Go tournament organization guide

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1 Prepare a tournament

This guide lists everything you need to know for your tournaments to be successful. In particular, it's important to anticipate deadlines and do a precise checklist so that nothing is forgotten.

The content will mostly cover the management of tournaments in face-to-face mode, Internet tournaments organization should be lighter and mostly technical – so it depends heavily on the applications used for the tournament...

2 General considerations

It is important to define precisely the desired type of tournament as well as the number of participants to expect. Depending on the importance of the tournament, it will be necessary to anticipate more or less in advance to reserve a room (important!) and send the invitations / advertise.

	Participants	Calendar	Organization
Small friendly club tournament	< 20	Can be improvised on site	1 to 2 people
Internal club tournament	< 20	A few days before the event	1 to 2 people
Small open tournament	> 10 and <50	6 months in advance (room to book)	2 to 4 people
Big open tournament	> 50 and < 150	6-12 months in advance (room to book)	5 to 10 people
Closed tournament	>= 4	6 months in advance (room to book 3 months in advance)	1 to 4 people
Great international competition	> 150	At least 2 years in advance	5 to 10 organizers + 5 volunteers per 100 players

			over 150 participants

If the number of pre-registered is lower or higher than expected, the organization should be adapted accordingly. Finding a room is probably the most important priority, especially when there are a lot of players expected.

2.1 Define the internal rules of the tournament.

2.1.1 Type of tournament

- Open tournament for all audiences,
- Tournament reserved for certain categories of players: beginners (on small Gobans), young people, FBG members (ex: Belgian championship)…
- Closed tournament (= by invitation) eg final round of the Belgian championship

Either all the participants are grouped together (most often), or they are divided into categories.

2.1.2 Rules used

Specify the komi, the handicap (without, exact or handicap-1 / handicap-2), the rules used (Japanese rules - standard in Belgium), if necessary: the deadline for sending the results.
Specify if the results will count for the Belgian and / or European ranking
The stake of the game is weighted according to the number of handicap stones (the greater the number of handicap stones, the lower the stake).

More details here: https://www.gofed.be/rating
For a game result to count towards the Belgian ranking the time per player must be at least 45 minutes "sudden death" or 30 minutes with a byo-yomi)...
For a game result to count towards the European ranking, see
http://www.europeangodatabase.eu/EGD/EGF_rating_system.php#CLASS

Decide and specify the method for calculating the handicap:
- either in relation to the "ranking" (level in kyu-dan) (ex: 3 stones between a 7-k and a 4-k),
- either in relation to the "rating" (level in points) (eg: 2 stones between a player at - 642 and a player at - 402 - Belgian classification - or between a player at - 1652 and a player at - 1814). The difference can be rounded up or down.
Decide if it is the Belgian ranking or the European ranking which prevails (advice: favor the Belgian ranking for FBG member players, generally more up to date).
Specify the maximum handicap (normally 9 stones) and how handicap stones should be placed (predefined - "Japanese style", or free "Chinese style" less common but more and more frequent).

Rather than an exact handicap, a "handicap -1" or "handicap-2" (removing 1 or 2 handicap stones systematically, or gradually from defined level deviations) is interesting because it allows both a better balance for the beginning and middle game and should avoid that an undervalued 20 kyu becomes the winner of a tournament...

2.1.3 Rhythm

It is a about defining the number of rounds, the duration and the schedules of the parts.
Note: if registrations must be made on site, foresee an additional 1 hour.

Here are the most commonly used rhythms:

Blitz	10 to 15 minutes sudden death. Foresee 1 hour per round.
Fast	30 minutes + byo-yomi of 20 stones / 5 minutes or 45 minutes "sudden death". Foresee 1.5 hours per round.

Regular tournament (most open tournaments, interclub, etc.)	1h + byo-yomi of 15 stones / 5 minutes. Foresee 3 hours per round.
"Slow" tournament (some tournaments; ex: final round of the Belgian championship)	1 round / day: 1h30-2h30 + 5x 1 minute. Foresee up to 6 hours per round.

Also plan an hour break in the middle of the day (start of the break between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.)

Most regular tournaments are organized in 2 days of WE in 1h mode + byo-yomi of 15 stones in 5 minutes.
A common formula in the UK is 4 rounds in fast game mode in one day.
A "Fisher" rhythm can be used if the tournament is played with electronic clocks.

2.1.4 Pairing system

Choose the pairing system: MacMahon (preferably), free (for small tournaments), elimination ...
Principle of the Mac Mahon pairing system: http://www.jeudego.info/?McMahon

Warning: Direct elimination tournaments are rather to be avoided, because being eliminated from the first game is not pleasant. Prefer a computer-calculated pairing system or an elimination system with "double life" (elimination after the 2nd defeat).

The tiebreaker for players who have won the same number of games must also be determined.
The tiebreaker rule of the European Federation:
1. Score (number of wins)
2. SOS (Sum of Opponents Scores - tournament performance indicator for the players you meet: add up their score in the tournament)
3. SODOS (Sum Of Defeated Opponents Scores - performance indicator in the tournament of the players we have beaten: we add their score in the tournament)
4. Direct confrontation.

2.2 Find a room

The search for a place to play should not be overlooked.
For large tournaments of more than 10-20 people, finding a room can be very problematic, especially if you start searching late !

Please note: **make sure there will be enough tables and chairs, that the place will be quiet when the tournament takes place**, that the lighting is satisfactory, that there is access to electrical outlets and an internet connection provided, preferably by WiFi.

Think about the management of drinks, snacks, and catering for lunch time. Check in particular that there is the possibility of making tea or coffee and that there is a way to eat on site or nearby.
Also think about smokers and visitors who do not play Go.

If the premises are suitable, it is important to get a written reservation confirmation.

2.3 Reservation of Go material

To obtain equipment, **contact the material manager of the Federation at least 2 weeks in advance** for reservation of game stones, gobans, pendulums, cell phone, printer ...) and arrange an appointment to pick up (then return) the equipment loaned.

Please note: you need someone to transport the games to the tournament location on the outward journey, or to the Fed's storage location on the return trip – the material manager does not do it.

The nature of the loan (# of pieces of each type loaned) will be confirmed in an email sent by the stock manager to the tournament organizer (with the CA in cc).

The tournament organizer is responsible for the proper return of everything that has been loaned for the tournament.

2.4 Advertising

For tournament publicity, **contact the Federation board - calendar manager as soon as possible to set a date with him and submit the event to the Federation calendar**.

To be approved, the tournament must follow the rules defined by the Belgian Federation of Go.

Advertise in clubs, on the Internet (FBG and EGF site), possibly in the (local) press…

Mention all the useful information for the players: address, date (s), times for registration and each round, rules used, accessibility, etc.

For a closed tournament, prepare and send invitations sufficiently in advance with an explicit confirmation request of participation from everyone.

In case of withdrawal (provide appropriate sanction if not announced; see tournament regulations), ensure the replacement of unavailable players by one / more "reserve" player (s) to be chosen according to the rules for designating the tournament.

2.5 Establish a provisional budget

List all expenses (the two main items are the room reservation and the prices to be distributed)

Set the amount of registrations based on the number of participants expected and profitability objectives.

Possibly provide discounts for young people and / or supplements for non-FBG members (this last point is perfectly justified if the tournament uses equipment loaned by the FBG).

Foresee prizes (equipment or go books, free registrations for the following year, medals, money, ...) and how to distribute them among the participants (categories to be defined).

For large tournaments, request subsidies / sponsorship from partners (game stores, municipalities, companies...)

2.6 Make a checklist

Divide the roles of each volunteer: define in particular a referee (essential for settling disputes) and provide a scribe for important parties.

Check before the tournament that all the IT material works by doing a serious simulation: test the pairing software, Internet access and printer (check the toner ink level !)!

List the required material:
• Tables and chairs
• Gobans and stones in sufficient quantity: provide a surplus as a precaution and for game analysis
• Pendulums and batteries for electronic pendulums
• Kifus and pens
• Tournament registration forms.
• Forms, so that players can record their results.
• Kettle (s), tea, coffee, possibly drinks, sandwiches..., dishes...
• Metal box with a cash fund (lots of € 5 bills ...) for change
• Various office equipment: paper, markers, pens, scissors, sticky paper, glue, flashlight ...
• Computer (s) with pairing software and printer, extension cable (if necessary).
• Tournament rules and practical information on site and online on the registration site.

• Numbers to place on tables
• Various posters (tournament schedules, signs…)
• Welcome speech (in French / Dutch / English)
• Practical information to facilitate reception: restaurants, hotels, campsites ... Provide accommodation if necessary with local players
→ For information: see annex for a detailed checklist model.

2.7 Final preparations

Encode in advance registered players in the pairing software.
Display tournament rules, schedules and practical information.
Arrange the tables and chairs (put the most beautiful stones and bowls at the tables intended for the best players), number with labels (if more than 10 participants).
Place arrow signs to help players find the room if necessary.

3 D-day tournament management

3.1 Welcome and registration

Check the difference between the declared level and the official level (of the FBG and / or the EGF):
* 1 level maximum difference for players in "dan".
* 2 levels - or more - of deviation is suspect for "single digit kyu".
However, a priori there is no reason to not trust the declared level; also many players play frequently in clubs or on the Internet and therefore their real strength can be much higher than the level of the official classification.

5 minutes before calculating the pairing: announce that registrations will close within 5 minutes
Once registrations are closed, print a list of registrants and post it.
Then ask all registrants to check all their data (surname, first name, level, nationality, club, etc.) in order to notify the organizers of any errors.
The first round pairings can then be made.

3.2 Official opening of the tournament

Open the tournament with a short welcome speech, remind the rules **(in particular, the rule used – japanese -, the komi and the time limits)**, who is the referee, the schedules of the different rounds, the handling of pendulums (byo-yomi)… in French/Dutch/English (depending on your audience… and your language skills ! ☺
Remind the procedure in case a player intends not to play one or more rounds: this must be announced to the organizers before the draw for the said round !
Mobile phones must be switched off and smartphones cannot be used to study the game; they are tolerated (just like any other electronic device) for scoring the game provided that the screen is always visible to both players !
Before each round, check the equipment and wind up the clocks.
Regularly check the internet connection (in case of webcast).

3.3 Pairing

3.3.1 Manual pairing

For a mini-tournament (< 10 participants), pairing can be done by hand.
In this case, a simple Berger table or a pairing tree (double elimination or with group stages) to be printed before the tournament can be used (see appendix).
A tip for easy pairing is to place players around a long table and rotate them by one place except 1 player who stays in place.

In all cases, you must still register the names of the players and their level to be able to determine the handicap of each game.

3.3.2 Computer pairing

For a larger tournament (more than 10 players), **pairing software is essential** in order to be able to combine speed and quality (priorities based on results, alternating colors ...).

Once mastered, pairing software takes only 5 minutes to generate all the pairings and print all the necessary documents.

The program used to manage tournaments in Europe (MacMahon) is free and downloadable here:
https://www.cgerlach.de/go/macmahon.html

It's pretty easy to use, but you have to practice it before you plan to host a big tournament.

Available software: MacMahon (Java – all OS), OpenGotha (up to 2000 players and 20 rounds - runs under Linux, MacOS and Windows, GoDraw (Windows systems)

During the tournament, enter the results in the pairing software.
Save regularly and keep the pairings / results sheets.

3.4 Arbitration

The tournament organizer assumes the responsibility of main referee, which implies to decide in case of dispute,

3.4.1 General principles of arbitration

Arbitrating requires obviously to know the rules. The baseline are the detailed European rules:
https://www.eurogofed.org/egf/rules_guidelines_points.html

In Belgium we use Japanese rules:
http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~wjh/go/rules/Japanese.html

Much more than the application of the rules, to arbitrate is above all to respect the players, not to intervene inadvertently and to be available - to speak several languages ...

3.4.2 When and how to intervene?

The referee must most often intervene in the case of a disagreement between players, if he/she detects a problem or if an observer reports a situation which requires decision.
There is obviously no need to intervene if the players quickly see and correct the error by mutual agreement.

At the start of the intervention, **stop the pendulum** to avoid adding a time issue to the existing problem... Take note of all the facts of the situation. Make sure players agree - without being swayed - before making a decision. The role of the referee is, depending on the situation, to inform, to settle a dispute, to help to restore a game, to decide the victory or in certain cases to share the point (if there is no better solution - notoriously when there is a suspicion of cheating).

3.4.3 Time management

The majority of incidents that occur in a Go tournament relate to the handling of clocks.
A player who places a stone on the game board or who passes must never forget to press the button of the pendulum !

1) Fallen flag (or time left at zero)

Only clicking on the pendulum matters. **If the flag has fallen or if the electronic pendulum beeps, the game is lost on time**, even if the required move has been made or if the player passes (!).

2) Delay

After 10 minutes of delay, the clock must be triggered. If the player arrives, he/she starts the game with the remaining time, otherwise the game will be lost when the flag is dropped

3) Malfunction - the time played has been lost on one side or the other or the predefined rhythm of play is not the right one.

Apply the principle of fair play. Estimate the time lost and correct it by dividing the time lost in half 50/50.

3.4.3.1 Adding the byo-yomi

Give the following advice to the participants: at the start of each byo-yomi, take the byo-yomi stones from the bowl (usually 15 or 20) and close the bowl.

Explain to the players how to set the pendulum for the duration of the byo-yomi (without adding any remaining time from the previous byo-yomi) and restart the pendulum.

Below is a technical memo on how to add a byo-yomi on electronic clocks.

DGT 2010

Appuyer pendant une seconde sur « - » pendant le tour du joueur.

DGT 3000

Appuyer pendant 3 secondes sur « < » pendant le tour du joueur.

DGT Easy

Mettre la pendule sur pause

Parcourir le temps restant avec </>

Régler le temps restant sur 5 minutes avec + / -

Pendule à aiguilles

Faire repasser la grande aiguille à gauche du drapeau et la régler à moins 5.

3.4.4 Management of common incidents

1) Illegal move

An error or an illegal move (direct recovery of a ko for example) does not lead to forfeit and the position can be replayed if the error is detected within 3 moves, otherwise the game continues normally.

2) Unclosed borders

If there are unclosed borders and/or stones in engagement, action must be taken to point out the error, as no count can be accepted without closed borders.

3) Following an accident, the position is lost

In this case the referee must intervene to help reconstruct the game to a position accepted by the players - without forgetting to correct the pendulums.

If the turn must be determined: count the number of black and white stones that have been played (and be careful if a player has passed).

If it proves impossible to reproduce / replay the game: sharing of the point is applicable unless reliable witnesses show an overwhelming advantage of one of the two players.

If a player intentionally destroys the game, this is tantamount to a surrender.

4) Proven cheat, aggressiveness...

In case of cheating or aggression, the game is lost and the player concerned is excluded from the tournament.

3.4.5 Special cases of rules

3.4.5.1 Different Japanese rules and Chinese rules

Warning ! In Belgium Japanese rules are used. There are some small differences with the other rules, in particular the counting of stones is different from that of the Chinese and American rules.
https://www.britgo.org/rules/compare.html

In Belgium:
- only empty spaces within territories are counted as points
- you should not give stones to your opponent when you pass
- a Seki is worth no points, if there is a stone that can be captured inside it must be done before the end of the game.

3.4.5.2 Very specific cases

In Go, you have to know that there are some very rare special cases that can arise: triple Ko, groups with undecided status, eternal life ... which can be problematic to arbitrate if they have not been studied.
If in doubt, check the rules or ask for help from strong players.

3.5 Scribe

The role of the scribe is to register the important games.
If the game is broadcasted live, the players should be announced, the stake and some comments (neutral) to answer the questions.
Better assign the task of scribe to a player of a fairly good level (> 5 kyu) to avoid gross typing errors and because the scribe must be able to transcribe the fast game sequences which sometimes occur at high level...

3.6 Closing the tournament

Announce the winner, the podium and the prizes.
Possibly provide special prices: youngest player, player from further afield, consolation prize for those without any victory ...
Thank everyone for participating and give an appointment for the following year.

After the tournament, send the results to the Belgian Go Federation and the EGF.
Do not forget to return all borrowed material
Make a report for the Belgian Fed of Go. Send your comments if you have any.

APPENDIX 1 - Checklist

Define the tournament's internal rules

Room reservation
- Check location (tables and chairs, brightness, calm, electricity & catering)
- Book by contract

Material reservation
- Make sure there will be enough games, pendulums ...

Promotion
- Advertising by E-mail and on FBG / EGF website
- CA mailing of federations, or even clubs near neighboring countries

Build a team
- Chief tournament responsible
- Team (2/3 pers.) for registrations
- Responsible for encoding results and going out pairing
- Official referee
- Referee court of appeal (at the start of the tournament itself: ask 3 "strong" players)
- Team to install tables, chairs, games and at the end of the tournament to tidy up and clean the room (in practice: ask for help from a group of volunteers)
- Team of possible scribes

Written instructions
- instructions for other volunteers
- welcome speech

Important checks !
- PC + printer (check ink cartridge), pairing software
- Internet connection :
- Enough games and stones, tables and chairs ... and batteries for electronic clocks

Material to prepare
- Prepare a copy of the official tournament rules
- Prepare registration form
- Envelopes (for prices)
- Sticky paper, pens (lots), markers, sheet of paper, calculator
- Prepare cash (plan change)
- Metal box fwith cash
- Numbered labels for tables
- Results sheets to be completed by the players
- Sheets to note games (kifu) and pens

Catering
- Check accessibility of drinks, fridge ...
- Kettle, coffee machine, cups, goblets, towels, teaspoons, stirring sticks ...

Others
- Contact Go hardware store
- Display a map

- Having addresses / telephone numbers for youth hostels and / or cheap hotels
- Provide accommodation with local players
- Select / book one / a few restaurants for the evening ...
- Contact with concierge: look for room key, bring key ...
- Mark the route
- Presentation Goban
- Take photos
...

APPENDIX 2 - Tournament rules example

Tournament format
Five rounds MacMahon with <handicap - 2>
Timing: 1 hour per player + byo-yomi 15 stones for 5 minutes
Komi: 6.5
Non-smoking tournament

Registration and entry Fee
nn € for registration and payment before ...
nn € after ...
If you pre-register and can not make it for the first round, you are expected to notify the organization.
Once your registration fee has been received, you will be paired for the first round. You only have to confirm your presence if there are mistakes in your name or rating on our wall-list. You can cancel your registration by warning us - half of the price will be refunded.
You can register by sending a mail to <email address> stating your name, country, club and level.

Prizes
Prizes for top places are determined by the MMS score and SOS. Prizes are divided equally if both MMS and SOS are equal.

Schedule
Day 1
00:00 - Opening of registration
00:00 - Deadline of registration
00:00 - First Round
00:00 - Second Round
12:00 AM - Third Round
Day 2
00:00 - Fourth Round
00:00 - Fifth Round
00:00 - Prize giving

Practical information
Address: ...
How to get there:

APPENDIX 3 - Organization of a major international tournament

The organization must start at least 2 years in advance.
The dates and places must be decided at least 12 months in advance.

The difficulty is increased by the management of many people coming from abroad, translation issues, management of visas, signs, plans, multilingual translations (Asian languages: Chinese, Japanese, Korean) ...
The size of the rooms (often a lodging that can accommodate many players, with meals and accommodation included) makes management more complex: need to move equipment, possible need to rent tables and chairs, etc.

It is important to recruit reliable volunteers. A reasonable team size is required: 1 manager + 5 volunteers per 100 players (for the EGC in Brussels in 2019: 6-10 organizers and 40 volunteers for 800 players).
Do not underestimate the logistical problems (tables, chairs, cafeteria, toilets, cleaning, garbage cans, lost items, air conditioning, retransmission of the parties, communication of the results, registrations, helpdesk, insurance, volunteer contracts, etc.).

APPENDIX 4 - Matching Tables

4.1 Berger tables for manual pairing -for 5 to 10 players

R	5-6 joueurs		
1	1-6	2-5	3-4
2	6-4	5-3	1-2
3	2-6	3-1	4-5
4	6-5	1-4	2-3
5	3-6	4-2	5-1

R	7-8 joueurs			
1	1-8	2-7	3-6	4-5
2	8-5	6-4	7-3	1-2
3	2-8	3-1	4-7	5-6
4	8-6	7-5	1-4	2-3
5	3-8	4-2	5-1	6-7
6	8-7	1-6	2-5	3-4
7	4-8	5-3	6-2	7-1

R	9-10 joueurs				
1	1-10	2-9	3-8	4-7	5-6
2	10-6	7-5	8-4	9-3	1-2
3	2-10	3-1	4-9	5-8	6-7
4	10-7	8-6	9-5	1-4	2-3
5	3-10	4-2	5-1	6-9	7-8
6	10-8	9-7	1-6	2-5	3-4
7	4-10	5-3	6-2	7-1	8-9
8	10-9	1-8	2-7	3-6	4-5
9	5-10	6-4	7-3	8-2	9-1

4.2 Pairing 8 players with elimination after 2 losses

8 TEAMS - DOUBLE ELIMINATION BRACKET

WINNERS

```
                    1
                        7
                    2
                            11
                    3
                        8
                    4

LOSERS

                    5
                        9
   L5
      L10               12
   L3                           13        14
      6
   L4       10
      L9
                    L11

                            14
                                15
                            L14
```