

# IGBO Tournaments Best Practices Guide



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# Tournament Best Practices

## Purpose

IGBO has over 50 member tournaments throughout the United States and Canada. Every year these tournaments put on an event that makes IGBO proud to call them one of our affiliated events.

The purpose of this document is to provide tournament directors and their committees with some best practices that others who have hosted tournaments have shared. Often team leadership rotates year to year so this document may be particularly helpful to new tournament leaders.

These are ideas and practices used by IGBO and other Regional Tournaments. We hope that this information helps you to run the best possible events that you can.

Please keep in mind that these are a guideline of suggestions to help make tournaments run smoother and more successfully. These are not mandates, they are only suggestions to help make your event the best it can be.

## Topics

The topics of this document are as follows:

- Tournament Committee Organization
- Understand USBC Certification
- Information about Contracts
- Determining Lane Conditions
- Tips for Successful Fundraising
- Securing Sponsors
- Promoting Tournament
- Setting Tournament Rules
- Opening On-line Registration
- Setting up in-person Registration
- Deciding on Tournament Events
- Reporting Scores

## Tournament Committee Organization

Setting up your tournament committees and establishing clear-cut roles within the committee is the foundation of your tournament. Typically, if your tournament has been ongoing over many years, the committee is established shortly after the current year's tournament is completed.

Each city has its own process in place to select Tournament Committee members. Some have elections for leadership positions, some have governing bodies, and set by-laws. Others are appointed by experience and are less formal. No matter how your committee is determined, the most important thing is that you have at least one person in leadership with experience running a tournament. In addition, make sure that the other top leadership roles understand their responsibilities and make regular reports to the committee on a regular basis.

When organizing your committees, here are some of the major roles that other tournament committees have. Not all of these roles are necessary, and some can be combined.

Something to consider is that some key players in the committee should NOT bowl in the tournament. It is suggested that at least one Co-Director, the Treasurer, and the Statistician at a minimum do not bowl. You will need people to run events such as raffles during the tournament so other committee members or volunteers should also not bowl to make sure all duties are fulfilled.

### Suggested Committee Roles

- **Director** – this is often shared with two or three people. Typically, one Co-Director handles the Bowling House, one handles the Hotel, and the other handles Fundraising and Sponsorship.
- **Secretary** – keeps track of the meeting minutes, agenda, and communication with the rest of the committee. Often this person works with the statistician to help verify scores, communicate with bowlers as registration opens, and winners are determined.
- **Treasurer** – this is one of the most important roles and should be filled by someone that is well trusted. You could consider getting them bonded which is a unique process depending on the state your tournament is held in. An important tip for treasurer duties is to make sure that all large withdrawals from the bank must be signed by at least two people. The treasurer will track all income and expenses for the tournament and should provide monthly reports to the committee. The Treasurer works with the Co-Director(s) as well to establish a tournament budget and ensure the committee is on track to meet that budget.
- **Statistician** – this position is crucial for determining the winners of your tournament. The statistician should help with setting up registration, verifying averages, and work with the bowling house to obtain official scores. Tip: It is helpful if this person is experienced with the role or works with someone who is. It can be overwhelming if there is no system in place prior to the tournament to compute the scores for all tournament events.
- **Sponsorship** – this position's goal is to obtain sponsors to help fund your tournament. (See Sponsorship/Fundraising for more information).
- **Fundraising** – this position seeks out ways to fundraise for the tournament and is often done by the committee with one person making sure that suggestions and ideas are researched and followed up on.
- **Hotel/Hospitality** – this person (if not a Co-Director), should work with co-directors to make sure the host hotel contract is as beneficial to the tournament as possible. (See Contracts for more information.) They will be the point person between the hotel and the committee.
- **Bowling Operations** – this is typically headed by one of the co-directors and they work closely with the bowling house. Prior to the tournament they will work with the house to determine lane conditions, lane assignments, capacities, drink specials, special rules the house may have, etc. During the tournament they will be the point person if issues with scoring, lane breakdowns, or other issues arise.
- **Registration** – this role includes helping to set up and process on-line and/or mail-in registrations for the tournament, verifying IGBO membership, and verifying averages. In addition, this role helps to set up how in-person registration will take place including check-in, average disputes, optional events, gift bags, and paying for optional events.
- **Volunteer Coordinator** – this person will coordinate the many volunteers you will need during the event.

- **Trophies** – this person will research trophy prizes and track what trophies will be ordered.
- **Banquet** – this person or sub-committee will determine the menu and setup for the banquet.

## USBC Certification

IGBO encourages all member tournaments to seek USBC certification. Tournament managers should be aware that, absent USBC certification, honor scores (300 games, 800 series) will not be recognized by USBC.

It is recommended that all tournaments publicize their USBC certification number on their registration website and that they display their USBC certificate onsite during registration. This is for the purposes of transparency.

Tournament managers should be aware that, at the time of USBC certification, they must certify that their tournament will be held under Standard, Challenge, or Sport conditions. (See Lane Conditions section for more information.)

## Host Hotel

If you choose to have a host hotel for tournament attendees, here are some important things to consider. More information will be covered in the Contracts section.

- If you have an ongoing relationship with a particular property in your city, they may be willing to give you a better price due to this ongoing relationship.
- Typically, if you have your banquet at the host hotel, meeting their food and beverage (F&B) minimums is a way to get room rates lower.
- If you are seeking or looking at another property, then make sure you have a copy of the contract with the previous property to help in your negotiations.
- If you have your banquet offsite from the hotel, try and negotiate best rates for the food and space possible. Also try to get the cocktail hour revenue bundled with this.
- Remember your banquet is the last thing that the bowlers will go to, and you don't want to make this something that they talk about negatively.

## Hospitality

If your tournament has or is planning to do a hospitality suite. Make sure there is a space big enough for a bar, places for people to play cards, LRC, or just to hang out and talk. Not, all hotels are agreeable to this, and you may have to build a relationship with them to get the things you want. Some properties/hotels REQUIRE that they do the bar or charge a corking fee.

Some attendees may want to bring a guest to hospitality. If you are paying for the drinks and snacks this will increase your costs. It is suggested that you require guests be registered and pay the guest registration fee in order to attend hospitality.

If you are not able to host a hospitality event, work with a couple of the bars that bowlers or you like to go to. Have them be a host bar one of the nights of your tournament weekend. Encourage them to have a drink special or discounted pricing, and they can track this either by the name badge, or give each bowler a wristband with the name of the tournament so they see how many came in.

## Bowling Center

Whether you are using a house that your leagues bowl in or a neutral facility, engage with them on what you want or would like such as lineage, discounts on bar and food, sponsorship, etc. It is beneficial for the tournament and the center to have a written contract, so each party knows what they are responsible or obligated for during the tournament. (See Contracts for more information).

## Lane Conditions

Lane conditions are a frequent point of debate among IGBO member tournaments. There are no universally correct answers. This section is meant to provide guidance and recommendations to tournament committees. Here are some tips to guide you through this topic:

- Typically, a standard house shot (lane condition) uses an oil ratio of 8:1 or higher and an approximate length of 40'.
- Typically, a sport or challenge shot (lane condition) uses an oil ratio of 3:1 or less.
- If a tournament will utilize a “standard” (“house”) lane condition:
  - The tournament should register as a “Standard” condition with USBC.
  - The tournament should utilize a DIFFERENT oil pattern than the host bowling center’s standard “house shot.” This will ensure that those who regularly bowl in the host bowling center do not have an unfair advantage over bowlers from other centers.
- If a tournament will utilize a “challenge” or “sport” lane condition, The tournament should register as a “Challenge” or “Sport” condition with USBC.
- Regardless of the lane condition, the tournament is encouraged to do the following:
  - Be transparent by informing all bowlers at the time of registration whether the tournament will be conducted under standard, challenge, or sport conditions.
  - As a best practice, tournaments should have a standard practice regarding disclosure of oil patterns. This is to ensure as level and fair of a playing field as possible for all participants.
  - If the tournament is going to disclose the oil pattern to ANY bowlers (including committee members participating in the event), the pattern should be disclosed to ALL bowlers participating in the event.
  - If the tournament is not going to disclose the oil pattern to ALL bowlers, then no participant (including committee members participating in the event) should know the oil pattern.
  - If the tournament lane conditions will vary from USBC certification, the tournament manager should work to correct the certification with USBC prior to the start of the tournament.

- If the lane conditions change and the tournament committee does not record the change with USBC prior to the start of the tournament, the tournament committee should report this change to USBC and work with USBC to appropriately correct any resulting concerns from this change.

## Contracts

All tournaments sign contracts to host their event, whether it be a hotel contract or a bowling alley contract. Below are some tips to help you make your contracts the most beneficial to your tournament. Keep in mind that when you sign a contract you will be financially obligated to the amounts stipulated in the contract. It is recommended that your entire committee review the contract before it is signed. You need to know exactly what you are agreeing to.

In addition to the specific information below, you may also want to include a clause typically called a Force Majeure. This clause will protect the signers of the contract from liability in the event of an act of God, regional disaster, fire, pandemic or other event that prevents the tournament from being held as stipulated in the contract. For more information about this, a good reference can be found here:

<https://www.lawinsider.com/clause/force-majeure>

### **Bowling Alley Contract**

The bowling alley contract is typically a basic form that states the rules of the Center and the guaranteed cost for lineage and dates for the event. Some centers do not have contracts, but IGBO does. If you want to use it, you can find it under Forms on the IGBO Website or [CLICK HERE \[THERE IS NO CONTRACT RIGHT NOW\]](#).

### **Hotel Contracts**

This is by far the more complicated contract. This is a contract that the hotel will require you to sign to host your event. It is imperative that you read the whole contract before signing. The key items to look for are:

- Room Rates – What are the per night costs for single, double, triple, and quadruple occupancy? How does this compare to their “normal” rates? Does this rate include WIFI or parking? Is there a breakfast or other perks included?
- Room Nights – Hotels look at rooms booked as room nights. It can be confusing when you are looking at how many room nights are booked as opposed to how many rooms per day are booked. When a hotel says you have 70 room nights booked. That could include 10 rooms on Friday, 40 rooms on Saturday, and 20 rooms on Sunday for a total of 70 room nights.
- How many rooms to book – It is important to be as accurate as possible when blocking rooms and guaranteeing them in the contract. You can be held financially responsible for rooms that you block but end up not being booked. Consider the following:
  - How many is the max number of bowlers you can accommodate?
  - How many of those bowlers will be coming from out of town?
  - How many will come in on Friday or Saturday and how many will stay through Monday? You will have a room rate for each day of your tournament, so each day will have a

different number. Typically, the lowest numbers will be on Thursday and the most will be on Saturday.

- Most hotels will work with you on this, so it is recommended you start with conservative numbers if possible and add more as registration opens and you can better gauge the interest of your bowlers to stay in the host hotel.
- Attrition Rate - This refers to the percentage of rooms that must be filled to avoid paying a penalty. By signing a hotel contract, you are guaranteeing them a certain number of room nights for your event. You'll want to try to get the best attrition rate possible to prevent you from being held responsible for paying for rooms that were guaranteed by you in the contract but were not actually booked as anticipated. (See Example to the right)
- Hospitality Suite - If you are hosting a hospitality suite at the hotel, make sure you read over the fine print in the contract about this topic. Some hotels will require you buy their alcohol and pay their staff. Some states have rules about alcohol and there is not much you can do about that.
- Food and Beverage Minimum (F&B) – this is the amount of food and beverage sales you guarantee to generate during the event. This usually includes the banquet food and hospitality if you are purchasing alcohol and snacks from the hotel. It can also include Audio Visual equipment in some contracts. It also includes whatever sales from the cash bar at the banquet. You'll want to figure out how many you estimate will attend the banquet and multiple that by the cost of the meal per person, plus the estimated cash bar sales, and hospitality sales if applicable.
- Audio/Visual – Most banquets will need at a minimum a podium with a microphone, but most will also have one or two screens and projectors to display results on. Unless your tournament is providing this equipment, it will need to be contracted with the hotel. Most hotels have outside vendors but will still include this in your hotel contract. Typical costs range from \$1500 to \$3000, so this is another thing you will want to make sure you budget for.
- Service Fees and Taxes – Remember that everything you pay for in your contract with the hotel will have an additional service fee (typically 26% or more) as well as applicable taxes based on that state. You need to keep a close eye on this as this can impact your overall budget.
- Cancellation policies – Find out what the cancellation policy is and see above the information about Force Majeure.

*Attrition Example:*

If you have contracted for 90 room nights with the hotel, if the attrition rate in your contract is 80%, you are only liable for 80% of the rooms which equals 72 rooms that need to be book without penalty, but the hotel guarantees you 90. Most hotels will work with you on needing rooms if you give them plenty of notice.

If you have any questions about a contract, you can contact your Regional Director or any member of the IGBO board, we are here to help if we can.

## Fundraising

Fundraising is done all year long and is very important to help you raise funds for banquet costs, donations to charity, gifts to bowlers, and administrative expenses. Here are some ideas that have worked for other tournaments:

- Weekly Brackets on leagues
- Monthly Lottery drawings
- Gift Basket Raffles
- Wine tasting events
- Bowling evens such as 9 Pin no tap, 40 Frame Game, mini tournaments, etc.
- Stay at home tournaments
- Product sales at bowling events
- Boat cruises/Bus crawls
- Golf tournaments
- Card Tournaments (Euchre, Poker, etc.)
- Super Bowl/March Madness boxes
- Drag Show event

## Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a great way to raise money for all the things that registration fees do not cover. Here are some tips to help secure sponsors.

- Utilize any contacts you may have thru your leagues. Small business owners are often willing to provide sponsorship in return for advertising their company at your events, on your website, or publications.
- Research your area for any companies that donate to local LGBTQ organizations.
- Develop a sponsorship document you can provide to prospective sponsors with a tiered level structure. For their donations, depending on the tier, there are things you can offer in exchange.
- If a sponsor requires a 501(c)(3) designation, you can accept cash donations thru IGBO, they can send the money to the IGBO Treasurer, it is sent back to you less Admin costs.

## Website/Social Media

Having a robust website and/or social media presence is a great way to advertise your event as well as upcoming fundraising events. Consider the following:

- Website – There are many ways to create a website, but you will need a hosting service to publish your website. Hosting services range in costs depending on the extras that are included, such as the ability to host documents, have multiple pages, include email with your tournament as the domain. Example: [director@tournament.org](mailto:director@tournament.org).
  - You may want to seek someone who has website development experience, if not, there are many services that will include easy templates you can use but will be limited in function.
  - Your website should include at the minimum the following:
    - Dates of your next tournament
    - Theme information (if applicable)
    - Host Hotel Link

- Bowling House Link
  - Upcoming Fundraising Events
  - Past Tournament results
  - Contact Information
  - Tournament Registration Link
- Create a Facebook page – This is simple to set up and is a great way to communicate with your members.
  - It is recommended that you limit who can post on your Facebook page or require posts to be approved. This will help you avoid spam messages from being posted to your members.
  - Set up events for your upcoming fundraising events to help advertise and allow people to indicate whether they will be attending.
  - Post photos from past events to engage attendees.
  - Be sure to respond promptly to questions posted on your page or sent via Instant Message.
- Post items on Regional and IGBO FB pages – IGBO has a Social Media Director (smeditor@igbo.org) you can contact to get help with posting information on the IGBO main FB Page. In addition, each Region has their own FB pages. You can contact the Regional Director for access to posting on their pages.

## Tournament Rules

To conduct a successful tournament, a committee must have a slate of rules that are enforceable and provide reasonable guidelines for how the tournament will be conducted. It is the recommendation of IGBO that member tournaments have their rules reviewed by their local USBC association to ensure that they are in line with USBC requirements. At a minimum, tournaments should include the following in their rules:

- Dates, times, fees, number of participants,
- Eligibility requirements,
- Fee breakdown – For example, how much of each entry goes to:
  - Prize Fund
  - Trophies
  - Banquet
  - Administrative Costs
- Guidelines for determining entering averages,
- Handicap determination, and
- Tournament entry closing date.

Sample rules for tournaments are available on the USBC website. Upon request, IGBO can also provide tournament committees with sample rules that have been previously used at Annual and Mid-Year Events. IGBO can also share sample rules by local tournaments. Please keep in mind that these are samples and should be customized for your tournament.

# Registration

Registration encompasses two phases: 1) On-line or Paper Registration for the Tournament and 2) In-Person Registration at the start of the Tournament.

## Pre-Tournament Registration

Most tournaments create an on-line registration where registrants can provide their information and pay the entry fee. On-line registration is the most useful for tournament committees, however, some registrants may not be equipped to register on-line. For these people, you may want to have a paper registration that mirrors the on-line registration that they can fill out and mail to you with their tournament fee enclosed.

IGBO members have the option to use the IGBO Tournament Registration Program. Contact Steve Ingram at [steve@funlovers.com](mailto:steve@funlovers.com) to set up a demo and consultation.

Here are some things to include in your on-line or paper registration:

- Name and contact information
- Preferred name and pronoun to put on their name badges
- A link to your tournament rules
- Entering Average
- Questions about IGBO Tournaments they may have attended to help you identify their TAD average.
- Information about the leagues they bowl on and how the tournament can obtain league standing sheets if need be.
- What hand they bowl with
- USBC Number
- Team Name (if they have a team)
- Doubles Partner Name (if they have a doubles partner)
- Team Lineup Position Preference
- Banquet attendance
- Guests they are bringing
- Optional purchases such as raffle tickets, optional events, or tournament merchandise
- Morality and truth statement

## In-Person Registration

This is the Bowlers first impression of your tournament. You want to set up your registration room to allow the best flow of traffic from the first station to the final check out. You will need volunteers posted at each position who understand their stations. Stations to consider are:

- Check-in/Average Verification - usually this is a binder with a page per bowler. The bowler's information will be included on a sheet in the binder. They should review the information and verify its accuracy. They should also sign the page for your records. This page typically also includes the morality clause mentioned in the above on-line registration section.

- In addition, many tournaments give the registrant a pricing sheet they can check off as they travel through the stations. This sheet should be a carbon form to provide the registrant a copy and the treasurer a copy for reconciliation. Be sure to include a way to indicate if they have already pre-paid during their pre-tournament registration to avoid confusion and duplicating purchases.
- At this station attendees are also given their Badge /lanyard and swag bag (if one is being provided)
- Optional Events such as:
  - Scratch Division
  - Scratch Masters
  - Mega Brackets
  - Dark Horse Doubles
  - Mystery Score
  - Raffle ticket sales
- Check Out/Cashier

### Suggested In-Person Registration Best Practices

- Welcome the bowlers – Often one or more of the Co-Directors roams through the registration room and welcome bowlers, answers questions, and directs people to the various stations.
- The first stop should be the Check-in/Registration section. Volunteers will:
  - Locate the bowler's registration sheet if using a paper system, or electronic profile if using electronic check in.
  - Ask the bowler to verify all their information.
  - Give bowler their badge, lanyard, and swag bag (if applicable.)
  - If they have additional average information, please notify tournament Statistician ASAP.
  - Have the bowler initial/sign at the bottom of the page.
  - Direct them to the next station.
- Each person manning the stations should have a good understanding of what their station represents. For optional jackpot stations a list of all registered bowlers ordered by division and/or name will be provided so as people sign up for that option, the person manning that station can indicate this on the master sheet. This will help the treasurer reconcile at the end of the day.
- Good signage is recommended to help the flow of traffic move one way. If you have a room with two doors and entrance and exit is recommended.
- Be sure all registration sheets are signed and given to the person at the cashier/check out station. This will be very important to reconcile all the transactions after registration closes and bowling begins.

## Volunteers

Without volunteers, you cannot run a tournament. Support is needed at all levels whether it is a major or minor task. THANK your volunteers. Thank them often. Volunteers are needed to:

- Man stations at Registration
- Help at Fundraisers

- Sell 50/50 or Strike pot tickets during the event
- Provide score corrections during the tournament

Where to get volunteers from:

- Partner with a charity
- League bowlers
- Family and friends
- Create a post or event invitation on social media

## IGBO Membership

IGBO cannot dictate that your participants be a member of IGBO, only you can do that in your rules. There are two ways to be a member of IGBO, be a bowler in a league who is a member of IGBO, or pay for Associate Membership for \$25 a year. If your tournament chooses to charge a participation fee for a NON-IGBO members, these funds must be forwarded to the IGBO Treasurer. USBC has a participation fee for non USBC members if the tournament allows it, IGBO does not.

IGBO Membership has benefits. If you allow non-IGBO members to bowl in your event, they are not entitled to any benefit IGBO provides, such as awards, average tracking, and tournament record keeping.

- Although it is optional, it is preferred that tournaments require bowlers be IGBO members either through their league's membership, or if not a bowler on an IGBO league, a direct Associate member.
- If you make IGBO membership a requirement, when your tournament starts accepting applications, the secretary must contact the IGBO Regional Director to get a current copy of IGBO Associates to verify membership of those not on an IGBO member league.
- If your tournament is a member of IGBO, there are a few things you are responsible for turning into IGBO at the close of your tournament:
  - All scores must be submitted within 30 days of your event ending. If your scores are ready before that, you do not have to wait the 30 days to submit them. If you choose to use a Sport or Challenge shot all scores must converted to Ten Pin scores according to rules set forth by USBC and IGBO.
  - If you have a bowler that bowls a 300 or 800 series, remember to go online and apply for their award within 20 days of your event ending.
  - If you are giving away a Storm Certificate, the winner must submit for the bowling ball within 30 days of winning.

## Closing out your Tournament

After your tournament events have concluded, your statistician will compute the scores to complete the awards ceremony. You should be prepared to give out all awards that receive a physical trophy at the awards ceremony.

Most tournaments host a banquet with dinner and a cash bar to present the awards. Your committee should determine an order of events to follow at the banquet. Here are some typical events that occur.

1. Welcoming bowlers and thank them for their participation in your tournament
2. Thank your committee members for their work organizing the tournament
3. Sing the national anthems of all countries represented at your tournament
4. If the IGBO President is at the banquet, introduce him/her and allow them to address the group if they choose.
5. If the IGBO Regional Director for your region is in attendance, give them a chance to address the group if they choose.
6. Present the awards that are receiving a trophy.
  - a. Include at least the top three
  - b. Include the score needed to place in the money
7. Allow Tournament Directors in attendance to give away a free entry to their tournament.
8. Pull raffle tickets through the program.

After the last event is bowled, you have 30 days in which to determine your final prize payouts and mail checks to the recipients. This must equal at least the amount allocated in your entry fee for prize fund multiplied by the amount of people who entered the tournament. Most tournaments add additional funds that were raised throughout the year and during the tournament to make the prizes more attractive to bowlers.

## Reporting Scores to IGBO

IGBO TAD (Tournament Average Database) is a benefit we offer all our member Tournaments to help them with Average Verification of the bowlers participating in their event. This feature is on the main page of the website and is User/Password protected for privacy.

All IGBO Member tournaments are required to send us their scores at the end of their event where we in turn maintain a database of our members and the scores and tournaments they bowl for a running 12 months. Member tournaments should submit scores to TAD at <https://tad.igbo.org> within 30 days of completion of competition. Instructions and templates are located on the Tournament Directors page.

If a member tournament has used a sport pattern or challenge pattern for all of a portion of its events, the member tournament should utilize the sport / challenge conversation chart to report bowled averages to IGBO. While USBC's rule on this isn't entirely clear, USBC clearly states that the goal of reported averages is to ensure a level playing field. As such, the only way to ensure a level playing field when a tournament reports scores on a sport or a challenge pattern is to utilize the average conversion chart.

## Closing Tournament with USBC

You will need to close out your tournament with USBC no later than 30 days after your tournament ends. Their website will provide information so that you can gather what is required. Typically, USBC wants to know how much was paid out to the winners. They do not need scores.

## You're Ready!

You are now ready to host your tournament. IGBO encourages you to reach out to your Regional Director or other Tournament Directors if you have questions along the way. We also appreciate any suggestions you have to make this document as helpful for tournament directors as possible.

Once you've successfully hosted a local tournament, you may want to consider bidding to host an IGBO Tournament. Check out the documents in the IGBO Library for what is involved in that process.

Good luck!

Revision Control Log	
Date	Revision
1/9/2024	Updated to reflect new renewal system, elimination of Part II dues, IGBO ID and providing scores to TAD. (KC)