Tournaments

An annual association championship tournament is one of the greatest benefits of USBC membership. To allow members this opportunity, associations are required to conduct a championship tournament annually. Association Championship tournaments are automatically certified through USBC however; it is strongly advised to certify online anyway so it can be included in the find-a-tournament feature as an additional benefit to your members.

Occasionally there are instances which make hosting the annual championship tournament excessively demanding on the association and its volunteers. Because of this, USBC Headquarters has allowed for exceptions to hosting the annual association championship tournament(s) in the following instances:

1. If special permission is granted by USBC Headquarters, Rules, or;
2. If the USBC national or a state association championship tournament is held in the association's jurisdiction.

If a merged local association is hosting any state or national championship tournament, the association may waive the open, women's, and youth local championships. The decision to do so is made by the board, and should be reviewed carefully before deciding which, if any, of the local tournaments the association does not run. All associations must provide equal opportunity for all of their members – thus, it is advised if one local tournament is cancelled, all would be cancelled.

It is furthermore advised if a local association cancels its tournaments and hosts the national/state championships again, the same policy remain in place.

Tournament Management
Throughout this section, the tournament manager position is referenced. In all associations, the association manager serves as either the tournament manager, or the supervisor of the tournament manager.

Furthermore, if the association manager delegates the tournament manager responsibilities to another individual, the association manager is still held accountable to ensure the duties of the tournament manager are done properly.

The tournament manager will handle the overall operation of the championship tournament(s), from scheduling tournament events to distributing the prize fund.

However, the board of directors sets the time and date of the tournament(s), approves the tournament site(s), and sets the tournament rules.

NOTE: State associations may award the tournament site and annual meeting site to different associations and they do not have to be conducted at the same time or place.

Plan Ahead
Do not wait until the last minute to start planning the association championship tournament(s). The sooner you start, the more likely you will have a successful tournament.

Consider the following when planning the tournament:
- Involve the entire board or a committee in the project.
- Create a timetable, including milestones such as:
  - Ensuring lanes are certified
  - Securing volunteers
  - Giving volunteers assignments
  - Starting invitation/bidding process (if applicable)
  - Securing sponsors
  - Developing tournament format, rules, and prize fund
  - Developing entry forms
  - Evaluating success of tournament
- Ask your tournament bowlers for feedback to enhance the tournament experience. See Sample Tournament Questionnaire at the end of this document. Also, consider asking those that did not bowl why they chose not to participate.
- All association tournaments should be self-sufficient, meaning current association funds should not be used to fund it. The portion of the tournament entry fees allocated for expenses should support the costs associated with running the tournament.
- All Association tournaments, including the championship tournaments, must be certified through USBC Headquarters. However, fund-raising events to benefit named charities do not have to be certified (Bowl for the Cure®, etc.). Associations may apply for tournament(s) certification by completing the application on-line at www.BOWL.com, through the Tournament Certification On-line Program.

Refer to Chapter 7 of the *USBC Association Policy Manual*, as well as the *USBC Playing Rules and Commonly Asked Questions* for championship tournament requirements.

Develop a Tournament Format and Events
Tournament bowlers' feedback is important and can prove to be a big asset when it comes to choosing a tournament format, tournament rules and the event(s) to conduct.

There are a number of items to consider:

Format
The format refers to the structure of the tournament, including the types of events to be held.
1. Scratch and/or handicap. Scratch is the actual score bowled. Handicap equalizes opportunities for bowlers with lower averages, allowing them to remain competitive, by adding pins to their scratch score. If choosing a handicap format, consider handicaps that attract all levels of play – such as 100 percent. The base figure for handicap should be higher than the highest average in the association.

Special feature - In addition to a handicap system, the association could incorporate a special feature, in which separate scratch prizes are awarded for pure excellence, such as the high single game score. As described in USBC Rule 307, to be eligible to be considered for a special feature at the championship tournament, entry fees may be charged for participation.

2. <u>Divisions</u>. In this format, bowlers compete against other bowlers with similar qualifications, such as skill (average) or characteristic (age). For example, the divisions could be averages of 189 or below and averages of 190 or above.

<u>Events</u>
Each association determines which event(s) they will offer for their championship tournament. Bowlers pay the required entry fee to bowl in each event, which can include a fee for optional all-events. Tournament events could include <u>any one or all</u> of the following:
1. **Singles**. This is the three-game total bowled by an individual.
2. **Doubles**. Two individuals complete the entry forms, enter as partners and their three-game totals are added together.
3. **Three-, four- and/or five-player teams**. Like doubles, all team members' scores are added together. If conducting a team event, the size of the team must be determined. The following are advantages of each option:
   - Three-player
     - Allows for shorter bowling time.
     - Assists smaller associations in having a more competitive tournament.
   - Four-player
     - Easier to put together "pick-up" teams.
     - Eliminates the hassle of finding a doubles partner for a fifth bowler.
   - Five-player
     - Still the traditional format for many bowlers.
     - Allows the chance to move on to national type events.
     - May be more appealing to people who like a more relaxed pace.
4. **All-events**. Any combination of scores from two or more events in the tournament. Typically, an entrant's scores from team, doubles, and singles events constitute an all-events score (reference USBC Rule 315).

When an association conducts its open and women's championship events as one tournament with separate divisions, tournament rules should be specific as to the entrant's eligibility for all-events. The rules should specify which scores will count toward the individual's all-events total. For example, if the tournament is offering an open singles event and a women's singles event in addition to a female all-events, the rules must specify which singles appearance will count toward the individual's all-events total. In cases where tournament rules and/or their intent are unclear, a bowler's first appearance in each event will count toward the all-events total.

Formats that Cannot be Used
USBC requires an association championship tournament to be bowled in the traditional tournament style of American Tenpins. As a result, Mail-o-Graphic, modified tournament formats (such as No-Tap), and league scores cannot be used.

Examples of Other Tournaments the Association may Conduct
While most of this section covers the association championships, there are other tournaments the association may consider conducting for its members, such as:
- Senior bowlers
- Mixed doubles
- League tournament of champions
- League officers
- Adult/youth
- High average bowlers (Masters/Queens competitions)

Information on Tournament Rules
In addition to the suggested tournament rules available on the "Rules" page of BOWL.com, the association board should consider the following information when setting up the tournament rules:
- Determine whether the tournament rules will include any limitations on who can participate in the association championship tournament.
- Determine which averages will be accepted — previous and/or current season averages. If current, indicate how many games are required by a specific date, with the understanding associations may not require averages in excess of 21 games for handicapping or classification purposes.
- Be sure to include when entries will open and close. Indicate the cost to enter the tournament, along with a breakdown of the amount allocated to the prize fund and the portion allocated to expenses on the tournament entry form. (The prize fund should be based on the number of entries as opposed to a guaranteed dollar amount. If tournament participation is lower than anticipated the association still will have to pay out any advertised guaranteed prizes). The portion of the entry fee allocated for expenses could be used for posters, newspaper ads, printing costs, supplies, postage, lineage, and even expenses or salaries for tournament workers.
- The rules call for 100 percent of all prize portions of entry fees to be returned to bowlers. A ratio of at least 1 in 10 applies unless tournament rules state otherwise.
- Consider allowing for multiple participation. Multiple participation, which is outlined in USBC Rule 315, allows tournament entrants to participate more than once in the team, doubles and/or singles events. The first appearance in each event counts toward all-events, unless otherwise provided in the tournament rules. Keep your proprietor in mind when considering multiple participation, because it could impact lineage and/or interfere with leagues.
- Make sure tournament entrants are aware of USBC Rule 319e, which requires bowlers to keep track of previous tournament performances over the last 12 months, including those still running, and adjust their entering average if necessary. This applies to all USBC members in USBC adult tournaments, unless tournament management waives the rule. In USBC youth

tournaments, USBC Playing Rules 319a (1 through 4), 319c, 319d and 319e do not apply unless otherwise stated in tournament rules.

Establish a Host Center
Be consistent and fair in selecting a center. The method for selecting the center to host the association championship tournament should be outlined in the association's operations manual, if relevant.

The two main methods for selecting a host center are:
- Rotation: In this system, the site is determined by a schedule so proprietors know in advance when they will host the tournament. If this option is chosen, ask for written confirmation a center can host the event. If it cannot, offer the tournament to the next center in the rotation.
- Invitation or Bid: Centers compete for the event based on the association's invitation to bid. If this method is chosen, it is important price is not the only consideration. Among other things, convenience, atmosphere and cleanliness are all factors which have an effect on the success of the tournament.

Additionally, events (i.e., singles, doubles and team) may be split between two centers. For example, a 16-lane center may host the singles and doubles events while a neighboring 24-lane center hosts the team event.

When members wishing to participate in the association's championship tournament have been banned from a center in which the tournament is being held, arrangements must be made to allow the individual(s) to participate. If an association has a written contract, it must add a provision in the contract specifying the contract is contingent on the center allowing all members of the association to participate. Contact the Rules team at USBC Headquarters at (800) 514-BOWL, ext. 3155 or rules@bowl.com for more information.

The center selected should be in compliance, or accommodations made to comply, with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Communicating with the Proprietor
Keep open lines of communication with the proprietor throughout the planning process.

For instance, in the planning stages, the tournament manager and proprietor should verify tournament dates, lane availability, lane certification, lineage, etc.

It is also advisable for the tournament manager to request:
- At least two open lanes to be available in case of breakdowns.
- An on-site mechanic.
- Clean restrooms, working water fountains, microphone, etc.

As the tournament nears its starting date other important information such as squad times and tournament rules should be discussed. Most important, the association should obtain written agreements with the proprietor once the tournament site is selected. Verbal agreements are binding, but it is good to have agreements in writing in case problems arise.

Consistent Lane Conditions
The association should attempt to have consistent and fair lane conditions, in a certified center, each day the tournament operates.

In a written agreement with bowling center management, an association could request daily lane dressing inspections before each day's competition to ensure the lane conditions are consistent for all participants.

Using WinLABS to Run Your Adult Tournament(s)
To facilitate the management of a tournament and maintain data year-to-year, USBC Headquarters developed the WinLABS Tournament program. This program is built into the WinLABS software and uses the same bowler information that is in the association's WinLABS database. As a result, the tournament manager can easily find adult bowlers, fill out rosters, record tournament information, and generate tournament reports.

Because the program uses the association's WinLABS data, it also allows for quick verification of local association memberships and averages.

Another feature of the WinLABS Tournament program is its ability to accommodate most tournament setups, including:
• Singles, doubles, team, and all-events formats.
• Team events for three, four, or five-person teams.
• Scratch and handicap divisions, with automatic assignments based on average, age, and gender.

The WinLABS Tournament program contains many more features, easing the tournament manager's workload. For instance, the program can issue lane assignments, track substitutions and average changes, calculate results, assign or disclaim prizes, and even has a check writing feature.
Finally, take advantage of the reports contained in the WinLABS Tournament program. Reports can be generated to develop confirmation letters, lane assignment worksheets, recap sheets, high scores, achievement eligibility, and check registers.

For more information regarding the tournament feature of the WinLABS software program, please contact the WinLABS team at (800) 514-BOWL, ext. 8973 or labshelp@bowl.com.

Promote Entries

Entry Forms
Personal contact is one of the most effective ways to increase tournament entries. Consider personally inviting members by handing out entry forms instead of dropping them off at the bowling center(s). For example, board members could visit leagues to promote the tournament and answer questions.

Additionally, the association may want to find other unique ways to distribute entry forms. The entry form could be included in the association yearbook and supply kits, or distributed at pro shops and sponsors' business locations.

To make entry forms inviting and complete, consider the following suggestions:
- Use color logos, pictures of previous champions, and quality paper.
- Provide plenty of white space to ensure the entry form is easy to read.
- Maintain a friendly and inviting tone.
- Promote the tournament on the association Web site. Place an electronic copy of a tournament entry form on the association Web site so it can be easily downloaded. Also, promote the tournament on BOWL.com. Tournament certified through the Online Tournament Certification page will automatically be posted on Bowl.com and can be found using the "find a tournament" drop down link

Communications
Mailings, e-mail blasts and voice blasts also could go to team captains and/or members.

WinLABS (adults) can be used to create e-mail address lists that can be copied and pasted into your e-mail system. Remember to include an opt-out message as required by law; and use the "blind carbon copy" feature to send the message. This way, personal e-mail addresses for association members will not be given away. For more information on e-mail, voice blasts, and opt-outs see the *Communication Plan, Developing/Implementing* document on the association page of BOWL.com under Forms and Manuals.

Train Tournament Staff/Volunteers
The association should have tournament guidelines, and include them in the association's operations manual, if relevant. Scorekeepers, registration workers, and others must work from the same set of rules. Training sessions, which should fall under the responsibilities of the tournament manager, serve as a way to make sure that staff understands their responsibilities.

Here are a few other things to consider when training
- Make training fun and enjoyable. Prepare quizzes and practice sessions where tournament staff can learn how to handle questions on averages, entry forms, eligibility and other topics.
- Registration workers should treat bowlers as customers who are paying hard-earned money for top-notch service.
- Schedule a convenient time with the proprietor to do a walk-through with tournament staff. Ensure the staff is familiar with the layout of the center(s).

The tournament manager may also consider the following:
- Use walkie-talkies so workers and front desk personnel can communicate easily.
- Automatic scorekeepers need to be monitored. Be prepared for situations where automatic machines lose scores permanently. If/when this happens, only tournament management can authorize teams to re-bowl the games.

Media Coverage
To obtain media coverage for the association tournament(s) the tournament manager should:
- Provide ample notice of the tournament.
- Provide regular results, including highlights of the day.
- Notify the media of exciting happenings.

- Partner with other community organizations to increase exposure of the tournament.
- Have a celebrity attend the tournament.
- Provide media representatives with association and bowling center telephone numbers so they can do follow-up interviews.
- Find ways to involve media personalities in the tournament.
- Provide media outlets with photographs.
- Utilize as many forms of media as possible (television, radio, newspaper, association Web site, etc.).

Complete Prize Checks and Paperwork
After the tournament, the tournament manager must distribute prizes within 30 days of the tournament's close unless USBC Headquarters-Rules has authorized a delay in payment, per USBC Rule 309.

To ensure the 30-day requirement is met, the tournament manager should:
- Immediately audit all scores (i.e. – check calculation on three game totals, etc.).
- Verify averages so that a prize list can be generated.

> **NOTE**: If tournament prizes will be distributed at a banquet scheduled more than 30 days after the completion of the tournament, permission must be requested by the association to rules@bowl.com and if granted prizes must be made available to qualifiers wishing to claim them within 30 days.

Recognize Participants and Winners
"Prestige" is a key element in the association championship tournament. Proper recognition of the champions, as well as recognition for superior achievement, is an important part of that prestige. It also will help to promote future tournaments. An awards banquet is always a great place for honoring your champions. Other suggestions include:
- Creating a photo display of the champions in a local bowling center(s).
- Making sure their photos are included in the association's yearbook/average book.
- Acknowledging them prior to the start of one of their regular league sessions.
- Recognizing last year's champions in the tournament program book and on the tournament lanes.
- Recognizing champions in local newspapers and/or on the association Web site.

Certifying Additional Association Tournaments
An association must apply for certification of additional tournaments online at BOWL.com. USBC associations are required to apply for a USBC certification for ALL additional tournaments.

All prize funds shall be distributed within 30 days following the close of the tournament, except when USBC Headquarters has authorized delay in payment. The association is not required to submit to USBC Headquarters a copy of the prize list and financial statement, unless certified online. The association shall maintain for at least one year, a prize list with the name and score of each prize winner, the prize issued and a financial statement listing all prize receipts and disbursements.

All scholarship tournaments must submit a prize list and deposit all scholarship prize awards with the SMART program at USBC Headquarters, in accordance with USBC Rules 301d and 309, within 30 days after the end of the tournament.