



V NAF WORLD CUP – ALICANTE

Thoughts and advice about running a big blood bowl event

To Ako and all the awesome guys and girls of the V NAF World Cup Staff

The true heroes that made it possible



On Thursday, September 7th 2023, the V NAF World Cup staff was depleted. Previous two weeks had been crazy while organizing stuff, preparing gift packs and giving the event the last finishing touches.

We skipped lunch to get extra time for tasks, and we visited the venue to check how tables, chairs and stands were being installed. Then going to our lodging, kick shower, meeting the Referee Committee and going to the inauguration in Alicante Port (we had to hastily get a stage built there as the Town Hall changed their mind about where to celebrate inauguration in the last minute).

You probably were there, or maybe you've seen videos and similar. Some music, some welcoming speech and some singing. Our ugly faces on stage and so on. But it was amazing to meet so many friends once it was over.

Finally, we got together for dinner. In case you attended World Cup, or you've ever been in Spain, you'll know that bars and restaurants set tables and chairs in the street and people dines there, enjoying nightlife.

So, we went out for dinner, still wearing the World Cup staff shirts. And then magic happened. Street was full of attendees dining there, and they spontaneously started cheering and applauding us. It was an overwhelming feeling, partly amazed, partly proud, and very embarrassed. We were speechless, not knowing if we really deserved it. It was probably one of the best moments we've had in our lives, and we'll remember it forever.



That's an example of what you should expect from organizing a big blood bowl event. Don't expect fame, fortune or everything that goes with it, as the song says; because you will probably get none of them. But you'll live unforgettable moments, will meet extraordinary people and will feel the satisfaction of working and sacrificing for our community. And that's the best reward and best feeling you could dream of.

If that's enough for you... jump on board. You won't regret it. Ok, you'll regret it sometimes. Just take a break, relax for a moment and go on. And in case you feel it's too hard and stressing, just reach for help. NAF Committee and community are full of people eager to help and support you. You're not alone. We'll be there for you. It will be great and you'll love this adventure and have the best possible memories forever.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this guide to help organizing big blood bowl events. Here I'll try to gather some thoughts, ideas and experiences we learnt through organizing V NAF World Cup in Alicante. Feel free to get or ignore as many contents as you want, but it may help some NAF member planning to organize a big event, so here it is in case you need it.

First step: Let's define what a bit event is. We're referring to 800 – 1000 attendees' size as a minimum, with international attendees from several countries. Think about Eurobowl, World Cup or similar size.

We love events with fewer attendees, and those are the backbone and bulk of NAF tournaments, but we suppose that an experienced staff can deal with them on their own and may not need this document, although they may find some useful advice in it, too.

What this document is about: Advice, suggestions, ideas and experiences. Problems and issues we found and we didn't expect, as we were inexperienced in organizing global size events, and how we tried to deal with them the best we could. Take a read, you may find issues you have not considered yet, so you can plan and prepare yourself for them.

What this document is not about: This is not a "how-to-do-it-right" guide, nor a user's guide for success. Every tournament, big or small in size, is totally different from the previous one. So just read what we went through and what we did, then consider your own situation, and adapt our experience to what you are dealing with (or just fully ignore it, no problem at all).

FIRST THINGS FIRST



Beer and shiny gifts. Is there a better way to start this?

Ok, so you are in a pub with friends, or just travelling back home from a blood bowl tourney, or your beloved one suggests it. Any given situation, the idea is put on the table: let's organize a big, big, stunning, amazing tourney with foreign coaches and colorful dice and happy people and...

Run. Run for your very life. Block those friends in media. Tell your loved one is over. Hide yourself in the darkest possible hole until the storm is over.

You didn't? You went all "yeah, let's do it"? Now you're doomed. Ok, let's go into the first things you should consider.

STAFF



Ruthlessly ruling her vassals.... I mean, kindly assigning tasks to staff members

First staff member you should think about is **you**. You're going to lead this project and take the brunt of it on your shoulders. So sit for a moment and, honestly and calmly, consider your own situation.

Do you have the time, energy, and experience needed to go into this? Are you ready to put a serious strain in your family life, spare time, work and whatever situation you may have in real life?



Be honest to yourself. Organizing such a big event is not like organizing a 60 people, 2 days tournament (with all due respect to volunteers sacrificing their time and work for those wonderful events). You can't consider this like "hey, it's like the tourney we run every year, just multiply it by 10".

I did lose 18 kilos from January to September 2023, due to stress and nerves. Ako (my wife and World Cup Queen Head Staff) went through a similar process. We spent long nights in front of computer, trying to solve so many different issues we never thought we would find. There were sleepless nights, nightmares and so many arguments at home. And our kid was mainly unattended for the whole 2023 summer.

Both being involved in blood bowl helped, so if you have a couple or family that's not into the game or community, it may get worse. Please remember it, there are more important things than blood bowl in life.

And that's after 13 consecutive years organizing an 80-100 people tournament, and several years being part of the organizing staff of a 250 people tourney too; so experience helps, but please, don't get overconfident with this.

Ok, let's say you think you can deal with it. It's time to find a band of fools that will follow you through hell.

Finding blood bowl coaches who would give up playing a major event that is held in their own country is not easy. People will always prefer to play it. But you're offering them something that just a few people have ever lived: organizing an enormous, amazing event. And that's a rather exciting and unique experience. There's such a big difference from being a player to be a staff member, and being part of the team will be a new and different adventure for them.

You don't need a big, numerous staff. In fact, inactive staff members usually get bored and feel you don't count on them. We were just 13 staff members in Alicante, and while it felt short in certain moments, I think it was the right size. That way, staff members were often busy and feeling part of the project.

You need some staff members that know how to play blood bowl. No need to find blood bowl top coaches or similar, just enough to sit and play in case a squad or a coach needs a substitute. But not every staff member needs to be a blood bowl player. If you're running a bar in the venue, if you need someone to attend info stall... those people have to be experienced in the tasks they've been given. So don't dismiss people because of their blood bowl experience, just try to find the right person for each needed task.

Don't just rely on previous friends for this. While it's nice to have some kind of previous relation and trust among staff members, dealing with unexpected problems and situations will bond staff together. You'll have a strong and coordinated team in the end, as everyone will get involved in several tasks and help each other. Try to look for experienced and competent people that will answer the call and keep a cold head when things get tight and tense.



I followed this standard to select Alicante staff: people I could shout at if they did an awful work, and at the same time they could shout at me if I did an awful work; while none of us getting really offended. Some of them were close friends, some of them weren't. And they exceeded any expectation I could have. Alicante World Cup was successful due to them, not me at all. I'm just the face of the team, but they made it possible and all credit should go to every member of our amazing staff.

Just an important note: Info stand has to be always attended. No matter if people is playing a round, or having lunch or whatever. There has to be a face there in every moment. You're dealing with 1000 attendees, there will be always someone asking about something. And attendees deserve to find someone there that may give them an answer, or find the right person to provide information (it's highly recommended that people attending info stand have a basic English level, in case it's not your native language).

Last advice: You are the face of the project. Don't shield and hide yourself behind your staff members. In fact, you're there to shield and protect them if anything goes wrong. Nothing hurts a volunteering staff member as much as being publicly blamed for a failure. You and your staff work, win and fall as a team. And every success and failure that may happen is the team's achievement. So in case things go wrong, step forward and assume the situation. Apologize, try to smile and do it better.

Don't be shy or a "coward", don't hide yourself and try to dodge troubles. Community will appreciate clear explanations and apologies, as long as you are open and sincere with them. Do your best and, if things go wrong, just explain what's going on, what you pretended to do and where did you fail. You'll find a ton of unexpected people jumping to help and lots of understanding and love from most of your attendees. There will be critics, of course. Just deal with them, keep calm and try to behave. A foul critic can be softened if you are sincere and humble, so count up to ten, smile and try to explain what happened.

Remember this is **your** event. Don't feel pressured by previous events, were those nice or bad. You don't have to match previous Eurobowl in number of attendees, quality or similar. You don't have to outdo previous World Cup. Plan **your** event, do as much as you can and enjoy your dream becoming real.

If the previous similar event was successful, good for them. This is not a competition. We never felt we had to outdo Lucca, or Dornbirn, or similar. And if the previous similar event had some issues... learn from the situations they had to go through, and try to show people there's a different way to do things. Keep respectful about the work previous people tried to do, no matter their result, as they had the same illusion and dream as you have now.



So just go on and do **your** project. Outdo us. Get bigger numbers, make people happy, that's all everybody wants. There are no medals for "best blood bowl event ever" or "biggest tournament in history", just shake pressure and do what you've planned. I truly hope you outdo us. It will mean you made community happier, bonded and stronger. And that's the only thing that really matters.

CHOOSING A CITY TO HOST YOUR EVENT



Big blood bowl events are not just tournaments anymore. Many attendees go there with their relatives, sometimes they play as a family, or just have their beloved ones doing touristic routes and similar while the tourney goes on. There's a lot of people that extends their time in the hosting city beyond the tournament and plan it as holidays, too.

So, when selecting the city where to host the tournament, you should consider this: what families can do while daddy is playing with his little expensive toys? Is there something to visit, somewhere to relax, any activity that help relatives enjoy their time there?

We've been told Alicante won the rights to organize World Cup just due to beach. While I think that's not the main reason for it, it certainly helped. Alicante is not as an expensive place as other Spanish cities are, while being a rather touristic city full of services. It's internationally known (at least for most European countries) and it has an important foreign community living there, so most services are offered in several idioms. It also has beach, of course, that implies sun and nice, soft warm climate in September for kids and relatives.



I think it helped attendees to “sell” it at home, let’s go there, you have sun, you have beach, you have pubs and shops and nightlife while dad is playing with his little expensive toys.

You should consider life cost in your chosen city. Expensive or long travel routes, costly lodging and similar may significantly lower the number of attendees to the event. So you have to find a balance between a touristic and an affordable city to host the event.

I won’t extend about airports, lodging offer and so on, as those are covered in the NAF bid documents and in previous World Cup bids you can find in NAF site. Obviously, city needs to offer a wide range of lodging options, several services and so on.

Part of our community gets really interested in the place they’re visiting. Be prepared to answer questions about food, touristic places, local culture and similar. We found that kind of questions rather refreshing, you’ll enjoy talking about local food or drinks after so many “when will rosters be published” questions.

VENUE



Blood bowl attendees usually need just two things to enjoy a big event: fun and comfort. So finding the right venue is essential. Most cities host at least a big hall for events right now, but there are certain points you should consider.

- Size: Do not consider your venue in square meters per attendee or similar. No attendee is the same of the previous one, there's people that will need more space and mobility than others. There will be people with mobility issues, wheel chairs, crutches and similar. Those will need an extra row of tables (we had the front row reserved for them in Alicante, so they were next to the bar and toilets), and gave that row extra space to move around. We made it long, so squads including an attendee with mobility issues could move there and play together, not isolating them. There's also people with different situations, like visual issues (needing special lights) and similar. So having available electrical sources and similar will help making people comfortable.
- Try to find the biggest venue you can afford: extra space (and also extra height) will help dissipating heat and noise. Also, extra space allows people to move, meet and gather at will, you can plan for shopping stalls installed in the venue and some kind of bar to avoid attendees leaving the venue for drinks.
- You should consider where the venue is. If venue is inside the hosting city, people will reach it on their own, so you won't need a bus shuttle or similar. That means you'll save you part of your budget and a lot of headaches while assigning each attendee a bus stop. We couldn't find a venue inside Alicante big enough to host World Cup, so we had to celebrate it in IFA, some kilometers out of Alicante. As people were lodging in 7-8 different cities, we had to coordinate a bus shuttle for everyone. And it was really tiresome. So, in case you can choose, look for a venue inside the hosting city.
- Don't be scabby about extras, especially AC and furniture. Once you gather a big number of coaches, AC is key to keep them comfortable, so in case you have to pay an extra for it, save some cash and do it. You'll get so many questions about AC and how it's going to be set in your event, it's easier to have it covered from the start.





- Same for tables. Find tables where coaches can comfortably deploy pitches and extras, like dice mats and similar. Giving coaches extra space so they can put their drinks next to the pitch and similar is a nice touch that people will love. We designed a 70 cm. wide pitch for World Cup, but gave each coach a 1 meter wide space so they could slam dice cups, deploy extra stuff and so on. Nobody wants to play so cramped that your elbows hit your neighbor or you crash on the coach behind you when you stand up.
- Finding a suitable number of tables may get troublesome. We had to gather more than six hundred tables, 90 cm wide, so pitches could be fully deployed and coaches could sit comfortably. After several months hunting for tables, we found a supplier with enough tables to cover the event, so tables travelled 700 km to Alicante to be used in World Cup. Plan for an extra cost in case you need to rent enough tables for all attendees.
- Important advice: when renting tables, make it clear that deploying them in the venue and collecting them once it's over must be done by the tables supplying company and their workers. Don't get your staff or referees involved in deploying tables or chairs, you'll need them in much more important tasks. Paying an extra for that service is more than well spent cash.
- If possible, keep part of the venue as food court, so people can gather there and have lunch out of the gaming area. While most people are really educated and clean the place after lunch, nobody wants to go to next game and find it full of stains, leftovers or liquid drops. So give attendees a different zone for lunch and similar if you have enough space for it.





- Having some kind of bar or similar service for attendees is a nice touch, and will also give you an extra income. We know it's extra work, and you'll probably need to find volunteers to man the bar. Offering cold beer, water and drinks is an extra service that, while not mandatory, makes attendees happier (same as AC before). Don't get involved in a wide array of drinks (skip alcoholic drinks and stick to just beer and soft drinks). Try to keep prices as low as possible, attendees love to buy drinks for squad mates and opponents, so give them the chance to do so.

All you really need are some freezers, some taps and finding balance between quality and cost in the drinks you buy and offer. Having a skilled and experienced team manning the bar is really necessary in a big event, so people doesn't have to patiently queue for drinks. We had a fantastic girl in staff with some bartending experience and we gave her full freedom to rule it, and it was a blast.

What did we do?

There are "dealing companies" in Spain, I mean, a company authorized to distribute several different drinks, snacks and supplies to pubs, bars and restaurants in a given territory.

So first we visited the official Coke dealers for Alicante and exposed them our project. We got a good deal, as they supplied us with water, Coke and some other less interesting drinks (energy drinks and similar). We had to pay an important amount of money, but they accepted to refund us any unopened box of drinks (coke and similar are served in boxes that contain 24 cans each in Spain). So in the end we just paid for the drinks we sold, as the unopened boxes were refunded. They also rented us freezers, counter and so on for just a small amount of cash, so it was a very nice deal.

Beer was a fully different business, as it is served in barrels. We visited several dealing companies. Some of them considered us a "small event" and weren't not interested in us (they got enough money just supplying local bars and restaurants in a weekly routine).

We finally found a dealer that agreed to do it, but he just served on Thursday and Friday. So we had to calculate how much beer to buy for the whole weekend and create a storage room behind the bar to store all the beer for the weekend. It was a worse deal, as we could only give him back 30% of the ordered barrels, and in case we didn't sell the rest of the beer, they would take it from us but we would have to pay a penalty.

We fell in the "nordics drink so much" trap. They don't, although there are some remarkable exceptions. We ordered 180 barrels, 50 litres each. That's 9.000 litres of beer. We calculated 1 litre of beer for attendee and day (that's 3-4 beers each day) and some extra stock, just in case.

We overbought so much beer. We expected to sell a lot of it on Friday and especially on Saturday, and it didn't work. We sold about a 35-40% of the expected beer.



So on Saturday night we gathered in the empty top floor of a McDonald's for dinner. As epic as it may sound, we were all depleted and exhausted, the 13 of us, silent, sweaty and tired.

We had an amazing girl with bartending experience in our staff, and we gave her full freedom to rule the bar at will and select bar staff and so on. I remember asking her "how much does a beer cost us?" and she said "97 cents, including plastic glass". And we decided to sell it for 1 euro on Sunday. That way we didn't have a real profit, but we were getting rid of stock. We printed several posters in different idioms, publishing the beer sales. And it worked, we got rid of enough beer to fulfill the dealer's requirements and skip paying a penalty, and got refunded for the unsold beer.

Beer is a rather social drink. Selling it at an inexpensive cost gives coaches the chance to invite squad friends and opponents. I remember coaches buying 12 beers and carrying them to their table for friends and rival squad. So beer sale was a great idea, but we faced a severe financial problem in Saturday night. Be careful and cautious about how much do you buy.

In case the venue is inside city, and not isolated as IFA was, expensive drinks may cause that people go out the venue to buy colder or less expensive drinks. So consider bar more like a service you offer to attendees that will give you some extra income and help having a smooth tournament than a real business that will finance the event.

Don't get involved in special bottles, labels or similar that mean an extra cost. Just keep it simple and inexpensive. Ecocupps are a nice touch and people love to keep them as a souvenir, but that would be the farthest I'd go.

Try not to overbuy drinks. If possible, find a dealer that serves you in Saturday. That way you can order less beer for Friday and see how it goes, if it's selling a lot or not. If I had to organize it again, I would calculate for 1 litre of beer for each 3 attendees or so, for the whole World Cup. And try to get extra beer served through the event in case I need it.

Last advice about the venue: Once you have chosen the right venue, visit it. Not just once or twice. Visit it as much as you need. Take a walk through the hall. Learn any hidden features venue may have, like the open-air grass zone we found for World Cup.

We visited IFA about 20-30 times while preparing the World Cup. We had to discuss several issues, fight the cost of some bills, ask for extra services and so on. IFA staff offices are there, right in the venue; so each time we finished meetings, Ako and me went to the enormous, empty hall, with our kid, and just had a lonely walk through it. We imagined where tables would be deployed, where stalls will be installed, where to put the NAF stand and so on. Then one day we went into the hall and it was real. Tables were there, stalls were being installed. After so many walks just dreaming it. It was a rather thrilling, breathtaking moment. I'm sure you'll love the moment you see it becoming real as much as we did.



If possible, visit venue when an event is being held there. The bigger event, the better. So you will know how it feels to be there when it's crowded, if AC really cools the place, how fast the cleaning service works, that kind of extra info you need to know. There's a huge difference from an empty venue to a busy one, so go there and check things on-site as much as you can.

So that's my advice. Go there, empty and full of people. Imagine it. Dream your event. It really helps to keep yourself motivated and passionate, and you'll need as much motivation as you can get, as this is a long term project.

FEEDING THE CROWD

Let's talk a bit about the worst point in Alicante World Cup: lunch. We know it was awful. We knew there, at the very same moment, while we were cutting ham sandwiches or serving Spanish omelet (or whatever it was).

We've received different suggestions after the event, and most of them are brilliant. Ideas about what we could have done in a different way. We had considered most of them before World Cup, and found several issues. This is the process we went through:

- First, we planned IFA restaurant would serve a premade menu to attendees each day. That was not possible, as IFA restaurant could only attend about 250-300 people at the same time, and demanded an exorbitant amount of cash as they needed extra people, extra tableware and similar. We could not afford it, so it was discarded.

- Next option we considered were food trucks. We spent several weeks checking different food trucks and offering them to install themselves on the venue. Most of them demanded to be exclusive in the venue (so just one burger food truck, just one pizza food truck and so on). Most of them reacted as "it's a very small event and it's not profitable for me", but we managed to get a few of them interested enough to install themselves in the venue.

- Then we attended a couple of food truck events, just to check the way they work. And boy, they are slow. You can spend 20 minutes in a 10 people queue while waiting for a burger. So imagine having a small number of food trucks slowly attending 2500 people, while next round time is approaching. It was ineffective, so we accepted to have those few interested food trucks as a nice extra, but we needed a different way to feed people.

- And that's the main problem you'll have to deal with. **You will have to find the way to feed a large number of attendees in a short given time.**

- There's not a winning recipe for this, or at least we didn't find it. In the end, we went for a company that offered cooking giant meals. We travelled to an event they were serving and sampled food and it was nice enough while affordable for us. What was our mistake? We didn't consider they calmly serve meals in a 4-5 hours lapse. So if you go at 13 :00 you have food, if you go at 14:30 you have food and so on. They're used to work in a rather slow, relaxed time; while we needed attendees to be quickly served so they could have lunch before next game. All we could do was jumping in and help things moving. There are pics of us preparing ham sandwiches and so on in a rather upset and tired mood.



- On the other hand, we've been told alternate food for vegans and vegetarians was rather good. It was a smaller amount of servings to be prepared, and it was significantly more expensive than the main menus; but we gladly paid for it. I recommend having a tasty and nice option for them, even if it means extra expenses. Not just for vegetarians and vegans, but for people with dietary issues. Attendees had the option to report us any dietary allergy or intolerance they could have, so we tried our best to offer each one an acceptable meal according to their needs (sorry if we missed someone, we've got no complaints about it but just in case).

So we soundly failed there. I apologized then, and I apologize here again. We tried our best. It didn't work. You can keep mocking me forever about paella, I deserve it. Just do it in a friendly way and all will be fun.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A BIG EVENT AND NOT GO BROKE

I know you are not into this to get a financial gain. But big events imply big numbers. And there's always a risk of big financial losses if things go wrong.

First of all, you need some kind of business plan. You don't have to be a financial expert, just ask for several budgets, compare them, choose the one you can afford while giving you the goodies or services you want, and try to make a deal with them about the payment moment. The later you can pay a bill, the better, so the event registration is open and you've started to get cash.

If you are preparing a World Cup bid you have to present a business plan anyway, so just do it. Keep things simple, like "we are going to spend cash in this, that, and that. It's going to cost this. We expect to receive this as tournament fees, so our planned profit would be that".

Try to avoid complicated business plans, like kickstarter or crowdfunding projects. Your business plan will be read for a lot of different people that may or may not have financial knowledge. So just keep it easy, expenses will be this, planned incomings will be that, and similar.

Be realistic. Don't rely in public subsidies, sponsors and so on, as those may happen or not. And be flexible. Life changes every day and you may find your financial plans suddenly shredded apart next morning after considering it done.

Be trustful, be serious, make suppliers feel they'll gain money if they give you time to organize the event and start gathering money. Show them previous events videos, pictures, gifts. Don't be afraid of being considered "the grown guy that plays with plastic toys", explain what blood bowl is as many times as needed. Show them Alicante videos of 2400 people jumping and drinking and having fun together. Tell them that people travel from Australia, from Canada, from Norway to be there. A smart supplier will understand that people that spends so much in travel is ready to spend cash in the event so you will be solvent, and will be interested even if he has to give you extra payment deadlines.



We started our project with zero euros in cash, and no financial backup from NAF or similar. That's ok, we knew the rules before starting the game. So what we did was visiting suppliers, negotiating with them, making so many deals and a lot of promises. I can't count how many times we've been called "those guys that play warhammer" or similar. There was a moment we even enjoyed it, as long as we could get a good deal for the project.

There may be expenses you didn't consider when you started your business plan. Like a civil liability insurance in case some kind of accident happens. We were charged for it depending on how many people was in the venue at the same time, so that's the reason of checking coaches every morning with the QR app, to get a certain number of people covered each day. Or a medical and ambulance service for attendees. There were some guys that got sick through the World Cup and had to be moved to the city of Alicante for medical care. Don't forget those unexpected expenses when building your business plan.

You're going to receive a substantial amount of money from all around the world. It may attract the attention of your country's financial authorities and pose a problem. So you should create some kind of legal figure to run the tourney, be it an association or any similar figure that exists there. And remember there may be taxes, as boring as it may sound when planning a tournament. So get informed about local taxes and how it can affect you, and save part of your income to cover them if you need.

Did you notice what I said about being flexible? When we were getting World Cup bid ready, we got hit by COVID-19 pandemics. While it gave us so much spare time to plan, it totally messed our business plan as prices of everything went really low. So we had to plan again, not knowing if we would be able to celebrate the event or how many people would attend.

Then pandemics were over. And prices started to rise again. And then the Ukrainian war started, and prices went nuts as life cost got suddenly increased. So we had to adjust our business plan again, fight to maintain our previous budget and the deals we had made.

Things you've planned through a year can change in a week. Try to be as flexible and adaptative as possible.

Main advice: profit (considered as avoiding financial loses, you won't get rich whatever you do) is not in your income. Raising the event fee in some euros or dollars won't make a difference, but will push some people out of the event due to cost. The key is in your expenses, and the better you plan and negotiate them, the better your financial results will be.

Once you have all those budgets and numbers added together, you'll know the approximate cost of the event. Then it's just as simple as dividing it for the planned number of attendees and you'll get the cost per attendee. **Increase that number in a 20%.** There will be so many unexpected expenses you'll have to cover, and so many real-life situations that will shake your numbers. So do it, raise the fee in a 20%. Don't feel ashamed to do it (as we did), you'll need that financial help. And if you feel you have more cash than needed, you can always produce extra gifts for attendees, as we did with the ball, turn and reroll tokens for World Cup. People love unexpected shiny surprises and prefer some extra, unexpected gift than a refund.

COMMUNITY



Beware of that guy with the black bandana in his head. He has the habit of being everywhere, being so passionate and keeping that contagious smile all the time

Here we are. The main reason of all your hard work. None of us, be it NAF Committee members, volunteers, tournament organizers or anyone involved in a blood bowl event does it for fame or acknowledgement. We do it for “blood bowl community”.

What’s “blood bowl community”?

Right now, I feel it’s like a big, diverse, bit crazy and very special family. They may be so different, from people that enjoy the game in a more serious and competitive way, to the ones that just want laughs and beer and fun. But they’re special, each one in its own way. They may be from Germany, from Scotland, from Italy, from Finland. Even from Ladonia. But once you meet any of them you feel at home. Time and experience have bonded us with some of them much more than just blood bowl friends.



And what do they expect from my event?

My feeling is that people want to be “who they want to be”. I mean, they want to forget all those real life issues and situations and problems, they have enough of that out there. Give them a comfortable venue to gather, time to socialize and some cold drinks to share with friends, and most of them will be happy. That’s all we need, forgetting routine, having a smooth tournament, time to meet and chat and some shiny goodies.



A free photocall or similar helps keeping people entertained while your're solving issues somewhere else. It's nearly inexpensive and people will love to have some sweet memories

There are some things that you should consider as well:

- **Make people feel you care for them.** Listen to them, try to solve issues they may have, be patient if they have a complaint. Care for their mobility or dietary issues. Help them with lodging, with bus shuttle, with financial problems they may have to pay your chosen fee. Just try to make them feel they're part of the event, beyond being mere attendees. Don't forget some of them go through a lot to be in your event, sacrificing money, family time, holidays... they deserve the best attention and care you can give them.



- **Put yourself in their shoes as much as you can.** While most of your attendees may be seasoned veterans that know how things go and have no trouble finding lodging, booking flights and similar, there will be a fair number of newbies that will need help. They may not know where to look for help, how to find the info you're publishing, or will have idiomatic problems. Be patient and answer some questions as many times as needed. Use media as much as you can to make info as available as possible. Try to cover each question in your kindest mood, even if you're tired and depleted. You'll be rewarded with a nice smile and a happy attendee, so it's worth the effort to do so.

- **U-18 and hobby prizes:** I can't recall how important this is. The whole World Cup experience was a blast for us, but there was a very special moment when we were celebrating the prizes ceremony. A small kid whose nick is Morg_Jr was awarded as the World's U-18 Champion. I remember he went into stage, collected his trophy... and more than 2000 people started cheering and applauding him for several minutes. The whole stage was shaking, he got the biggest cheer of the day.

I can't imagine how he felt or how proud and thrilled his father was. We felt it was a very special moment and we loved doing it. That's blood bowl for us, more than any certain ruleset or game strategy or similar. Creating that special moment and having attendees involved was amazing.

I strongly recommend that kind of special prizes, and especially the U-18 award. It's easy to control kids playing in the event, referees did help with it in Alicante. Do it. It costs nothing, it wastes no time, and you'll give a small kid and a proud father an unforgettable moment they've lived together and will remember forever.

- **Easier rulesets help getting big numbers:** Try to find a balanced, understandable, even "simple" ruleset. Something that newbies or newcomers find easy to manage and use. You're trying to get a big number of attendees, so you'll need inexperienced coaches jumping into the event. Give them something they can understand on their own. While some coaches want a more complex, competitive ruleset, good coaches tend to be top no matter how difficult or easy the ruleset is. So keep it simple and let people sharpen their rosters on their own.

You should establish a determined deadline (I recommend after a GW FAQ document, be it May or November) and don't apply any extra race or starplayer changes from that moment (keep in mind rules modifications have to be immediately applied).

In case you need some help or a base to start working with, look for previous big events. Eurobowl and World Cup tend to have a manageable ruleset you can use as a start for your own. And reach for help, if you need it. NAF Committee, and specially our amazing Tournament Director, will be more than glad to help.

- **How to gather big numbers:** Number of blood bowl coaches eager to travel abroad for big events is constantly growing. People love to meet each other, to gather, to chat, to get together. That will give you a lot of experienced coaches attending your event, and that's great as most of them know what's going on through the tournament, what to do to help, or just how to organize themselves.



But you are looking for real big numbers, aren't you? There were more than 700 Spanish coaches attending last World Cup. The active Spanish community is big, but not so big. What did we do? First, we opened the barrows. We contacted veteran and retired coaches, and lured them with the World Cup in Spain. It was affordable, near home, and they could be as grumpy about us as they wanted. That was enough to bring most of them back to life. There were faces we had not seen in a blood bowl tournament for ages.

And then, newcomers. People that have played a game or two, that started a league and left it due to real life issues, that were not NAF members and just knew blood bowl from a training game that they attended in a local shop. We squeezed the gaming community as a wet sponge, trying to gather as many attendees as we could.

How do you persuade an inexperienced coach to join a big, tumultuous and maybe expensive tournament? Ok, this guy knows he's not going to win the World Cup. He knows he will be trashed every round. He won't attend the tournament if he feels he's wasting his time or money.

Seduce him. Tell him it's a once in a lifetime opportunity. Show him those shiny gifts he'll get. Keep your tourney fee as low as you can, so he doesn't feel he's getting broken to be trashed. Tell him about the foreign coaches, about the partying atmosphere. Be passionate, be seductive, show him there won't be another chance to live something like this.

Also, most Spanish coaches that attended World Cup had no previous chance to travel abroad for a tournament, due to work, family, finances... so hosting the event in Spain was like an awesome, unexpected opportunity for them and they joined in big numbers. So there was no secret formula. Just the usual blood bowl coaches, plus oldies and newbies. That's the way we gathered more than 2200 people playing blood bowl together for the first time in history.

- Streaming and similar services: Having an official streaming service that allows people to check how things are going sounds cool. So why we didn't have it?

First, we didn't have the energy, time and spare staff members to man that service. And that's an important advice you should consider: don't waste your staff in activities not directly involved in the tournament. Serve the bar, cover the empty spots in squads, keep the info stall always covered. Move up and down through the venue (and be sure it was a long walk), attending questions and trying to help. I mean event issues; the amazing Referee Committee will cover rules questions and in-game situations. Check if people with mobility problems feel comfortable. And, in case you find some spare time, chat to vendors, friends and attendees to get a feeling of how things are going. Those are the important things you and your staff should attend.

Second, an official streaming service means spending cash on it. Maybe a lot, maybe not, I'm fully profane about it. But we had the feeling that the money people had paid as fee should be invested on them as much as possible. You may think different than me and probably you're right and I'm wrong, that's the way we decided to do it. We knew there were people that had saved money through four years to be in the World Cup. So we decided to offer free water fountains, extra gifts or a better bus shuttle for them, instead of spending cash and energy in streaming. There were several attendees streaming on their own and we offered them as much help as we could, setting a space for them, giving them power supplies and so on, but that's the best we could do.



- **Be realistic: You can't make all people happy all the time.** But that's something every attendee already knows. So don't sink and get down if things get a bit tangled. Jump into the problem, do your best to solve it and keep pushing. Show people you're doing your best to solve things. You could see all of us running and helping to get the ham sandwiches served. Cursing in Spanish and in several invented languages. We knew it was going bad, but that was all we could do in that moment, fighting to solve it. And while we got some well deserved critics about it, there was people that came to us and thanked us for our response, too.

Things won't go as smooth and easy as you have imagined them. There will be unexpected situations and issues. You'll feel pressure and stress and strain. We had a private zone behind the info stall with computers and storage and so on. Ako cried there. I cried there. Just go there, swear or cry whatever you need, and let it go. Redo your makeup and wear your best smile again. Go out and keep pushing. It will be great in the end.

- **Don't forget to celebrate:** Sunday night we gathered all staff and had a last walk through the venue, once everybody was gone. It was silent and empty again, although tables and surviving chairs were already being dismantled. The whole event passed so fast... then we went to Alicante, found an open food vendor and ate a slice of pizza, sitting on the pavement. That was our big post-event party. But we were together, the whole staff family. We felt tired but proud. So... things can go smooth and right, or get complicated, or whatever. But you and your team did it. You all did your best and you have the right to feel proud. Share some drinks, or just a cold slice of pizza, talk about the experience with your team, in private. Thank them for they sacrifice and their amazing work. Those guys did it for you, just because you asked them to do so.

What can you expect from community?

Don't expect anything. Don't expect gifts, or help, or nice words. You're not doing this for a reward, some gifts or a pat on your back. Just work to make them happy.

It will just happen, like an amazing surprise. They will reach and help and support you in any possible way. I can't tell how many people came to us and offered help in the most unsuspected ways. I can remember Arioso offering medical help in case we needed it, but that's just an example of so many incredible people that travelled to the World Cup, joined an event to just relax and have fun, and were ready to leave it all aside and jump to help in case we needed it. I can't thank you all enough, as all of you made this experience the best we've had in our lives.



Blood bowl family is the greatest group of people you could work for. They will make you smile and laugh when you are down, they will lift your mood when you feel tired. Every sleepless night you go through for them is worth the effort. They are eclectic, different, colorful and awesome one way or another. So do it. Go for your dream. Start planning your big event. Call that group of fools that will jump into the project. We promise we'll do our best to attend.



V NAF World Cup Staff. Our closest family, now and forever. I'd count on them for any project in my life.

P.S.- I want to express my most humble, deep and eternal gratitude to every person involved in V NAF World Cup, be it as staff, volunteers, NAF Committee members, or just attending it. You made it possible, it was your World Cup as much as ours. We truly love you.