior to the tournament. Our suggestion is one month before. This will allow you to finalise the draw and distribute it to all attendees prior to your WF tournament. This will be much easier if you have chosen a team registration fee, rather than a player registration fee.

5. STRIP

- Find out the colour of the strip of all teams playing in your WF tournament. Determine if there will be any colour clashes prior to the tournament.
- Decide if your club will provide alternate colour bibs / strips, or whether you want every team to bring a second strip or spare bibs, in the event of a clash of strips.
- Ask all teams to have numbers on their shirts, or shorts, if possible. This will assist the referees, if they need to record details for certain player's offences e.g. not walking, tackling from the side or behind, etc; or disciplinary records, such as card offences or send offs. .

6. SPONSORSHIP AND GRANTS

- There are a number of federal, state and local government agencies, clubs with community programmes and local businesses that offer funding, sponsorship or grants to local community-based sporting organisations. So, consider investigating government and club grants and approaching organisations such as:
 - Local councils.
 - Community banks and credit unions.
 - RSL's and sporting clubs with licenced premises.
 - Local businesses.
- You can contact WFFA for support and guidance on what to do with sponsorships and grants.

7. INSURANCES

- Arrange Public Liability Insurances (PLI) for your WF tournament.
- Arrange Personal Accident Insurance for your tournament, which includes insuring players during the WF tournament.
- Share your Certificate of Currency and details of what your Personal Accident Insurance Policy covers with participating clubs and on your website social media.
- For assistance in arranging insurance, contact WFFA or your state association for advice.



8. REFEREES

- Calculate the number of referees you will need for your WF tournament based on the number of pitches you will be using and the number of games that will be played.
- Do you have enough training and accredited referees?
- If not, invite players with referee qualifications to officiate when they are not playing.
- Contact John Hanley from WFNSW, to arrange a referee training course in the lead up to your tournament. John may also be able to attend your WF tournament and act as the referee assessor to ensure that trained referees are also accredited, so that they are able to referee in future WF tournaments.
- Ideally, all WF tournaments should include WF referee training as a planned activity before the tournament.
- Ensure that all referees' scorecards are signed by a representative of each team at the end of every game. This could be the team captain, or another player.

9. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

- Establish a clear "Code of Conduct" for your WF tournament and request all players to sign this Code of Conduct as part of their registration.

An example of a [Code of Conduct from Central Coast Walking Football](#)

- Establish clear Disciplinary Processes for breaches of this code and ensure that all tournament referees and tournament officials are fully conversant with the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Processes.
- Establish a tournament disciplinary committee to determine penalties to be applied to red card breaches by players on the day. It is important that serious breaches are addressed on the day.
- Serious breaches like dangerous tackles from behind, abusive or threatening language or behaviour, or bullying should receive serious penalties.
- Referees, players, spectators and tournament officials MUST be supported and treated with respect at all time.
- Establish and communicate to all that only the team captain should query the referee regarding a decision that has been made during a game.

10. LAWS OF THE GAME (LOTG) / RULES OF PLAY

- The tournament director should finalise the LOTG / Rules of Play for your WF tournament at least one month prior to the tournament date.
- These LOTG / Rules of Play should then be distributed at all participating teams and players so that they are well prepared for the specific rules relating to your WF tournament.
- While primarily based on FA or WFA Rules of Play, the tournament director will need to adapt these LOTG / Rules to suit the venue and type of tournament that will be held.

[FA Walking Football Laws of the Game](#)

[WFA Walking Football Laws of the Game](#)

- Social tournaments typically do not have goalkeepers and have smaller goals. While these features are not specifically included in the FA Competitive LOTG, there is ample freedom, within these LOTG, to define local rules of play and / or social competition specific rules.
- Determine the length of each game and the time between games on a pitch. 20 minute games and a 10-minute change over time between games works well and allows you to play 2 games per hour on each pitch.
- Determine the length of the lunch break for each day of your WF tournament. A lunch break of 30-60 minutes works well, as it allows players to have a break and go and get something to eat, if there are no facilities at the venue that offer food. It is also not too long that players stiffen up and risk strain injuries when they start playing again.
- It is okay to experiment with rules of play at a tournament, as long as safety is maintained. As WF is still relatively new, trying a different way of dealing with running, tackling involving contact, etc. will help every WF tournament get to a best practice sooner.



11. DRAWS

- Once you have finalised all team registrations, you can start preparing the draws for each division based on the number of teams that have entered that division.
- You first need to decide how many games you will be able to play at your venue. This can be calculated by using the following formula:

$\text{No. of pitches} \times \text{games per hour per pitch} \times (\text{number of hours} - \text{time of lunch break})$

- So, for example, if: 4 Pitches x 2 games per hour per pitch x {7 hours (10am to 5pm) – 1-hour lunchbreak}, then you can have 48 games in the day.
- In this combination, each pitch will be able to host 12 games involving 2 teams during the day. That means 24 teams will be able to play 4 games on the day.
- If you want teams to play more than 4 games in the tournament, you will need either less teams in total, more pitches, more hours in the day or more days.
- Decide how many matches you want each team to be able to play as a minimum in their division. A minimum of 5 works well for a one-day WF tournament. If you want teams to play more than 5 games in the tournament, then an additional day may be required
- A simple draw for a division is as follows:
 - 4 teams = Each team plays 6 games. Every team plays each other twice
 - 5 teams = Each team plays 4 games over 5 Rounds (as each team will also have a bye).
 - 6 teams = Each team plays 5 games over 5 Rounds. Every team plays each other once.
 - 7 teams = Each team plays 6 games over 7 Rounds. Each team plays each other once plus a bye.
 - 8 teams = teams are split into 2 groups of 4.
- Each team plays 3 games against the other teams in their group and then the top 4 playoff 1v2 across the groups, with winners and losers playing each other. The bottom 4 playoffs are 3v4 across the groups and the winners and losers play each other. So, each team gets a minimum of 5 games.

Note: If there are 3 or less teams in a division these teams should be merged into another division to get more games against different teams.

[There are many free online tools for creating a draw: Try Fixture List or contact WFFA or your state association for assistance.](#)



12. FOOD

- At your WF tournament, you will need to consider how players, referees and other attendees will get food during the WF tournament.
- Are there food and drinks / water available at the venue? Are there food outlets nearby? How much time will be required for the lunch break to allow people to get food and return to be ready to play after lunch.
- A BBQ is a great way to provide food at the venue at a relatively low cost. If you don't have the people from your club to operate the BBQ, consider working with a local charitable organisation or group, that raise money for others by running a BBQ.
- Another consideration is whether you want to arrange a tournament dinner, at a local club, restaurant or other venue for the evening of the first day of the WF tournament?
- This is a great way to bring players together and to socialise. It is part of making your WF tournament an event rather than just a WF tournament. WF tournaments should be fun and enjoyable for all players and not just the winning teams.

13. SHELTER

- Do you have suitable undercover shelter available at your WF tournament venue, in the event of inclement weather? Rain or excessive heat can greatly affect the comfort and enjoyment of the players, referees and spectators.
- You may need to have a few marques available, especially for teams that have travelled long distances to attend.

14. AMENITIES

- Does the venue have enough toilets, changing rooms, showers for the number of men and women who will be attending your WF tournament?
- If not, what facilities are nearby?

15. FIRST AID

- What first aid will you offer at your tournament? A first aid kit? A defibrillator? First aiders who are players? St John Ambulance? (if there isn't a defibrillator at your venue, make sure you know where the closest one is, or discuss with St John Ambulance, if they are attending).
- Do you have an area, at the venue, that you can assign to the external first aiders? If an ambulance is required, can it reasonably access the venue?

16. TROPHIES AND MEDALLIONS

- You will need to decide whether you will offer trophies to winning teams or medallions, momentos to everyone who participates: players, referees, tournament officials in your WF tournament.
- If so, consider where, when and how will you present these trophies and/or medallions? You will need to allocate time for this presentation. The closer to the last game of the day the better. You should also communicate the time of the presentation ceremony to all participants prior to the WF tournament to ensure that this activity is well attended, bearing in mind players' travel from the tournament.
- Many players in the social competitions will be playing in their first tournament. Giving medallions to social teams will likely be very much appreciated by these players new to tournaments.
- Trophies and medallions for every participant is one of the more expensive items you will have in running a WF tournament, so find out the costs and include them in your tournament budget based on the payments you will receive from players and sponsors, if any.
- You may want to consider a "perpetual" trophy or shield with plaques on it to record the name of the winning team each year. This will reduce the cost of awarding trophies to the winning teams each year.
- You may also want to also consider a few fun alternative awards for individuals / teams such as:
 - Best dressed team.
 - Inspiration award to the oldest men's and women's player(s).
 - Best goal celebration.
 - Walking Football medal for the person best espousing walking football values.
 - Fair Play award for the team with least fouls against.
 - Longest Drive - for the team who travelled the furthest.

17. KEY RESOURCES / ROLES ON THE DAY

- A tournament director to address any issues / questions raised on the day and to liaise with any media who may be attending the tournament.
- A tournament timekeeper who uses the air horn or other time-keeping device to start and finish at games at the same time within the 30-minute block.
- A scorekeeper or two, who gather the signed scoresheets from the referees after every game and update the division tables, so that teams are always up-to-date with the competition tables.
- A tournament disciplinary committee to determine sanctions or actions relating to players / team officials sent off (RED CARDS) in a game. This committee should consist of 2 or 3 individuals.

18. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER FOR A FUN AND ENJOYABLE DAY

- Arrange a WF tournament dinner at a suitable venue near to where you are playing your tournament. This is a great way to get players from different WF clubs to mingle and socialise.
- Invite a guest speaker to your WF tournament or WF tournament dinner.
- Allocate time to conduct a [Fun Football Skills/Games Session after your tournament](#)
- Create a list of local places to stay and places to eat. Those attending from interstate or intending to stay a one night or more, will appreciate a list of places to stay and eat.
- Create a WF tournament event booklet to serve as a guide for participants, spectators, and officials, providing all necessary information about your WF tournament. This is particularly useful if you intend your WF tournament to be a regular annual event. This booklet should be designed in a reader-friendly format. It should be concise and informative, ensuring that all attendees have easy access to information they need for a smooth and enjoyable WF tournament experience and visit to your location.

19. HOLD A PRE-TOURNAMENT BRIEFING

- A pre-event meeting is essential to ensure that all aspects of your Walking Football tournament are well-coordinated and everyone involved understands their roles and responsibilities on the day.
- This could be held for referees, captains, managers and coaches, the day before or on the day the tournament gets underway, or via an online meeting, in the week before your WF tournament commences. This is a great opportunity for people to ask specific questions about the details of the event. If you can't fit this into your timetable, then sending out a summary of the key messages and information prior to the WF tournament, asking if there are any questions, should suffice.
- Possible topics for this meeting could include:
 - Welcome message.
 - Tournament schedule, venue map, (including pitch numbers) and facilities.
 - Tournament rules & regulations.
 - Teams and fixtures.
 - Trophy and medallions, presentation arrangements.
 - First aid, safety & emergency information.
 - Tournament dinner.
 - Sponsors & partners.
 - Contact information.

20. POST TOURNAMENT REVIEW

- After the WF tournament has finished, ensure you do a formal review of your WF tournament in terms of:
 - what went well.
 - what didn't go to plan.
 - what you could improve / do differently next time.
 - You may also want to conduct a survey of players to cross check whether your impressions were substantiated by player feedback.

21. DO IT ALL AGAIN

- Make sure that this tournament director's manual and checklist become documents you refer to when setting up your next WF tournament.

