



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Sports Service

Events@Sport

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Introduction

University of Cambridge Sports Clubs organise a range of different events each year at University, College or community venues. This may include BUCS events, Varsity Matches or regional/national tournaments. This document, based on the Running Sports: Managing Events Guide (Sport England), aims to provide an overview of the key principles that should be applied when planning an event. These can be summarised as:-

- A. Plan
- B. Deliver
- C. Review

The following sections provide some guidance on items to consider when running an event. It is by no means an exhaustive list and clubs should note that not every item will be relevant to every club, so each club needs to ensure that it considers event and sports-specific requirements. The National Governing Body of each sport should have a range of resources to help with the planning and delivery of events. The Sports Service is also very happy to meet with clubs to help them to plan and review events if needed.

Whilst much of this guidance is written for running sporting events, clubs should also take it into account when running other events such as Club Dinners, Open Days etc.

A. Plan

Aims and Objectives – Key Questions

<p>Why are you running the event?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of the event? • Does it meet the aims and objectives of the club? • How will it benefit the club? Finance, publicity, alumni relations, fundraising etc.
<p>When will the event be held?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will your event fit in with the term/academic schedule? • Will your event clash with any other University or local events, BUCS or league competitions? • Have you sufficient time to organise the event?
<p>Where will the event be held?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What facilities and equipment do you require for the event? • Which venue(s) can provide the space and equipment necessary? • Can the venue(s) accommodate the participants, spectators and guests? • Does it have adequate accessible facilities? • Is that venue available? • What is the cost of the venue and can the club afford it? • Traditional vs. practical venue? • Is the venue suitable for all weather conditions or do you need a back-up?

Keeping the Club Senior Treasurer Informed

It is really important for the club/Organising Committees to engage with their Senior Treasurer early in the event planning process. Senior Treasures will then be able to discuss what direct involvement they wish to have in the planning of the event or what key information or updates they wish to receive throughout the process. Senior Treasurers also have a wealth of experience and can provide invaluable guidance when delivering longstanding annual events such as Varsity or when considering new events.

Financial Viability

The club needs to consider very carefully the financial viability of the event. To do this, the club needs to set a budget that clearly identifies the cost of running the event against existing funds, sponsorship and potential income sources. The budget will be based on an estimate initially but it is essential for the club to confirm actual figures as soon as possible, and continue to review expenditure against the budget as the planning process progresses to ensure that the event remains financially viable. Again, the Senior Treasurer should be involved in any discussions involving budgeting for an event.

If the intention is for the club to achieve a profit from the event, it is important to be clear with all those involved from the outset where these funds will be allocated e.g. running expenses, capital or small projects, equipment or a charity. An example budget sheet can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

Event Committee

There is no fixed governance model for organising an event, particularly when it comes to Varsity Matches. Some clubs have established an independent company, others use voluntary alumni or senior committees, joint committees with Oxford or rely on the individual student club committee.

When determining the right organising structure for the club it is important to consider:

- What areas of expertise do you need to run the event?
- Which people within your club/organisation have these specific areas of expertise?
- Do you need to recruit people from outside the club/organisation?
- Are the key people needed available?
- Do you need more volunteers?

Once the key people have been identified, an event committee should be established. It is not advisable to have just one person responsible for all aspects of managing an event. By having an event committee, the burden of responsibility can be shared more effectively. This is particularly important for the wellbeing of students, as they also have academic and playing responsibilities to manage as well.

Regardless of the governance structure for events, it is essential that the roles and responsibilities of each organisation and individuals involved are clearly defined. It is also important to liaise early in the process with the venue, regardless of whether it is a College, University or community ground to ensure that expectations are clearly captured.

Event History

There are a number of Varsity Matches that have been running for many years with many associated traditions. Whilst organising such events it is highly important to consider which historical items should be preserved and celebrated, and what new innovations could be implemented alongside the more traditional elements

Committee Meetings

The Event Committee should meet regularly to ensure that all aspects of the event are planned effectively and in a timely manner. The number of meetings needed will depend on the nature and complexity of the event. However, every meeting needs to have a clear purpose and structure so as to make good use of people's times. Setting up an action plan with clear timeframes is often helpful to keep the planning process on track. Keeping a record of the meetings is also important, not just for ensuring items are not missed but to help with evaluation following the event, and the planning process for future events.

Event Manager/Coordinator

It is helpful for the event to have an Event Manager/Coordinator to guide and steer it through the planning, delivery and review process. The person taking on this role should be able to:

- Communicate effectively with people at all levels;
- Be able to delegate effectively and monitor workload;
- Motivate other committee members;
- Meet deadline and encourage others to do so; and
- Keep accurate records.

It is important that the Event Manager/Coordinator is not overloaded but is supported by a pro-active committee. It is also essential that consideration be given to succession planning so that good practice can be shared with future organisers. This is particularly important when student Event Managers/Coordinators hand over to the next generation.

Once the Event Committee has been established, groups or individuals should be assigned management areas.

Management Area	Responsibilities might include:-
FACILITIES	Booking venue (including alternative venue for wet weather), legal restrictions, car parking, catering, disabled access, toilets, changing areas, reception/registration desk, information points, lost children point, First Aid/medical area, lost property, security, telephones, venue management, staff and volunteer facilities.
EQUIPMENT	Chairs and tables, directional signs, display boards, fire extinguishers, First Aid kits, public address system, radios, scoreboards and timing systems, seating, video, sports equipment (rackets, balls, posts, goals) traffic/pedestrian barriers, court/pitch markings.
ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE	Event budget, income and expenditure, application/entry forms, procedures and policies, code of conduct, VIP list,

	complimentary tickets, insurance, meeting schedule – dates, structure, production of minutes and records, printing programmes, results, registration, rules of individual sports, telephones/emails, post-event evaluation.
STAFF/VOLUNTEERS	Announcers, attendants, bar/catering staff, caretakers, car park attendants, cleaners, officials (plus reserves), photographer, receptionists, safety staff/lifeguards, security staff, speakers, staff (general) stewards, volunteers, uniforms, refreshments, accommodation, transport, training/briefing sessions, pay/expenses.
SUPPORT SERVICES	Bar and catering, clubs/partners/National Governing Bodies, emergency services, lost property, lost children, First Aid support
TRANSPORT	Public transport, teams' transport, staff transport, pool cars and drivers, arrival/departure arrangements, airport/railway pick-ups.
MEDAL CEREMONIES & BLUES AWARDS	Medal ceremonies, medals, commentators/announcers, player of the match, 'Thank you' gifts for committees or VIPS. Post Varsity – Blues, Half-Blue and Club Colour awards
HEALTH AND SAFETY	Risk assessments, emergency planning, First Aid provision and insurance. Clubs should refer to the Sports Service "Safety@Sport" document for further guidance in this area.
MARKETING AND PROMOTION	Publicity timetable, branding, poster/banner sites, media coverage (including website and social media). Liaison with the Sports Service and University Communications Office.
POST-EVENT CLEAR UP	Closing the event, dismantling equipment, storage and return of equipment, cleaning, refuse collection.

Each area should develop their own plan, listing tasks to be completed, how they will be undertaken and who is responsible for it.

Insurance

Any sporting event will require insurance, most likely above and beyond what is in place for the club as standard. This could include: accident, cancellation and public liability, property loss or damage, etc. This is an extremely important area of event planning. You will need to:

- Check what type of insurance cover is required;
- Confirm who is responsible for providing insurance cover i.e. your club/organisation, the venue owners or the suppliers (e.g. the hot food supply on the day); and
- Anticipate any unexpected events and ensure that you are covered.

- Store a copy of the policy, and any accident forms, for a period of time following the event in case a claim arises at a later date (adults have three years to make a claim for negligence, and under 18s have until their 18th birthday plus three years).

NB: Always check your insurance details thoroughly and seek written copies of other parties' insurance details who will be on the site as a part of your event.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety needs to be a core guiding principle throughout the planning process across all management areas. Key questions include:

- Have you completed or obtained the necessary risk assessments?
- What safety precautions do you need to take as a result?
- Are you likely to need marshals or security? If so, how many, where will they be posted and what training do they need?
- Do you need to provide refreshments or catering? Are you using suppliers with sufficient food safety certification, equipment and experience for the event?
- Do you have an appropriate emergency procedure in place that is agreed in advance with the venue?
- Is any emergency training required or do you need to engage First Aid/emergency services for the event? And if so, on what basis to meet the National Governing Body's requirements?
- Do you need to give health and safety announcements? What information should be included?

Medical Support/First Aid and Accidents

A number of sports, such as Rugby and Boxing, have clear requirements when it comes to medical support and doctors. Clubs should check with their National Governing Body/competition regulations to determine if and when there is a requirement to have a doctor for training, pre-competition assessments or competitions.

Clubs should also check their National Governing Body guidance to determine what type of First Aid/emergency aid and equipment should be in place for their event. For some events, such as Trampoline, the National Governing Body may require that an ambulance and/or paramedic is on site throughout major events.

Finally, any accidents that occur during sports club events should be reported to the Sports Service via the [online Accident Form](#). If there is a significant incident or major accident during an event run by University sports clubs, even if it is not on a University site, it is very important that the club contact the Sports Service as soon as possible for guidance and support.

Equipment

Most clubs will own their own equipment and this may be sufficient to run the event. However, it is not uncommon for a club to borrow equipment from another club to deliver an event, and indeed some clubs share equipment. It is essential that any equipment used for events is well maintained with the appropriate safety certification where appropriate. Clubs must ensure that any borrowed equipment is insured to an appropriate level.

Legal Restrictions

Event Committees should liaise with venues on the management of any legal restrictions and/or licensing requirements. Potential licences that may be required include;

- [Entertainment](#) – including music, dancing and public performances
- [Alcohol](#) – if you are intending to sell or supply alcohol at the event
- [Distributing Leaflets](#) – in certain areas you may be required to obtain permission

You may also need to consider applying for a [Temporary Events Notice \(TEN\)](#) if you want to carry out a ‘licensable activity’ on unlicensed premises in England or Wales.

If you are planning to handle/prepare/store/serve food, you should always follow guidance issued by the [Food Standards Agency](#) (FSA), and also check if you are required to register.

Sponsorship

Clubs have historically been successful in achieving sponsorship from kit and equipment suppliers and/or local and national businesses for events. When looking for sponsors, or when approached by sponsors, clubs need to consider carefully any contractual terms and what it could be committing itself, or by extension, the University, to deliver. Clubs should also take into account ethical considerations related to potential sponsors and whether an association with a particular individual or organisation could present a reputational risk to the Club or University. For the avoidance of doubt, advice should always be sought from the Club Senior Treasurer and Director of Sport before entering into sponsorship agreements.

Marketing, Promotion and Reporting

Some sports events may provide the opportunity to generate income through participants and spectators. As with other aspects of event planning, it is important to allocate enough time and resources to plan and distribute publicity effectively. When appointing the person co-ordinating this functional area, ensure it is someone with experience of marketing and promotion.

The Sports Service is able to assist with promoting and reporting on events being organised by registered clubs via the University of Cambridge Sport website and social media channels. In conjunction with Oxford University Sport, we've been working on a joint Varsity website. This will become the central website for fixtures and results for all our Clubs

Promotion of the event should be done in accordance with the Club's social media policy and also using the guidance published by the Sports Service.

Alumni Engagement

The continued engagement of former members is a valued aspect of the club, not least in the on-going support offered by many alumni members. It is therefore important that alumni engagement is considered early in the process, particularly when organising the Varsity Match. A common mistake is to leave contacting alumni too late for them to attend the event. An early ‘save the date’ correspondence is particularly helpful for alumni.

Some clubs organise ‘Old Boys’ and ‘Old Girls’ matches as part of their Varsity Day. Clubs need to ensure that any alumni participating in a club sporting event are aware of their status and understand the position in respect of their insurance cover.

Spectators

Major venues

Where sports clubs have events at major facilities, the host venue or city will have their own spectator management protocols. Clubs need to ensure that they understand these and work with the host to ensure that they are implemented effectively. Such events include:

- The Boat Race (Tideway)
- Varsity Rugby (Twickenham)
- Varsity Cricket and Real Tennis (Lord's)
- Varsity Hockey Matches (Southgate)

University, College or local venues

For clubs organising their own events independently or as a part of a joint committee, the following considerations should be addressed:

- How many spectators can you have on site? Consider travel to the site and parking availability, fire evacuation requirements, taking into account equipment and temporary seating, as well as participants, volunteers, staff and spectators. It is essential that the site has sufficient toilets for the numbers attending and that these are regularly checked during the day. This is easily overlooked and can cause a lot of problems.
- Think about how you will separate the participants from spectators during the day in terms of changing and toilet facilities, circulation spaces and in the competition area. This should be included in the event plan and risk assessment. Most National Governing Bodies will have guidance where spectators should be situated in relation to the field of play.
- Where needed, put in place an appropriate ticket allocation/purchase mechanism to control numbers on site.
- Publish a Spectator Code of Conduct as part of the ticket allocation process, including an alcohol policy where appropriate, and ensure that these are clearly displayed on the day. Many National Governing Bodies have Codes of Conduct for all those involved in the sport, whether participants or spectators.
- Volunteers need to be assigned to checking tickets and provide information and support to spectators with clear instructions as to what is expected of them.

Safeguarding (including Spectators)

- University sports clubs should not normally run events specifically for children. However, they may well have children present in the audience. If the Club is likely to have children in the audience then sufficient safeguarding policies and procedures need to be in place. Sports clubs are advised to speak to the Sports Service early in the process to discuss the event and safeguarding requirements.
- The Child Protection in Sport Unit has a [Safe Sports Management Tool](#) that clubs should use when considering running events involving children

B. Deliver

Event Briefing – Before the Day

It is essential that everyone involved in the running of your event knows exactly what they have to do on the day itself. If you have identified some training needs, for example, emergency action plan, you must programme these training sessions well in advance of the actual event. You will need to hold briefing sessions for the event either a day or two before, on the day itself, or both; this may involve a verbal briefing.

Documents for Event Organisers and Volunteers

It is important to provide written notes, task sheets or both to all those involved in running the event. This might include information on:

- The event programme and timings
- A map of key areas
- Roles and responsibilities
- Key contact information for issues that might arise during the day
- Emergency protocols and contacts
- Competition rules
- Volunteer Agreement (if appropriate)
- Code of Conduct (organisers, volunteers, participants, spectators, officials, etc.)
- Safeguarding information including dealing with lost children
- Photography, filming, and social media policies and procedures

On the Day

Parking	All car-parking areas should be well signposted and supervised if necessary.
Signposting	Clear signposts should be in place well in advance of the event starting. It is helpful to check that it works well before the day of the event.
Facilities for disabled people	All access points and facilities for disabled people should be well signposted.
Meet and Greet	Reception – your reception area should be clearly signposted and ready for early arrivals.
VIPS	Hosts – decide in advance who will meet key guests and press, and make sure that everyone is clear about their role. On the day itself, make sure that hosts are available to meet any early arrivals.
Officials and helpers/volunteers	All officials and helpers/volunteers should be clearly identified by wearing uniform & badges. Ensure all staff look smart and tidy, this makes them more approachable and promotes a professional image.

First Aid	The timing for First Aid support to be on duty needs to be considered in advance: only during competition or as soon as spectators are on site. First Aid facilities should be easily accessible and clearly signposted. All officials and helpers/volunteers should be clearly briefed so that they can direct people to the right place.
Toilets and Changing Facilities	Toilets and changing facilities need to be clearly signposted and regularly checked throughout the day so that rubbish can be removed and toilet paper replenished.
Refreshments	You will have made arrangements for catering well before the day of your event (including ensuring that any relevant licenses are in place), referring back to the FSA Guidance . On the day itself, allow enough time to set up the refreshment areas and make sure they are clearly signposted. If you are serving alcohol at the event, you should consider whether a Code of Conduct is required.
Club Members	Club members should be reminded that whilst in attendance at the event (whether competing, spectating or helping), they are representing the club and should therefore abide by your club's Code of Conduct at all times.

Contingency Planning

Even the best-laid plans can go wrong. This may be because of something that has been overlooked or something that is beyond everyone's control. When planning your event, it is essential to try to predict what might happen on the day. Your Event Committee should hold a session specifically to identify possible problems and develop contingency plans you may need to implement.

You will need to ask yourself, and find answers to questions such as:

- What will we do if it rains?
- What if participants aren't there on time?
- What if there aren't enough officials on the day?
- What if the main VIP is delayed in traffic?
- What if more people than anticipated turn up to watch?
- What if there is an accident?

Your contingency plans will need to include who is responsible for dealing with specific problems if they should arise. These people will need to be able to act quickly and calmly to analyse and deal with the situation. This will minimise the disruption and allow things to return to normal as soon as possible.

Finishing the Event and Clearing Up

It is easy to focus on the event itself and overlook post-event details. Don't forget to build the following into your event plan:

- Closing the event on the day, including presentations, packing up displays, dismantling and returning equipment, collecting litter, cleaning and so on. You will need to make sure there are enough helpers/volunteers to complete this part of your event plan.
- Thanking people who have been involved, volunteers, key staff, and venue owners
- A final meeting to evaluate the event and start planning for the next.

Making Notes

The delivery stage is often intense with limited spare time for those involved. Nonetheless, organisers are encouraged to note and make use of mobile phones to take reference photographs or videos of specific areas for improvement in the future. A visual record will help future organisers to understand the issue in question e.g. the hazardous positioning of an ice cream van on a canal towpath during a regatta.

C. Review

After months of planning and hard work, it is easy to forget the review element of event management.

Setting up a review meeting with the Event Committee is a really important final step to assess the success of the event and to prepare for future events. Individual committee members will need time to go away and reflect on the event and the areas they were responsible for, and to prepare a verbal and/or written report for the formal review meeting.

For those responsible for the financial side of things, this will mean balancing the books and producing an overall financial report. For those involved in publicity, this may mean compiling a list of the press coverage received and assessing whether it was adequate.

The timing of the final review meeting is important. You will need to allow committee members enough time to prepare for it, but it will also need to be close enough to the event to be relevant.

There will be a surprising number of things to do after your event. These will include:

- Outstanding correspondence – for example, sending 'thank you' letters to helpers, sponsors and guests, and distributing competition results.
- Post-event publicity – this may involve submitting a report on your event to your club/organisation website, the Sports Service, newspapers and National Governing Body newsletters/websites.
- Financial records – you will need to balance the books and produce a financial report that accounts for all expenditure and income, including any grants or donations received.

- Final report – this should include a summary of your planning process, details of any problems encountered, a review of the event itself and any conclusions. Send a copy to your sponsors and other interested partners, and keep a copy safe for future reference.

In cases where a significant shortcoming or incident has occurred, it is important for the Club to work with the Sports Service to review the event and risk assessment.

Lessons to be Learnt

It is very important to review all aspects of the event to establish what went well and what you need to improve next time. This may involve reviewing:

- Feedback from participants and spectators, both verbal and in writing – use questionnaires and keep letters.
- Your publicity strategy – was it effective? Did you get the media coverage you wanted?
- Your event overview and functional area event plans.

Learn from your experience. Ask committee members what they would do differently next time. Note their suggestions and keep them with your event report for future reference.

Once you have recovered from running your event and tied up all the loose ends, what next? If your event is to be held annually, the chances are you will need to start planning for next year. Careful planning and attention to detail are key elements of running all successful sports events. Just because your last event was a success doesn't mean the next one will take less time and effort to plan. Even if you intend to hold the same event next year, you will still need to devote as much time and effort to the planning stages.

Handing Over

If you are not responsible for the next event, you should ensure that as much information as possible, including the lessons learnt, are handed over to the next organiser so that they can benefit from all of the hard work that you have done and continue to improve the event.

There is space at the end of the Club Registration Form (Sports Service Moodle Site) to save Event information/Reviews for future committees.

KEY CONTACTS



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APPENDIX 1: Example budget sheet

Expenditure (B)	Estimated £	Actual £
Venue/Event		
Hire		
Trophies/medals		
Equipment		
Displays/signs		
Gifts		
Other		
Support Services		
Admin		
Travel		
Meetings		
Postage		
Telephone		
Printing		
Emergency Services		
Other		
Financial/Legal		
Legal Costs		
Travel		
Officials' expenses		
Police costs		
Insurance		
Other		

Publicity/Promotion		
Programme printing		
Artwork/design		
Posters/banners		
Website		
Guests/VIPS		
Photography		
Sponsorship Packages		
Income	Estimated £	Actual £
Sponsorship		
Grants		
Donations		
Tickets		
Entry Fees		
Programme Advertising		
Programmes		
Other		
Total Expenditure		
Total Income		
Expenditure – Income		