



Tournament Tips and Standards For Crokinole Tournament Organizers

Produced by the National Crokinole Association

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The goal of the National Crokinole Association (NCA) is to foster the development of crokinole. The NCA supports existing local clubs and the formation of new clubs and organizes a series of NCA tournaments called the NCA Tour.

The following are suggestions to help you run your tournament smoothly. The methods outlined below have been used to run tournaments in the size range of 20 to 85 players, the size range commonly applicable for tournaments on the NCA Tour (other than the World Championships). The NCA encourages tournament organizers to experiment with different forms of organization, and these tips may be helpful for organizing a tournament of any size.

If you have any questions about tournament organization or require further information, please reach out to the NCA at nationalcrokinole@gmail.com. If you have never organized a tournament before, the NCA will happily point you toward experienced organizers who can help make your tournament a reality!

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Part 1: Organization

Book a Location: The venue for a crokinole tournament needs to be large enough to accommodate several areas, each of which requires different amounts of space. In general, it is preferable to have all of the following regions in a single room, but certain functions may be relocated to separate spaces within the venue as necessary. The room should be able to accommodate sufficient crokinole boards for the number of entries expected, alongside a couple other functions as outlined in this section. If the location does not come with sufficient tables for the event, then tables will have to be arranged.

The Playing Area: Easily the most important aspect of a crokinole tournament's successful functioning is the playing area. There are two distances that need to be considered when spacing boards within your playing area: board-to-board and row-to-row. Row-to-row distance is the easier of the two to calculate. Leaving six feet between rows is the rule of thumb, allowing players in neighboring rows plenty of space to scoot their chairs back without collisions and typically leaving at least some walking space between rows. More than six feet between rows is never inadvisable, but less space can be accommodated (to a minimum of five feet) if the rows are staggered so that a player backs up into the space between players on the next row. Standard tables are about three feet wide, so in singles play there should be nine feet allotted per row: three feet for the board and three from half of the aisle on either side.

Space between boards (within a row) is a bit more flexible. Two boards can be placed on a single eight-foot banquet table, spaced at least two feet apart. Banquet tables can be set almost next to each other, leaving just one foot between them. 24 inches should be left between a wall and the table closest to it. As such, a row of four boards on two banquet tables (for eight or nine singles players) would require 21 feet at minimum. If individual tables are used, then they should be 2 feet apart at minimum and the same distance should be given between a wall and the table closest to it.

Using the smaller recommendation as a bare minimum, a row of four boards on individual tables would require 20-22 feet. Five to six more feet must be allotted for each board that needs to be added to a row. If there are an odd number of players in a group, tournament organizers may place a chair for the player on the bye to sit in at the appropriate end of the row, which requires more space.

Using these two metrics, it is possible to calculate the amount of space required for a playing area of a given size. A field of 38 players would likely be split into four groups – two of ten players and two of nine. While the nine-player groups would require four boards (with one player on a bye in every game), the two ten-player groups would require five boards. Supposing that each board is on its own table, the nine-player groups would

require 9 feet by 20 feet (4x3-foot tables, 3x2-foot gaps, 2 feet from the wall) for 180 square feet each. The ten player groups would need 9 feet by 25 feet (5x3-foot tables, 4x2-foot gaps, 2 feet from the wall) for 225 square feet each. These four groups together would require 810 square feet alone to stage. In this calculation, maximum space is given between rows of tables; reducing the space between rows from 6 feet to 5 would reduce the required square footage to 720 without severely impacting player experience. Two feet between boards is also somewhat generous; reducing that distance by up to six inches will save space without impacting the player experience.

Doubles tournaments require more space as players sit on all four sides of the table. Six feet are required between tables on all sides, which means that 81 square feet are required per table (or pair of teams). It is possible to condense a doubles setup, though, as rotating alternating tables by 45 degrees in a checkerboard fashion allows for more efficient use of space and accommodation of more registrants.

Note: Banquet tables are not suitable for doubles tournaments as they do not allow equal access to the board for all players.

Registration and Scoring: There should be a banquet table (or two) set up to facilitate player registration, scorecard tabulation, and (optionally) display of scores using a monitor or a projector. Registration should ideally be in the same space as the playing area, with enough space given between the two regions for people to walk in two directions at once.

Lunch Area(s): As many tables as are required should be set up for lunch to be laid out. If possible, separate tables and chairs should be set up for players to eat their lunch, but sometimes there is insufficient space within the venue to support (some or all of) the players eating lunch in the same space as the playing area; if this is the case, lunch can be relocated to another location (including outdoors if weather permits) or *players may eat within the playing area with sufficient notice to not place plates, cups, silverware, or any other lunch items onto the board*. If possible, a separate designated dining area is ideal.

Note: Tournament organizers should feel free to be creative with their space usage, but some elements are easier to relocate than others. The NCA does not advise breaking up a single tournament division across multiple playing spaces, but it is not a problem if lunch is held in a different space than the playing area.

Assign Key Event Roles: The tournament organizer should delegate whatever of advertising and publicity, registration, financial, announcements, food/meals, sale of T-shirts and other items, and scorekeeping they are unable to manage to other trustworthy individuals.

Decide on the Mode of Play: While various non-traditional and experimental formats (including but not limited to [Waterloo doubles](#), progressive/St. Jacobs doubles, three-player singles, four-player singles, five-hole crokinole, and alternate scoring like 100-point matches) are allowed in Tier 3 tournaments. Only singles and fixed-partnership doubles are accepted in Tiers 1 and 2.

Advertising: We recommend producing a flyer (for distribution on paper and electronically) containing at least the following information:

- The tournament's name
- The tournament location as well as its precise mailing address (locatable by GPS)
- Date
- Whether the tournament is competitive, recreational, or both
- A basic tournament timetable, including the start of registration and tournament play
- The cost of entry
- A contact e-mail address and phone number
- A day-of-the-tournament cell phone number (if possible)
- That the tournament is listed on the NCA Tour (if applicable)
- That NCA rules will be used
- If alcohol will be available at the event (This may attract some people and turn others away.)
- If the tournament is a fund raiser or a not-for-profit event

The flyer can then be placed on the NCA website and other similar websites and disseminated through other digital forums like crokinole Facebook groups and chat servers.

Encourage Pre-Registration: Knowing the size of your field in advance helps you to know how many tables, chairs, and boards you will need. This will also help you to set up scheduling, rotations, format, budget, and set a timeline for your tournament. Depending on the size of the room booked, an upper limit may need to be placed on entries. Tournaments usually set a registration cutoff 2–3 days before tournament day so that the format can be settled in advance.

Entry Fees: NCA recommends fees in the range of \$25–30 for per player. Consider a reduced rate for those 15 years and under.

Quality Boards: Many players, if asked, don't mind bringing a tournament quality board and discs. Ensure there will be enough quality boards on hand and that they arrive early so they can be waxed if necessary.

Tables and Chairs: If your venue does not have tables that are suitable for use in crokinole tournaments, you must work with your organizers and community to acquire appropriate tables for competition. 34- or 36-inch square tables are very common, as are standard 8-foot banquet

tables. All tables should be of roughly uniform height, at least within each row if not across the entire tournament.

Chairs may not have arms (due to their hindrance of motion on the chair) or wheels of any sort (since the chair must remain in one place throughout a game).

Lunch: Arranging a lunch (built into the price of registration or for a small additional fee) will reduce the lunch break time and keep most of the players onsite.

Score Tabulation: Arrange for one or two people to manage the tournament's scorekeeping. Make sure that there is a computer available for the scoreboards and a display screen or projector to show results to players.

Timing: The tournament organizer must have a plan to signal the start/end of any timed matches. The NCA's tournament timer is free to use and recommended by the NCA (accessible at [this link](#), designed by Peter Tarle of the Quinte Crokinole Club), but there needs to be a projector or sizeable monitor to display the countdown timer as well as a speaker loud enough to make the timer's sound effects audible for all competitors over their chatter. The NCA strongly recommends against using the voice instead of a buzzer to avoid human error in timing and the person's calls failing to cut through competitors' conversations.

Listing on the NCA Tour: A tournament organizer or club can apply to be listed on the NCA Tour. The application, which outlines the expectations of organization and quality that are made of top-level tournaments, is available on the NCA's website.

If listed, the NCA will promote the tournament and count the results toward overall player standings. There is a small annual fee for this (currently \$75 for Tier 1, \$50 for Tier 2, and \$25 for Tier 3, all amounts in CAD), which helps to support the NCA. Organizers of listed tournaments are able to use the NCA's logo on their advertising; please contact the NCA by sending an email to nationalcrokinole@gmail.com to request the high-resolution files.

For a listed tournament, the organizer should state on the flyer or other publicity that

1. NCA Rules will be used, and
2. This tournament is listed on the NCA Tour

Part 2: Format

Mode of Play: The NCA's Tiers 1 and 2 are the highest standard of competitive crokinole, and non-approved modes of play are unlikely to be accepted into those high tiers. The only approved modes of play are singles and doubles, following the NCA's official rules which allow for head-to-head competition and fixed partnerships playing two-against-two. The one exception to the above is in the case of recreational divisions of tournaments, progressive doubles is also permitted. Tier 3 tournaments are welcome to experiment with different modes of play; countless crokinole variants have been devised, but few have seen tournament play.

Divisions: Organizers must decide if they are going to offer a competitive division, a recreational division, or both at their tournament. Most NCA tournaments today accommodate both divisions, but some run a competitive division only.

Structure: There are many structures that can work in crokinole tournaments, but they must take pains to ensure competitive balance and fair play. The following outlines of tournament rounds and procedures represent the baseline for competitive balance and thoroughness that is required of events in the NCA's two highest tournament tiers. Of course, these are just frameworks; tournament organizers should feel free to create their own spins on these formats. Structure should be formalized as much as possible prior to tournament day to avoid confusion.

Preliminary Rounds: Almost every NCA tournament contains at least one round of preliminary play in which players are sorted for placement in later rounds. The following modes of play are pre-approved for preliminary rounds: a Tavistock-style round (in which all players are in one large group and a partial round-robin is played), grouped round-robin play (in which the field is divided into groups of roughly equal size each of which plays a complete round robin), or Swiss tournament.

Balancing Preliminary Rounds: Each mode of play can suffer from an imbalance of skill levels of the players involved. Details on how to ensure appropriate balance are included for each mode of play in the sections that follow. For all tiers of tournaments, organizers are encouraged to use these means to balance their tournaments. For Tier 1 tournaments where less than 100% of the field competes for first place following the preliminary rounds, some level of balancing is mandatory; completely random structure is not allowed in these cases. For example, tournaments where after the preliminary phase the whole field is put into one elimination bracket to play for first, balancing is not mandatory. For tournaments where a subset of the field (A-pool) plays for first, balanced prelims will be mandatory for Tier 1 tournaments.

Tournament organizers are allowed discretion to determine the extent to which they wish to perform balancing. For example, a tournament organizer could ensure that the top 10% and bottom 10% of players are each spread out evenly. A tournament organizer might use their own knowledge of the players' skills to determine those top 10%, or they might use current or previous season standings, or they might use the FlickSkill ratings on the NCA website. However, to ensure the fairest balance of skill, the NCA has provided a Pool Balancer on the NCA website which can automatically balance the field for each of the below modes of play, and tournament organizers are encouraged to use this tool.

Tavistock-Style Rounds: Some tournaments choose to run their preliminary rounds out of one large group instead of several smaller ones. If you choose to use an incomplete round robin across the entire field for your first round, you should ensure that your field has at least twice as many competitors as there are games played. In terms of player draw, you should seed the best players in the field to avoid extremely unbalanced draws. If using the Pool Balancer on the NCA website to seed the players, select the "Carousel Tournament Seeding" option. How many players move from the preliminary into which afternoon pools should be clearly stated before the first round begins. Some tournaments will choose to advance only a certain number of people (like the WCC does with its Top 16), and others will split the field into evenly-sized afternoon pools to play a second round. The means for determining which players move on must also be announced; the most common method is the total points scored by each player/team during the round robin.

Group Play: In these rounds, the field is divided into groups of approximately equal size, each of which plays a complete round robin. To ensure competitive balance, the skill level of the players should be distributed evenly between the groups to ensure that each group is not significantly weaker or stronger than the others. Common methods of deciding who qualifies for which afternoon pool include **1)** ranking players across all pools and re-dividing the field according to group scores (see "Normalizing Scores from Groups of Different Sizes" in Part 3), **2)** advancing the top 3 players from each group to Pool A, the next 3 to Pool B, and so on, and **3)** advancing the top 2 players from each group plus the 2 best third place scores from all pools to Pool A, then assigning players to pools based on scores compared across all groups. The numbers in these examples are arbitrary, and should be adjusted based on the size of a field. The means for determining which players move on must be announced before the start of the round; the most common method is the total points scored by each player/team during the round robin. A tournament might also choose to do a complete round robin with one single group.

Swiss Tournament: In Swiss tournaments, an algorithm is used to pair opponents together in the most efficient way to establish a ranking of the field of players in the fewest number of games. The results of each game are used to determine the pairings for the next game. This can be an advantage for very large tournaments as it requires fewer games to determine a ranking than a round-robin tournament would. It can also be beneficial for fields with a wide skill level as late in the Swiss Tournament, players tend to be paired against other players of similar skill level. A variety of websites and applications offer Swiss tournament options. For Swiss tournaments, it is important to ensure that the field is pre-seeded (top-to-bottom) by skill level so that the initial set of matchups is correct. If using the Pool Balancer on the NCA Website, select “1” for the Number of Groups to determine the pre-seeded ranking of the field. Each website or app might use different means to rank the players/teams in the swiss tournament. For example, points scored and 20s might be tracked, allowing ranking to follow those described in the other modes of play above. However, applications not customized for crokinole might use a more universal ranking method such as the win/loss record. Tournament organizers of Swiss rounds must have a good understanding of how the app they are using will work and what scoring and tie-breaker options are selected.

Single-Round Tournaments: For some organizers, a single round robin is enough to determine playoff-bound players or teams. It is perfectly acceptable to advance from a round-robin preliminary directly to a knockout bracket, as has occurred at the Ontario Doubles Crokinole Championship many times. Tournament organizers should ensure, though, that the preliminary round is as balanced as possible if they are going to advance a small number of players or teams to the knockout stage.

Second Rounds - “Pool Play”: Most second rounds of NCA tournaments take the same shape as the “Group Play” outlined above. Each afternoon “pool” should play a complete round robin, after which the top 2 or 4 players from each advance to the elimination games.

Elimination Matches: The number of players from each group in the second round that will be going to the elimination matches should be determined and announced in advance of the start of the second round. It is recommended that the top four players from the “A” pool and either the top two or four players from the other pools advance from the second round.

It is advisable to leave elimination matches untimed so that players can properly weigh out the best decisions in difficult moments.

Advancing Two Players: Pools “B,” “C,” etc.: If two players advance to elimination games, they will meet in a head-to-head pool final. Elimination matches are typically either races to a set point total (commonly 9 or 11 points) or the best of three games (each of which is a race to five points).

Advancing Four Players: At Least the “A” Pool: The NCA recommends that this format be used for at least the A pool, but it may also be used to crown the champion of any other pool. If the tournament director opts to use this format for any pools beyond the A pool it should be used across the entire tournament.

The four players advancing to the semifinal round should be seeded based on their second round scores. Seed 1 will play against Seed 4 in one semifinal, and Seeds 2 and 3 will contest the other. The winners of the semifinals will meet in the final. Regardless of which of the above formats is chosen for elimination matches, it should be used for all of a tournament’s matches.

Please note: other structures are also permitted, but the one described above has proven itself in numerous tournaments.

Third Place: There are two common methods for awarding third place. Third place may be awarded to the losing semi-finalist who placed higher in the second round, or the two losing semi-finalists can play a match for third place. Regardless, the tournament organizer should announce the method that they have chosen before the semifinals begin.

Group Size and Timing: Groups of nine and ten players both require nine games worth of time to complete (ten players require a nine-game complete round robin, and nine players require eight games plus one bye), which takes about 90–100 minutes in singles. Increasing to 11 or 12 players requires two more games, which adds about 20 minutes to the round time. Tournament organizers should be careful not to let rounds run too long.

Lunch: Tournament organizers typically offer lunch between the two rounds of a two-round tournament or at a clearly marked resting point in the middle of a one-round tournament. During this lunch break, scores will typically be tabulated and players assigned to their afternoon pools, if applicable. After score tabulation has finished, scores should be made visible to all competitors and the tournament organizer should announce that scores are posted so that all players have the opportunity to double-check their scores. If any re-organization of the tables and chairs needs to be done between rounds, this is the time to do so.

Part 3: On Tournament Day

Rules:

- Use of NCA rules should be specified. Key rules the NCA recommends announcing and clarifying before the tournament start include:
 - The “one cheek rule” (rule 7i)
 - What happens if time runs out (rule 8b)
 - The “damage rule” (rule 8f)
 - Holding the board or table during a player’s or an opponent’s shot (rules 7a, b)
- Consider printing off a copy of the NCA Rules and having it on hand for people to read before the event.
- Tournament structure should be clearly articulated before the start of the tournament.
- Make a clear statement of the tournament’s tie breaking procedures.
- Consider printing the “Tournament Planning Document” and the “Additional Tournament Rules” document and posting them at the tournament (see the final section of this document)

Who Plays Which Colour and Who Plays First: The tournament director should clearly indicate a consistent rule for these two issues. One simple method is to decide, for example, that players on a certain side of the room will play the darker discs and will shoot first in the first round.

Round-robin Rotations: If there are an odd number of players in the pool, place the tables and boards in a row with a chair at the end of the row closest to the control desk. When moving between games, players rotate clockwise around the row which includes the chair, following the player ahead of them. The person sitting in the chair has a bye. This method enables every player to play every other player with no players meeting twice.

If there are an even number of players in the pool, choose one of these options:

a. **The “Anchor” Method (recommended)**

One player (called the “Anchor”) remains at the end board closest to the control desk. The other players then rotate clockwise around the playing positions, skipping over the Anchor player, who should stay at the same board for the entire round, switching sides after each game. In the first round, the Anchor should be one of the lower seeded players in the group as chosen by the tournament director. In the second round, the Anchor should be the player who qualified last in the group. This method enables every player to play every other player with no players meeting twice.

b. **Use a written rotation schedule.**

For this method, the tables have to be numbered and schedules have to be on hand for each possible number of competitors in that pool. This method guarantees that the round robin will be complete without any players meeting twice but can lead to some confusion if tables are not clearly numbered.

Timing: The time for a game of 4 rounds should be

- Singles: 8 minutes for each game
- Doubles: 13-15 minutes for each game
- A minimum of 2 minutes between games must be allowed for players to validate scores, move to the next table and warm up before the beginning of the next game.

If there are several players that have never played in a tournament before, consider not timing the changeover time after the first game so that experienced players can guide the new players and ensure smooth flow.

Elimination matches should be untimed.

Scoring:

- In each of a game's 4 rounds, players should track their points and 20s scored. Two points are available in each round; a player scores 2 points for a win, 1 point for a tie, and 0 points for a loss.
- Players should fill out their own scorecard and have their opponent initial the scorecard once the game is finished. Clearly printing the first name of the opponent above their initials will help the tournament director if any scoring issues arise or if tie breaking procedures are necessary.
- When ranking players scores before the second round or the play-offs make an announcement, or display the scores, to give players a chance to confirm their scores/ranking.

Normalizing Scores from Groups of Different Sizes: If groups have different sizes and you are choosing competitors for the next round from these groups based on overall score, then it is necessary to normalize the results. For example, suppose groups A and B had 10 and 9 competitors respectively, in which case a competitor in group A would have played 9 games and a competitor from group B would have played 8 games. If a competitor from group B earned 41 points, their score should be multiplied by $9/8$ before being compared to other groups. That player's normalized score would be 46.125 or 46.1, which would mean that 41 points in 8 games ranks higher than 46 points in 9 games.

Items You Will Need

- Scorecards. A standard scorecard format can be downloaded from the NCA website, which can be printed by most printers on standard 4x6 file cards
- Pencils and pens for scorekeeping
- If posting results by computer, a large monitor or projection screen
- Timing device with noise maker (e.g.: a bell) A countdown timer with the time remaining being clearly visible to the contestants is desirable (but will not always be possible). The NCA's Tournament Timer is available [here](#).
- Shuffleboard wax. Board wax and polishing cloths may be brought if the organizer wishes to standardize the playing speed of the boards
- 20's containers
- A level and shims for leveling the boards
- Movement schedule or rotation plan if used, with numbers for tables

Other Tips:

- Set up the facility the night before, if possible, to avoid delays at the start of the tournament
- Do not use a human voice to signal the timing of games. Sounds like bells, buzzers, and the sound effects in the NCA's Tournament Timer will stand out from the sound of a tournament more than a human voice will.
- Organize door prizes, 50/50 draw and other event fundraisers
- Consider offering "Jackpots," small and fun prizes offered for difficult objectives (e.g.: double-takeout-20 and perfect round for competitive, 6 20s in a round for recreational, etc.) that are claimed as soon as they are accomplished
- If awarding prize money, ensure that these amounts are based on registrations and not specified in advance.
- Certificates are much cheaper than trophies (but trophies are more appreciated)
- If there is a final playoff game(s), it can work well to schedule this game to start after all other games have finished so that a crowd can form to watch.
- Singles and doubles tournaments are NCA standards, but other formats like singles team tournaments (like the famous Schneider Haus tournament) are fun alternatives that can be tested in Tier 3 events
- Keep play moving throughout the day and avoid long breaks to keep people invested until the end
- NCA playing terminology:
 - 8 discs = round
 - 4 rounds = game
 - Best of X games or Race to X points = match

Part 4: Tournament Standards

The following standards are requirements for all Tier 1 and Tier 2 NCA tournaments.

Equipment/Setup

Boards Dimensions: The NCA's standards dictate that a tournament crokinole board shall have a playing surface with a 26-inch diameter that is raised one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) inch above the ditch, onto which the scoring circles are drawn at four-inch intervals from the center with the radius being 4 inches for the 15-point circle, 8 for the 10-point circle, and 12 for the shooting line. This specification shall leave the shooting line one inch from the edge of the board at all points. The ditch shall be two inches across, and the outer rail shall not be thicker than one half ($\frac{1}{2}$) inch. The center hole shall measure one and three-eighths ($1\frac{3}{8}$) inches in diameter and six (6) millimeters (+/- 1mm) in depth.

Board Leveling: Tournament Organizers are encouraged to ensure boards are reasonably level, with adjustments made by shimming tables and/or boards as necessary. Once the round robin section or a playoff match has begun, further adjustments should not be made to the board. If a player wishes to have a board adjusted before the round robin or playoff match begins, they should bring it to the attention of the organizers.

Discs: Discs shall be of consistent quality and appropriate for each board on which they are used. If using boards brought by tournament participants, it is acceptable to use that participant's discs on their board.

Discs must be made of wood.

Provision of discs for each board will be arranged by the Tournament Organizer. Players/teams may not bring their own personal set of discs to play with.

Discs must be provided in sets of two different colors.

Disc colors for the two opposing sides must be of sufficient contrast that there is no confusion which disc belongs to which opponent (e.g. Do not use black discs and dark brown discs together).

Disc colors should be of sufficient contrast with the board surface (e.g. Do not use natural colored discs on a natural colored maple board surface. Do not use grey buttons on a Tracey Gray Rock. Do not use black buttons on a Brown Castle board with a black surface.).

Disc colors should contrast with the color of the ditch (e.g. Avoid using red discs on a board with a red ditch, if possible).

Disc color combinations between opponents should avoid common colorblindness pairs such as red/green, orange/green, blue/green, blue/yellow.

Tables and Chairs: Tables must be large enough to easily hold a crokinole board while leaving space for discs, scorecards, 20 holders, and any other accessories a player may require; each table should be no less than 34 inches long.

NCA tournaments increasingly favor tables that are 34–36 inches square (around 3 feet) for individual boards. Standard 8-foot rectangular banquet tables are just as easily accessible though, and if they are used in a tournament, one board should be placed at either side of the table (allowing about 2 feet between boards) in order to minimize any leaning that may occur toward the middle of the larger tables. **Banquet tables are not usable for doubles tournaments, as they do not provide equal access to the board for all four players.**

Chairs should not have arms or wheels.

The Playing Area: Sufficient space must be provided so that players can place their chairs comfortably, move freely on their chairs, move between tables between games, and exit a row if need be without disturbing other players.

For singles play, the minimum distance between rows is six feet (or, if tables are staggered, five feet). The minimum distance between boards within a row is two feet.

If tables are placed such that players sit back-to-back in doubles play, then the minimum distance between tables on all sides is six feet. Tables can be set up more efficiently within the space, as long as player comfort and ease of movement is maintained.

In all formats, tables should be at least 24 inches from any walls, pillars, or other obstructions in the space.

Format

Mode of Play: While various and experimental modes of play are allowed in Tier 3 NCA tournaments, only two modes of play are allowed by the NCA for use in Tier 1 and Tier 2 tournaments: singles and doubles. Singles tournaments feature exclusively one-on-one competition, while doubles tournaments consist of fixed partnerships playing two-against-two, both as delineated by the NCA's official rules. The one exception to the above is in the case of recreational divisions of tournaments, progressive doubles is also permitted.

Preliminary Round Formats: Preliminary rounds must be one of the following formats: incomplete round robins with random seeding of the entire field (or with top players evenly distributed to equalize the draw), divisions of the field into groups which play complete round robins, or swiss-style tournament.

If splitting the field into morning groups, Tier 1 tournament organizers must ensure that skill level between the groups is as equal as possible. Details on how to achieve this can be found in Part 2 above.

Minimum Number of Games: The NCA wants to avoid tournaments that consist of an elimination bracket only, as that sees the overwhelming majority of participants leaving a tournament having played only one or two games.

In the dual interests of ensuring competitive balance and avoiding the above scenario, the NCA requires tournaments to have preliminary rounds. These can be used to seed elimination matchups in field-wide knockout brackets, but they must not be omitted. Tier 1 and 2 tournaments must have sufficient preliminary rounds (i.e. pre-knockout games, for all participants) to guarantee that everyone in attendance plays no fewer than 14 games in singles tournaments and 10 games in doubles tournaments. Tier 3 tournaments must have some preliminary round, but the NCA does not specify a required size.

For advice on constructing fair and suitable round robins, see Part 2 of this document.

Determining a Champion: The tournament's champion should be determined using a head-to-head match. Options for head-to-head matches include the "Race to X Points" and "Best of 3 Games" formats; more details on both can be found in Part 3 of this document.

Head-to-head matches are valid for any and all knockout stages but are required for the finals.

Designated Test Formats: The Competition Committee might approve a designated test format that will be allowed to be temporarily used in a Tier 2 tournament. Designated test formats, in general, will have been successfully attempted at a Tier 3 tournament and deemed worthy by the Competition Committee to test on a greater scale.

Rules

NCA Rules: The NCA's official rules of crokinole must be followed in all tournaments on the NCA Tour.

Timing of Games: 8 minutes must be given for each round-robin singles game and 13–15 for all doubles games. Leave 1–3 minutes between games for players to move between tables.

All head-to-head elimination matches must be untimed.

Tie Breaking Procedure: There are two tie breaking procedures used by NCA tournaments, to be used separately when a round robin is complete or incomplete.

Incomplete Round Robins: This method is used for Tavistock-style preliminary rounds and when wildcards are used for group advancement in first rounds with multiple complete round robins.

The only way to separate two players (or teams) tied in points when there is no direct comparison between them is to compare their overall 20s scores. If the players are tied in 20s scored, the tournament organizer shall call for a 20s shootout to break the tie.

Complete Round Robins: If the players or teams played a complete round robin, which is to say that they played all of the same players including each other, then the following tiebreaker procedure will be used.

- (1) First, the points shall be summed from all games that the tied players played against each other. The player(s) who scored the most points win the tiebreaker. For any remaining players who are still tied, then
- (2) the 20s shall be summed from all such games. The player(s) who scored the most 20s in these head-to-head games win the tiebreaker. For any remaining players who are still tied, then
- (3) overall 20s scored in the tournament round shall be the tiebreaker. The player(s) who scored the most 20s in the tournament round win the tiebreaker. For any remaining players who are still tied, then
- (4) the tournament organizer shall call for a 20s shootout to break the tie.

Swiss Tournament: Swiss tournaments typically have multiple tiers of tie-breakers to establish player rankings. Options for tie-breakers may vary based on the website or app used to manage the Swiss Tournament. A recommended order of tie-breaker preference is

- (1) Total Points Scored (assuming this isn't the primary means of ranking)
- (2) Total 20s Scored (if this can be tracked via the app)
- (3) Bucholz (approximates strength of schedule)
- (4) Wins vs. Tied Opponents

Documents for Posting at Your Tournament

The two documents on the following pages are resources for tournament organizers, meant to aid organizers in constructing their tournament and to clearly communicate its rules, organization, and procedure to participants.

You may use these documents for your tournament and post either or both of them in your venue.

Tournament Planning Document

To assist a tournament director in planning a tournament. May be posted at the tournament.

Name of Tournament

Date of Tournament

1. This tournament shall use the NCA's Rules of Crokinole.
2. The initial round shall take the form of: (Circle a or b)
 - a) Players will be divided into _____ groups, each of which will play a complete round-robin.
The players are seeded into the groups: yes / no
 - b) A movement of _____ games against random opponents (like the WCC)
3. Advancing to Second Round Pools (circle a, b, or c)
 - a) _____ players will be selected from each group for second round group "A" based upon their scores within that group.
An additional _____ players will be selected based on the highest normalized score.
Players will be selected to second round groups "B," "C," etc. based on the highest normalized score.
 - b) Players will advance to second round pools "A," "B," "C," etc. based on the highest normalized score across all morning groups.
 - c) Other:

4. Elimination Games

The top four players from the "A" pool will advance to the semifinals.

In pools "B", "C", and so on, (circle) 2 / 4 players will advance to the elimination games.

Circle a or b:

- a) Players placing 1st and 4th in the second round play a head-to head semi-final match. Players placing 2nd and 3rd play in the other semi-final. A final match will be played between the 2 semi-final winners.

Select One (See item 5 in Additional Tournament Rules):

- i. The WCC head-to-head method will be used.
- ii. The first to _____ points method will be used.

Circle one option for both:

The Quinte Convention head-to-head method will be used: Yes / No

The Wimbledon Rule will be in effect: Yes / No

- b) The four players will play a round-robin playing one game against each opponent. The top two finishers will play a head-to-head match for the championship. The next two will play for 3rd place: Yes / No

Additional Tournament Rules

May be posted at the tournament

1) Timing of Matches

- a. All matches will be timed unless otherwise stated. A distinct sound will be used to begin and end play. Any discs not shot when the ending horn sounds will remain unplayed, except a single shot to be played immediately after the horn to equalize the number of shots taken if necessary. The round will be scored as it stands at that point. The opposing player and the referees will monitor players deliberately delaying a game. ***If a round of a game is not started before the horn sounds each player shall receive 1 point for each round not started.***
- b. Time allowed:
 - i. *Singles*: 8 minutes per game (4 rounds)
 - ii. *Doubles*: 13 Minutes per game (4 rounds)
- c. There will be 2 minutes between games to verify scores, move to the next table, and take practice shots.

2) Tie Breaking Procedure

- a. In a complete round-robin,
 - i. Points will be totaled from all games between any tied players. Tied players are then ranked based on their total in this count.
 - ii. If any players are still tied, 20s scored in those games will break the tie.
 - iii. If still tied, the player with the higher number of 20's overall in that round will place higher.
 - iv. If there still is a tie, a shoot-out will be conducted (See rule 3).
- b. In an incomplete round-robin,
 - i. The player with the higher number of 20's in that round will place higher.
 - ii. If there still is a tie, a shoot-out will be conducted. See rule 3 (repeat until tie is broken).

3) Shoot-out Procedure – to be repeated until all ties are broken

- a. *Singles*
 - i. All tied contestants will alternate shooting 12 discs each for the “20” at the same board.
 - ii. Each disc will be removed from the board after each shot and recorded as a “20” if successful.
 - iii. Top scorer(s) after all shots are taken will advance.
- b. *Doubles*
 - i. Shoot-outs will be conducted the same as in 3a except partners will shoot 6 discs each in standard order.

4) Methods of Conducting a Head-to-Head Match

Method 1: Best of Three Games

The contestants play successive games of four rounds. If a game is tied, a fifth round is played to break the tie. The first player to win two games is the winner of the match.

Note: Some Ontario tournaments add the Wimbledon Rule to Method 1. The purpose is to eliminate the advantage of playing last in the sudden-death round of game three. This states that if in the final game of a multi-game match between 2 players the players are tied 4-4, then the winner is the first player who has a lead after an even number of rounds. (6, 8, 10 etc.)

Method 2: The Quinte Convention

The contestants play up to 3 successive games. Ties are allowed. The winner is the first contestant to either a) win 2 games or b) tie 2 games and win one. If the players are tied after 3 games (i.e. each has three ties or each has one win one loss and one tie) then additional rounds are played. The winner is the first player to hold a lead after an even number of additional rounds.

Method 3: The “Race to X Points”

Players play successive rounds. The winner is the first player to reach a set number of points, usually 9 or 11.

5) Choice of Start or Sides in Elimination Matches

The tournament director may declare that the player with the higher seed has their pick of the choices by virtue of their higher second round finish.

Alternately, the referee may hold a coin toss before each head-to-head match. The winner shall have either a) the choice of starting order or b) the choice of sides (and disc colour unless it is determined by the side in that tournament.) The loser shall have the other choice.

6) As soon as the scores are posted, it is each player’s responsibility to verify that their score is correct. Once the next tournament round has started a player loses the right to correct their finishing order, even if an error has been made.

7) *If any unusual situation not covered in these rules occurs, the tournament director or head referee will make a ruling after reviewing it with players involved. In all cases, their decision will be final.*