**Preparing a Chess Tournament in Current (Covid) Environment**

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| **DO** | **DON’T** |
| Plan your approach. As a minimum you need an action list. This is a project. The clock is ticking. So every step (action) needs a deadline against it. Not planning is planning for failure. Having a plan will give the people you are engaging immediate confidence in your ability to deliver. | Deal with Covid challenges by committee. In a rapidly changing environment the parameters will change before any formal agreement can be reached. To this end your Exec or Committee should be the last body you formally deal with, having built up a reasonable approach (albeit work in progress) with the support of health care personnel and a limited number of respected chess colleagues. |
| Build a Cost Model. Cover everything no matter what. It should automatically generate how many entrants you need (without donations) to cover your cost. It will tell you (against e.g. seating constraints) whether your competition is remotely viable financially  | Lazily reference websites. Yes reference websites e.g. Government, ECF, BBC but highlight specifically where and why. |
| Have a Plan B. If something must happen what will it be? Major and Minor sections only? Reduced prize fund? No FIDE rating? | Make exceptions to rules for friends. Word will get out. Credibility gone. |
| Reference available material on your organisations website. In this instance the ECF Risk Assessment Template. | Understate the risk (of Covid). It will undermine people’s confidence in your judgement. |
| Look for ‘like’ events from which you can learn. What measures did they take? Were these successful? What was the approval process? | Always have to be right |
| Engage with Local Council. Through them you will have access to the Health Authority and Police. They will have a Covid Officer who should advise you whether your proposed competition meets current Health and Safety guidelines.Of course – if your premises are Council run this engagement will be through the manager of the premises | Overstate what you can achieve. There will always be a level of risk, even in normal times. Potential players should be aware that the proposed precautions are designed to minimise the risk, not to remove it. |
| Visualise what you are trying to achieve. Play out the part of the competitor in your head - arriving to play and how he/she will get from entry to the grounds to his/her board.  | Panic. In the current situation Government announcements are almost daily. The September 8 ‘Groups of 6’ breaking news caused instant (negative) reaction to the likelihood of Northumberland Congress going ahead. But the detail wasn’t in the breaking news and the people who matter – those who have devolved responsibility for implementing the new guidelines – were likely all in bed. So sleep on it, collect your thoughts and speak to them in the morning. Stay away from your keyboard until then!  |
| Imagine you are a 70 year old competitor desperately missing OTB chess but concerned for your and your families safety. What measure do you expect to see in place to assure you? |  |
| Commit your thoughts to paper. And share with two or three colleagues/friends who ideally redress your weaknesses. Mine are knowledgeable and sticklers for detail and can be relied upon for prompt and honest advice. They don’t have to be chess players. I referenced two chess friends (one should be an arbiter) and three Health Care professionals – one a nurse in a Covid recover unit. |  |
| Build up a communication process. Meet face to face every week with your Host. Be able to reflect progress against that planned activity. Start communications with candidate entrants. |  |
| Always tell the truth |  |
| Be prepared to compromise |  |
| Maintain a ‘How can we’ attitude at all times. Else how can you expect people to get on board and enter. |  |
| Ignore abusive/nay saying Social Media conversations. You are dealing with people who know – it’s their job. |  |
| Think outside the box. So rather than “Well, for 120 people the cost will be £xxxx for the weekend” try “I need to accommodate xx people and can afford £xxx for accommodation. Can you help me please”? In the current climate everybody needs to be flexible. The Northumberland approach was “We can afford £xxx but will go open book and profit share with you”. Ref above, ‘Build a cost model’ and ‘Always tell the truth’  |  |