

Running a Game Competition

by Seamas Mac Daibhid



First presented at Cracked Anvil Collegium, February, AS XXIX (1995)
Last Updated April XLII (2008)

Copyright © 2000, 2002, 2008, Seamas Mac Daibhid; all rights reserved.

Reprinted from SCAdia.org by permission.

This article may be reproduced and distributed in printed form at official or unofficial activities of the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) or reprinted in official or unofficial SCA publications without prior permission provided that the text is reproduced in its entirety, including this notice and the copyright notice.

This article may not be distributed by any electronic means. Please do not copy this PDF file or any of its contents to any other website, distribute it by email or other electronic transmission, or post it on newsgroups, feeds, or bulletin boards; instead, please provide a link to SCAdia.org. The author requests that he be notified of any use or distribution of this material.

A GAME COMPETITION can add interest to an event of any size. People who aren't occupied by period fighting or arts-and-sciences activities can compete in period games instead, and spectators often enjoy the matches. However, a game competition, if not well organized, can be a disaster for the competitors and a nightmare for the person responsible for running it.

I offer here a guide on techniques I have learned for running a game competition, and on problems I have learned to avoid.

What Makes It Fun

A game competition that isn't fun for the competitors is a waste of everybody's time. Keep these points in mind to keep the fun in:

- **Mix styles of games**, so that some require strategy, some favor dexterity, and one, perhaps, has a small element of chance.
- **Carefully choose games** that are easy to learn, fast to play, and not too well known.
- **Start early in the day**, so that people can play freely without feeling rushed. Give everybody who enters plenty of chance to play.
- **Encourage spectators**, to give the players a feeling that they are part of the entertainment for the event itself.
- **Offer small prizes for each game** in the competition, and a larger overall prize for the best game player.
- **Don't require everyone to play every game**, but for the overall prize require players to compete in a minimum number of different games to qualify.
 - ◆ For a 3-game competition, require players to participate in 2 games to qualify.
 - ◆ For a 4-game competition, require players to participate in 3 games to qualify.
- **Finally, don't forget that the SCA is an educational society.** If there is an interesting or unusual history behind a game, work that into your explanation of the rules, or make a special game set that reflects the history.

Contents

What Makes It Fun.....	1
What Makes It Fail.....	2
Choosing the Games.....	2
Board Games.....	2
Games of Skill.....	3
Play-Testing.....	3
Modifying Games.....	3
Preparations.....	4
Prepare Yourself.....	4
Prepare the Autocrat.....	4
Prepare the Games.....	4
Prepare Sign-up Sheets.....	4
Prepare the Rules.....	4
Running the Games.....	6
Sign Up Competitors.....	6
Teach the Games.....	6
Organize the Lists.....	6
Run the Games.....	8
Tips for Running the Games... ..	8
Scoring.....	9
Score Individual Winners.....	9
Score the Overall Winner.....	9
Drop-outs.....	10
Ties in Overall Score.....	11

What Makes It Fail

A game competition that never ends, or where players are being rushed to finish one match and start another, will not be a popular memory. Be careful about these things:

- **Limit the number of different games involved.** A good competition needs no more than three or four different games (with possibly one more game to use strictly as a tiebreaker).
- **Limit the number of people who can enter.** A relatively small field of competitors (8 to 10) can take *all day* to play out. Tactfully—but firmly—discourage casual entrants who are likely to get bored and drop out anyway.
- **Make sure you've got at least two boards** (or other sets of required equipment) for each game. The more matches that can be played simultaneously, the more quickly and smoothly the competition can run.
- **Make sure the rules for the competition and for each game are clear.** Your players will be angry if they think you changed the rules on them.
- **Devote your time to the competition**—don't agree to run it concurrently with some other task. A game competition is very nearly a full-time job for the person in charge. This extends even unto feast, as your competition may run into the evening.

Choosing the Games

Select an assortment of period games for your competition. Choose either three or four different games—two will not give enough variety, and five will be too complex to run. ***All must be two-player games.*** If you like, choose one many-player game to throw in for a tiebreaker (see [Ties in Overall Score](#) below), but do not score it toward the overall winner.

Try to keep the games somewhat balanced in difficulty. Players can pass up one game completely and still qualify for the overall prize—don't give lazy players two dead-easy games while serious competitors are knocking themselves out on a real brain-buster.

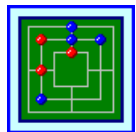
Good period and period-style games can be found almost anywhere. Look in *The Known World Handbook* from the SCA Marketplace (<https://stockclerk.sca.org>). Look in your children's' encyclopedia. On the Internet, THL Moira and I have found links to several sites which give rules for games, such as:

- <http://www.waks.org/game-hist> — the *Medieval & Renaissance Games* page of Justin du Coeur.
- <http://www.tradgames.org.uk> — the award-winning *Online Guide to Traditional Games* page of James Masters.
- <http://www.mastersgames.com/rules/rules.htm> — another page by James Masters.
- <http://www.farisles.org/guilds/gamebrd.htm> — *Making Game Boards* by the Far Isles Guilds.
- <http://www.gamesmuseum.uwaterloo.ca> — *Elliott Avedon Museum and Archive of Games* of the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

You can easily find others.

Board Games

- Pick at least one board game such as **Nine Men's Morris**. Avoid games of pure chance, with no element of strategy—your competition is for the best player, not the luckiest. On the other hand, pure strategy games such as Chess or Go can take quite a while to play (see [Modifying Games](#) below).



Games of Skill

- Pick at least one game of skill such as **Shove-Ha'penny**. These are games of hand-eye dexterity, involving pieces that are pushed, stacked, tossed or otherwise manipulated physically. Do not pick games of chance in disguise, such as dice games. A game of skill should involve a definite target, and dexterity should be a factor. (If you can't improve with practice, it's not really skill.) Pick games in which ties are impossible, unlikely, or quickly resolved.

Play-Testing

Play-test every game. Find someone who will promise not to enter the competition, then play several matches of each game, with the following questions in mind:

- **Do I really understand the rules?** If a rule is unclear, work out what your interpretation is going to be. Make a note of each of the confusing points for later use (see [Prepare the Rules](#) below).
- **How long do the rules take to learn?** Use games with rules that are easy to explain. If you can't fit the rules into a few sentences, the game may be too complex to use.
- **How long does the game take to play?** Remember that your competition may involve dozens of individual matches. A game in which a typical match takes more than fifteen or twenty minutes is probably too slow.
- **Is the game any fun to play?** Games that sound good on paper can turn out to be tedious when played, especially if one player usually can gain a quick and decisive lead.

If a game doesn't live up to your hopes in play-testing, *don't hesitate to replace it*. There are plenty of others.

Modifying Games

If a game is lengthy to play, lacking in strategy, difficult to learn, or just too well known, but you *really* want to use it anyway, then look for a way to modify it slightly, as with the following examples from *The Known World Handbook*.

- **Nine Men's Morris** is a well-known game, and experienced players would have a strong advantage in a competition. Using the lesser-known Twelve Men's Morris, with more men and more lines, forces experienced players to learn a modified strategy.
- **Hyena Chase**, as described in *KWH*, is pure chance: each person rolls a die and moves his man. Giving each player two men introduces at least a small element of strategy, in the choice of which man to move.
- **Shove-Ha'penny**, as described in *KWH*, is quite a lengthy game (especially for the unskilled player): the winner must score three points in each of nine beds. To modify it for competition play, grant a match win to the first player to score three points in any three of his nine beds. Cutting out two-thirds of the required scores cuts much more than two-thirds off of the play time.
- **Chess**, of course, suffers from many of the disadvantages above; it is lengthy, difficult, *and* well-known. If you must have Chess, I recommend that you set a small maximum number of entries, limit entry to people who already know the basic game, and choose a variant form (such as Byzantine Chess, which is played on a circular board). To keep play time down, encourage players to concede matches when badly outplayed.

Preparations

Prepare Yourself

Gather plenty of paper and pencils, and plenty of patience. Make sure you aren't down for any other major activity, such as heralding or serving feast. If your competition actually finishes early, you can volunteer for anything you like, but plan to be busy until midnight. This may sound obvious, but ***make sure you remember how to play each game you've selected.***

Prepare the Autocrat

Presumably the autocrat is aware that the event will include a game competition, but make certain that you are allocated space at troll for game sign-up. You don't want your players being booted aside every time somebody wants to have a tourney or serve lunch, so make certain your autocrat allocates a designated "Game Area" on site.

Prepare the Games

Make sure you have boards or equipment for every game. If you borrow games from other people, get them well in advance of your event—if someone forgets all the chessmen, your whole competition can fall apart. ***Make sure you've got at least two sets for every game;*** three or four sets are even better. For games that use marbles or pebbles for men, make sure you've got several spare men.

Don't forget to make or collect prizes for each game. If you are making your own boards or game pieces for the competition, you might consider giving them out as prizes at the end.

Prepare Sign-up Sheets

You will need one sign-up sheet for each game in the competition. Don't make a sign-up sheet for the overall competition; anybody entered in the minimum number of individual games should be automatically considered for the overall prize.

Prepare the Rules

You should prepare signboards with three kinds of rules:

- Overall rules of the competition
- Individual rules for each game
- Courtesy guidelines for players and spectators

For example, for a three-game competition, you might prepare the following signs:

COMPETITION RULES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The games are Twelve-Men's Morris, Shove-Ha'penny and Byzantine Chess • You may enter any or all games (Byzantine Chess entrants must already know basic chess play) • Prize for winner of each game • Ties in round-robin play will play 2-of-3 tiebreaker round

Example 1: *Overall Rules*

OVERALL PRIZE RULES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must enter at least 2 of the games to win the overall prize • Overall prize goes to player with most match wins in all games • Matches won against players who drop out may be omitted from scoring • Ties in overall score will play 2-of-3 tiebreaker round

Example 2: *Overall Rules (cont.)*

PLAYER COURTESY

- PLEASE — Be available for your matches
- PLEASE — Be alert for your turn
- PLEASE — No practice games
- PLEASE — Do not enter if you are fighting in the lists or shooting in IKAC
- PLEASE — If there is a disagreement over rules, ask the games-master for clarification

Example 3: *Player Courtesy*

SPECTATOR COURTESY

- PLEASE — Yield game boards immediately when competition players appear
- PLEASE — Do not assist the players
- PLEASE — Do not discuss possible moves, strategies, or errors within earshot of players

Example 4: *Spectator Courtesy*

TWELVE-MEN'S MORRIS RULES

- Move no man until all of your men have been placed on the board
- Move along or form rows on any marked straight line (including diagonals)
- Capture from a row of 3 only if opponent has no other men
- If an existing row of 3 men is broken, at least 2 of its men must be moved and replaced before it will capture another man
- Capturing all but 2 of opponent's men counts as a match win
- Leaving opponent no legal move counts as a match win

Example 5: *Twelve Men's Morris Rules*

BYZANTINE CHESS RULES

- PLEASE - Do not enter unless you already know basic Chess rules of play
- In round-robin play, draws & stalemates count as 1/2 match win for each player
- "Bare king" & perpetual check count as full match wins
- Center circle is not a playing space
- No 2-space first move for pawns
- No pawn promotion
- Pawns move either clockwise or counterclockwise, and may not change direction
- If a clockwise and counterclockwise pawn of the same color meet face to face, opponent may remove both pawns without using a turn

Example 6: *Byzantine Chess Rules*

Tailor these examples to your specific event; for instance, you might not have an IKAC shoot on your schedule. If the examples seem like an awful lot of in-your-face rules, remember that game competitions have no kingdom standard requirements and no game marshals. If you don't tell players your rules, they will make up their own.

Note that the rules for Morris and Chess are not complete. You will explain the complete rules to the players at the event; these signs are merely reminders of the more unusual, confusing, or easily overlooked aspects. As you play-tested the games you chose, you should have observed which specific rules gave you the most trouble; these are the ones to put on the boards.

Running the Games

Sign Up Competitors

Have all sign-up lists and the competition overall rules (but *not* the individual game rules—don't tell your players more than the names of your chosen games until the competition begins) at your event's troll booth when your site opens. Don't let your lists stay open too long. You have two limiting factors: the size of your lists, and the time available for the competition. For a one-day event, take entries for the first hour or so after the site opens. For a weekend event, close your entries no later than about 10:00 on Saturday morning. If time passes and scarcely anybody is entering, have your herald call for entrants.

On the other hand, if the lists fill up quickly, have the herald announce that sign-up will soon end. *Don't set a deadline in advance*—just close the lists when they start getting too big. If one game fills up much faster than the others, close that list earlier, but don't close more than one game early—the very last entrant you accept **must** be allowed to enter enough games to qualify for the overall prize.

Once your lists are closed, **do not** take late entries. Be firm about this right up front, or you will have trouble later.

Teach the Games

Once sign-up is closed, move to the designated Game Area and set up all of your signboards, game boards, and playing pieces. When the Game Area is ready, have the herald call for all of your players to gather there. I do mean **all** players; this is when you explain the rules. Anyone who fails to report at this time may need to be disqualified from the competition.

Briefly describe the overall competition rules and scoring, then give detailed explanations of individual games. *Show* the players how the games are played; have an assistant to play against if needed. Concentrate on any confusing points, using your prepared rule boards as visual aids. Give the players ample chance to ask questions.

While you are explaining, get to know your players' faces and garb, so that you can find them later when you need them to play. Also, emphasize how much of the day they will spend playing—this is the best time to discourage people who are likely to drop out. Try not to let anybody past this general meeting who won't stay to finish the competition. *Drop-outs after the games have started are a serious headache for you (see Drop-Outs below).*

Organize the Lists

The best competition allows each entrant to play a large number of matches, both for enjoyment and because the overall winner is determined by total number of matches won.

Whenever possible, use round-robin lists (each player plays one match against each of his opponents) instead of elimination lists (each player plays until he loses his first or

Number of Players	Round-Robin Matches	Single-Elimination Matches
2	1	1
3	3	2 + 1 bye
4	6	3
5	10	4 + 2 byes
6	15	5 + 1 bye
7	21	6 + 1 bye
8	28	7
9	36	8 + 3 byes
10	45	9 + 2 byes
11	55	10 + 2 byes
12	66	11 + 1 bye
.	.	.
.	.	.
.	.	.
<i>n</i>	$\frac{n(n-1)}{2}$	

Table 1: *Matches in Round-Robin vs. Single-Elimination Games*

second game). Round-robin play is also easier for you to run, because the matches may be played in any order. However, the number of matches in a round-robin game increases very quickly with the number of players. (See **Table 1** for number of matches for up to twelve players.) Unless your game plays *very* quickly, I don't recommend using round-robin lists for more than six or seven players.

Round-Robin List

For a round-robin game, draw up a full chart of all matches to be played. The simplest way I have found to do this is to make two lists of names (on a *full* sheet of paper) and draw lines between them. Down the left, list all players except the *last* one; down the right, list all players except the *first* one. From each name on the left, draw a straight line to each name on the right that is *on the same level or lower*. Thus the first name on the left will have lines to every name on the right; the second name on the left will have lines to every name but the first on the right; and so on. See **Figure 1** at right for a five-person round-robin chart.

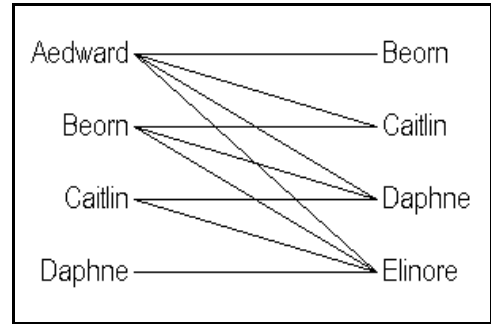


Figure 1: Round-Robin Match Chart

Such a chart has one line for every match to be played. As matches are finished, write the name of the winner just above the line for that match. At the end, count the number of times you have written each name to score the matches.

A possible alternative for a large number of players is a partial round-robin, where each player plays a fixed number of his opponents, rather than all of them. The simplest variation on this (for an even number of players) is to make two lists on a full sheet of paper as above. But down the left side, write the names of *half* of the players, and down the right, write the names of the *rest* of the players. Then draw a line connecting each player on the left to *every* player on the right, so that each player plays half of the total entry. For instance, for ten players each player would play five matches, for a total of 25 matches in the game (as opposed to 45 for a full round-robin of ten players). *However, if a player drops out, you must schedule extra matches for anyone still scheduled to play the drop-out, so that all remaining players have the same opportunity to score match points (see Drop-Outs below).*

Single-Elimination List

For the first round, take pairs of players as you can get them; once your first-round matches have been started, build your tree from there. If you have an odd number of players, the last player must play a bye match. Play bye matches yourself, or get volunteers from non-contestants. Don't give any player more than one bye match; spread the byes up and down the tree. See **Figure 2** below for a list of 9 players to see how the byes can be distributed; matches are indicated by joined diagonals pointing to the winner, and byes are indicated by horizontal lines.

Bye matches must be played—remember, the overall award is for total match wins. A player who wins a bye match advances in the list *and* scores a match win; a player who loses a bye match advances in the list, but *does not* score a match win. In **Figure 2**, Helga won her bye in round 3, but Isadore and Beorn lost their byes in rounds 1 and 2. Their names have been **X**'d through to indicate that these matches should not be scored.

Score match wins on a single-elimination tree by counting how many times each name is written after the first column; do not count names that have been **X**'d for players who lost a bye. *Don't let a player skip a bye match*; remind the player how the overall award is won. Note in **Figure 2** that although Isadore won the game, Helga scored as many match wins, because Helga won her bye match while Isadore lost hers.

Double-Elimination List

I don't recommend running a double-elimination list, mainly because I get confused trying to do it. But if you are more organized than I am, I would suggest using a procedure similar to a single-elimination list, in which the initial pairings on both the winners' side and the losers' side of the table are taken as players become available. It may become impossible to keep some players from getting more than one bye match; try to limit each player to one bye match on each side of the table.

A loss in a bye match should *not* move a player from the winners' side to the losers' side of the table.

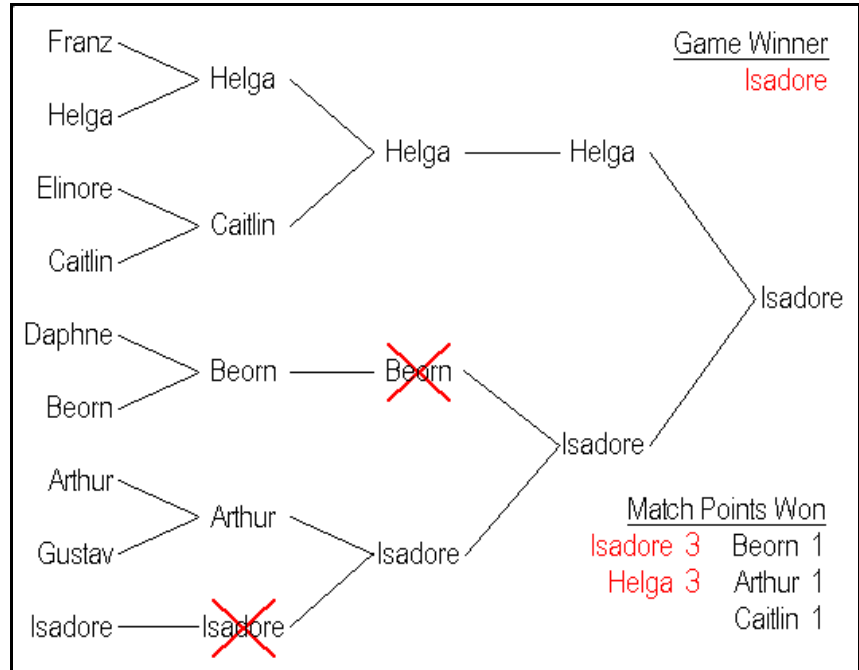


Figure 2: *Single-Elimination Match Chart*

Run the Games

This is the part that will drive you crazy. Expect to spend much of your day searching around the site, hunting for the one player that everybody else still needs to play. The most important advice I can offer is to ***be patient***. You are running the games for the players' enjoyment, not the reverse. No matter how confused it gets, remember that it could be worse—you could be the autocrat. (If you *are* the autocrat, please *don't* try to run a game competition.)

Next most importantly, ***be organized***. Know if a player is needed for several successive matches, so that you don't let him walk off after the first one. If a single-elimination list is getting down to the last matches, warn the surviving players that their next match may not be far off, so that they will stay close while other matches are being played.

Third most importantly, ***be available***. Never leave the games unattended for more than a few minutes. If players turn up ready to play, and you aren't there, they will wander off, and won't be as cooperative next time. Also, if players finish a match, and you aren't handy, they may not wait around to tell you who won.

Tips for Running the Games

- **Discourage members of your home group** (or anyone closely involved in running the event) from entering the competition.
- **Discourage any guest who will be tied up much of the day** (as with fighting or cooking) from entering the competition.
- **Try to familiarize yourself with your players' faces and garb**, so that you can spot them at a distance.
- **Get yourself a part-time runner**, if possible, to chase down players for you.

- **Don't keep your lists secret!** Let the players see who their next competitors are, and they will often start the next match voluntarily, without having to be chased down.
- **Try to keep several matches going at one time;** this is why you want more than one board for each game.
- **When players leave the Game Area,** ask them where they will be going, so you know where to look for them.
- **If a dispute arises** (over a misunderstanding of the game rules, for instance), give the two players involved a chance to settle it themselves—step in directly only to prevent misinterpretation or distortion of the rules. The simplest way to resolve most disputes is to clarify whatever point caused the problem, then replay the match from the beginning.
- **Emphasize with all players that they should not leave the Game Area** without telling you who won each match—nobody will enjoy being called over for a match they already played, just because you weren't told the result.
- **Have the herald call often for players to check in at the Game Area** to see if their turn has come up. However, use the herald to call for a *specific* player only as a last resort, so as not to embarrass and annoy individual players.

Scoring

Score Individual Winners

When the last match of a particular game has been played, identify the winner of that game. For single-elimination lists, the winner is the last player unbeaten. For round-robin lists, the winner is the player with the most match wins.

Round-robin lists may end in ties; run a tiebreaker round of the same game. For a two-way tie, have the two competitors play a 2-wins-of-3 round. For a three-way tie (rare), play a separate 3-match round-robin tiebreaker. For a four-way tie (never happens to *me*), play a 3-match single-elimination tiebreaker. If the tiebreaker round somehow results in another tie, play it over until you have a winner. *Do not score tiebreaker matches toward the overall score.*

Score the Overall Winner

Once all games have come to a winner, tabulate the number of regular matches each player has won in each game. Add up the total number of match wins for each player in all games; the player with the most wins in all games combined is the overall winner. Again, *do not score tiebreaker matches toward the overall score.*

See **Table 2** below for an example. Aedward wins round-robin Byzantine Chess with four matches, but is out of the overall because he only entered one game. Isadore wins single-elimination Twelve-Men's Morris, although Helga has also scored three match wins (see **Figure 2** again). Franz, nimble fellow, takes round-robin Shove-Ha'penny by winning all five of his matches. But since Franz was shut right out of Morris, Helga is the overall winner with 6 total matches in 2 games. (Note that the horizontal and vertical grand totals differ by the 4 matches of Aedward's which are disqualified from the overall scoring.)

Sometimes one game requires substantially fewer matches to determine a winner than other games in the competition (for instance, a small single-elimination list with only 7 games, up against round-robin lists with 21 or more matches). When the number of matches played in one game is one-third or less than that of other games, score each match for that game double.

Don't be surprised if, as in **Table 2**, the overall winner is someone who did not win any of the individual games. A good all-around player who comes in second or third in every game is a prime candidate for overall winner.

	Byzantine Chess	12-Men's Morris	Shove-Ha'penny	30 Matches for Overall Prize
Aedward	4	Didn't Play	Didn't Play	Not Eligible for Overall Prize
Arthur	Didn't Play	1	2	3
Beorn	1	1	1	3
Caitlin	3	1	Didn't Play	4
Elinore	2	<i>none</i>	2	4
Franz	Didn't Play	<i>none</i>	5	5
Helga	Didn't Play	3	3	6
Isadore	Didn't Play	3	2	5
34 Scored Matches	10	9	15	
Game Winner	Aedward 4 wins	Isadore 3 wins	Franz 5 wins	Helga 6 wins

Table 2: *Scoring for Individual Games & Overall Winner*

Drop-outs

When a player drops out of a game, or out of the competition, you may have to adjust the scoring for one or more games. The important thing is that all players remaining in the game or competition have equal opportunity to score match wins.

If the drop-out player has already played all of his matches for a particular game (been knocked out of single-elimination games, or played every opponent in round-robin games), then no adjustment is necessary for that game. No remaining player could have scored any additional matches against that player.

However, if the player is still unbeaten in a single-elimination list, or has played only part of a round-robin list, some kind of adjustment is required. For a round-robin game, simply do not score any matches the drop-out played. Players who defeated the drop-out lose one match win from their overall score, but will be left with the same number of matches played as those who had not yet played the drop-out; if any player complains about this scoring, point out that that player got one practice match that his opponents did not.

For a single-elimination game, treat the drop-out's *next* match as a bye. For instance, if Helga in **Figure 2** above won one match, then dropped out when scheduled to play Caitlin, give Caitlin a bye match to play. Caitlin will advance in the list regardless, but must win the bye to score a match win. If another player in the same round is scheduled for a bye and hasn't yet played it, that player and Caitlin could play each other.

As you can see, the easiest way to handle drop-out players is to discourage them up front, before the competition begins. However, please be patient with players who drop out, as they might have a valid reason.

Ties in Overall Score

If two or more players tie for the overall award, there are several ways to handle the tiebreaker. In choosing a method, keep in mind that the overall competition is for the best all-around game player. Try one of the following:

- **Identify the one game in which each of the tied players scored the fewest match wins**, and run a 2-of-3 or 3-of-5 tiebreaker round in that game. The player who shows the most improvement will win the overall. This is good for two-way ties.
- **Have the tied players play one match of each game in the competition**, and give the overall to the player who wins the most matches. For a three-game competition, this will always break a two-way tie; for a 4-game competition, two matches of each game may be required.
- **Pull a rabbit out of your hat.** Have a completely new (and very obscure) game in your pocket, and run a tiebreaker round with the new game. The fastest learner will win. Play 2-of-3 or 3-of-5 for two-way ties, or round-robin for ties of three or more players.
- **If you wanted to use a game with more than two players**, this is the time for it. Gather a crowd, and throw your tied players into the group. This has two variants:
 - *Pick a crowd game that gives only one winner but plays very fast*, then keep playing it over until one of your tied players has won three times. If the non-contestants are winning, toss out any non-contestant who wins three times. For instance, use a tossing game where players try to be the closest to a target, then give the overall prize to the first tied player to be closest three times.
 - *Play a crowd game as above, but pick a game where every player can score points.* Play until one of your tied players scores a specific number of points. For instance, use a tossing game where players try to hit targets with coins, then give the overall to the first tied player to score 10 points.

If you pull out a new game for the overall tiebreaker, *use a game requiring only dexterity and strategy, with no element of chance.* A player who has fought through to a tie in the overall score will not be happy about being beaten by luck. Also, if you use a crowd game, make sure the non-contestants can't influence the outcome by favoring or ignoring one player (Plague Frog, for instance, where a particular player can be made a special target, would not be a good choice).

Don't get arbitrary. In my experience, players in a tie prefer to play it out, even if it takes until midnight, and won't appreciate it if you meddle in the results to speed things up. If you don't break the tie the first attempt, just play again.

SCAdia.org is not an official web site of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. and does not delineate official Society policy. While much of the material on SCAdia is instructional or educational, much of it is provided entirely for entertainment. SCAdia makes no claim to support the Society's substantially educational purpose, and should not be considered to reflect upon the Society directly. SCAdia is also not an official web site of the Shire of Smythkepe or the Kingdom of Gleann Abhann.