

POJC Guidelines

The Pacific Oceania Junior Championships (POJC)

POJC HISTORY – In 1990, the first POJC was held. The first decade the POJC was much different than the event we hold today. In 1990, there were two age groups (14s and 18s), with six or seven nations involved. At that time, four nations hosted the one month POJC; Fiji, Tonga, Samoa and American Samoa. Less than 40 travelling players were involved. Host nations filled the draws with many excited local stars. In the mid 90s with more north nations gaining ITF membership, the POJC experienced growing pains. Host nations had a difficult time billeting too many visiting players and funding expensive tickets from the north became a problem. We solved the billet problem in 1996, when the North Pacific held their first NPQ. ITF funds were spent wisely with north nations provided less costly travel grants to the NPQ held in Guam. Winners received travel grants to attend the POJC, as members of the ITF North Pacific Team. This format proved successful as more juniors participated in the NPQ and only the best attended the POJC. Based on the NPQ success, in 2001, the OTF suggested two more qualifying events, with the winners travelling to Fiji for a two week POJC event. This is how we evolved to the current POJC, with regional teams from the North, East and West. In 2010, the POJC finally expanded to three age groups; 12s, 14s and 18s. In 2011, the 14s age group was changed to 15s, providing three age groups with equal three year age divisions.

POJC POINTS – Since 2001, the POJC format has featured regional teams. Team points were counted since 2001. If a player finished 1st that player earned 12 points for his or her region. If a player finished 12th (last) that person earned one point for the regional team. Regional point totals are totalled including 4 boys and girls from the 12s event, 3 boys and girls from the 15s age group and 2 boys and girls from the 18s age group (18 players gain regional points). We never included doubles points as the POJC is a singles qualifying event and for various reasons, counting doubles points was confusing. Regional points were not tallied in 2012. This best practice will be reintroduced in 2013. The history of regional points appears below.

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
W 124	W 125	W 134	W 139	W 135	W 150	W 138	W 131	W 143	N 131	W 127
E 101	E 104	E 99	N 90	E 106	E 98	E 90	E 101	N 95	W 128	E 126
N 87	N 83	N 79	E 82	N 69	N 60	N 68	N 78	E 73	E 77	N 121

THE POJC PRIZE – Since the beginning, the POJC prize was “best players” selected for the ITF Team that toured New Zealand (December). In the late 1990’s the ITF expanded the team program. The younger team visited New Zealand and the older team toured Australia (January). In 1991, we had six players on the ITF Team to New Zealand. Today, we have twenty players on our two teams to New Zealand and Australia. I fondly remember my first team trip to New Zealand. Sitting in the front seat of the ITF van was a top junior from Vanuatu who today, is the VP of the OTF. These team trips continue to be outstanding learning experiences for our juniors. The POJC results are also the main selection criteria to gain a scholarship to attend the Regional Training Centre.

POJC QUALIFYING EVENTS – Each year since 2001 the ITF has sponsored three qualifying events. The ITF Development Officer is the referee. I enjoyed this role, only missing one qualifying event during my career. The West Pacific is normally held in Fiji in May, during school holidays. With many West Pacific players based at the RTC, Fiji became the cost effective host nation. Nations involved are: PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Norfolk Island, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Nauru. Kiribati and Nauru once attended the NPQ, but when their air links to Guam ended, the affordable solution was for these nations to join the WPQ. The North Pacific has always been held in June, with Guam hosting two out of every three years and Northern Mariana's hosting the third year. Palau, FSM, Marshall Islands, Guam and Northern Mariana's make up the NPQ. The East Pacific has usually been based in American Samoa or Samoa on a rotational basis. Tonga, Cook Islands, Tahiti, Samoa and American Samoa are the nations involved.

QUALIFYING INFORMATION SENT TO NATIONS – two months before the qualifying event begins, Pat O'Rourke (now John Shannon) emailed nations a letter of invitation. Nations were invited to send a certain number of players in each age group (normally two or three).

QUALIFYING HOST NATIONS – If qualifying host nations are centrally located, we have less expensive air tickets allowing a larger number of juniors to attend. Hosting nations need eight tennis courts to conduct the tournament. The ITF host nation grant does not cover all of the expenses, but most. Hosting nations often gain extra support from private sector sponsorship. The EPQ and the WPQ requires billet support for visiting teams, but in the NPQ, visiting teams usually stay in hotels at their own expense. The host nation holds an opening / closing ceremony, provides daily lunches and hands out certificates of attendance to attending players and coaches (and sometimes t-shirts).

QUALIFYING TRAVEL GRANTS – In the qualifying events, ITF travel grants are split to try to create an equal advantage for all nations. East Pacific travel grants for Samoa and America Samoa mean \$150 air tickets between these two nations, so we allocate a small amount \$1,500. In the North Pacific we have \$150 air tickets between Northern Mariana and Guam, with the majority of travel grant funding provided for more expensive air tickets for FSM and Palau. West Pacific travel grants should be split according to the air ticket cost factor. Besides ITF travel grants, it should be understood these nations also spend their funds to allow more players to attend qualifying events. As an example, PNG might spend \$1,400 to have two extra players attend the WPQ. The WPQ invitation letter might read the ITF will provide 4 tickets valued at \$2,800 if PNG will buy 2 additional qualifying event tickets.

POJC TRAVEL GRANTS – ITF travel grants should be used to assist all nations in the most meaningful manner. POJC travel grants should try to provide over 80% of the air travel cost. However, this is impossible for North Pacific nations as their POJC air tickets cost around \$2,000. We need to find a way to be fair to all nations attending the POJC.

POJC SHIRTS – POJC funds are spent to provide t-shirts for the East, West and North Teams, as well as shirts for the POJC champions that make the ITF Teams to New Zealand and to Australia. I also made shirts for the OCJC. Providing a shirt to everyone that plays a role in the POJC lets them feel they are important members of our team (they are). These shirts are treasured gifts and provide high exposure at a low cost for the ITF, the OTF and ONOC.

THE POJC COMPETITION FORMAT – The POJC format and the qualifying event format are the same, with two pools of 5-6 players, or with larger draw numbers (13-16 players), four pools of 4 players. The POJC draw template was introduced in 2001. It includes built-in rules and needed information.

DRAW TEMPLATE – Attached is an empty POJC template 6-1, with six draws of 12 players and one additional draw of 16 (if we have a case where one event has 13-16 players). If you review the attached 2011 POJC document, you will see we had three boys from Cook Islands in the 15s draw (for good reason). So, in this situation, the attached 2011 POJC draw required 5 draws of 12 players and one 16 player draw. Template 6-1 will normally be used for the POJC, but might not be used for qualifying events. POJC template 4-2 means 4 draws of 12 and 2 draws of 16 players. POJC template 3-4 has a double purpose. It could be 3 draws of 12 players and 3 draws of 16 players, or it can be 2 draws of 12 and 4 draws of 16. Three templates cover all POJC draw number possibilities as it is understood we will not have draws of over 12 players in the 18s age group.

Before the event, the empty draw template needs to be manually updated as it might not be the WP; it could be used for the NP, EP or the POJC. It must be updated to 2013, with the correct host nation, date, player entries and other information included as it becomes available.

The POJC template allows you to find all important information within one document, making it user friendly (instead of spending time reviewing several emails to find required information). Within the template, you review the POJC report on the 1st page (only written after the event is completed). On page two, you will see the names of all POJC players (region, nation and year of birth), as well as coaches and tournament directors. Page three provides the arrival and departure dates, billet information and important phone numbers. Page four lists the regional point total. The singles draws are following by six doubles draws. All information is placed together into one document as shown in the 2011 POJC document.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE – You will see the POJC template has a built in order of play. Two pool matches are played on day #1, two matches on day #2 and one match on #3. On day three, when the final pool matches were completed, we totalled the pool play results. Time permitting, we tried to complete the semi final matches on day three (Wednesday). On Thursday, we scheduled the finals (for 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th and 11th). Due to rain we sometimes fell behind and the POJC singles finals were not played until Friday. The doubles started when the singles ended. Being a singles qualifying event the coaches agreed it was better to finish singles before we started the doubles. Remember, we could not use the courts on Saturday as they were reserved for the OCJC. I can proudly say we finished all POJC singles events (since 2001) and normally we finished the doubles. Even with rain!

DAILY ORDER OF PLAY – The draw template shows on day #1 and day #2, six matches are played on the same court using the followed by system listed on the draw sheet. With six events, meaning 12 pools, we had a simple non-confusing system, with players based on the same court all day long.

ORDER OF MERIT – This is listed at the bottom of each draw page. Matches won/lost, if tied head to head results, if three players with same match won/lost total, we counted sets won/lost and then games won/lost. The rules of the 16 player draw are seen on the second page of this two-page draw. All important event rules are built into the POJC template document. No confusion.

POJC NUMBER OF COURTS – Twelve courts are required. We had the 12s play at the Nadi Sports Club (4 courts), a one hour bus drive from the RTC courts. The bus departed at 7:45, after I had a five minute meeting with the coaches travelling to Nadi. With six matches scheduled each day on each court, sometimes the bus did not arrive back in Lautoka until 7:00. The courts were reserved until 5:00 when the NSC members take over the courts. Sometimes we did not finish before 5:00. The club members always allowed us to finish our matches. The 15s and 18s (eight different pools) were played at the RTC (six courts) and the Northern Club (2 courts). Eight pools require eight courts.

POJC QUALIFYING EVENT TEMPLATES – The EP and NP will normally use POJC template 6-1 as these regions have only three and four nations involved. Usually, little reason for 16 player draws. The WP includes eight nations, so there might be reason to use a different POJC template, with more than one 16 player draw. Usually POJC template 4-2, meaning 4 draws of 12 and 2 draws of 16 players is used. Just in case, we have POJC template 3-4, if we have 3 or 4 draws of 16 players.

POJC TEAMWORK – When I was the POJC referee, we worked together to produce the best tournament format possible. Along the way a variety of administrators and coaches introduced POJC changes to make a good program better. ITF London, Mike Daws, Fenton Coull, Pat O'Rourke and John Shannon were the administrators who played a main role in creating these guidelines. I also credit Coach Jeff Race as over the years he provided meaningful advice. Of course, the POJC coaches and I always held discussions. The 2010 suggestion by POJC coaches led to changing the POJC age group from 14s to 15s. In the past, everyone was involved in making changes.

The purpose of this document is to review POJC history and to understand why we do things the way we do. I would be delighted if this background information leads to improving POJC guidelines. We can always make our POJC even better.

Dan O'Connell, OTF Joint Secretary General

March 2013

(POJC referee: 1992 – 2011)