

Planning a FOTF competition! Tips and tricks

Whether it be a small picnic meet or a large racing carnival, planning a Fashions on the Field (FOTF) competition can be a daunting task. Although It's All About The Sash does not run competitions, we have worked with many clubs to:

- help plan;
- 'bounce off' ideas off; and
- recommend strategies to help boost numbers, secure judge and sponsors (to name a few)..

If you are new to FOTF or planning a competition, the following suggestions below are 'food for thought'. Remember that no two competitions are the same and an added extra to any race day or event, so the FOTF community is appreciative to the Committee for hosting events.

	Points to consider
Stage/presentation area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate viewing for judges • Public seating/viewing • Ensure area it is accessible/safe • May be as simple as a walkway, could be a straight stage, stage with runway etc – does this require hiring? • You will require a judges table or seating area • Think about coverage (competitors & judges) for poor weather or alternate venue at track • Stage dressing/decoration/backdrop (if any) not to obscure entrants or be distracting to outfits • Club advertising on/near stage ie event/year, sponsors wall nearby etc • PA system/microphone/music
Host/MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does a host/MC need to be booked? The host/MC is the person who will commentate the event and assist with its smooth running. You may have someone within your club who can do this for you • Does the host have an understanding of FOTF and race wear • Interaction with judges – will judges have a microphone to communicate with host, will a runner send scores to host to read out or will host roam? • Create running sheet of the event for the host for smooth running. This should also be given to anyone in an organisational capacity
Judges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judges to be briefed (preferably prior to day) with categories, guidelines & scoring. • Choice of judges ie experience with race wear, can one judge mentor others with less experience?, mix of genders. • If possible, organiser/s of FOTF to stay off judging panel so they remain neutral • Some clubs have different judges for sections, or to judge heats/finals. Advertise if this will be occurring (this is not a common occurrence but does occur)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will judges/host require anything ie refreshments at judges table, hospitality at track, travel, accommodation, hair/make up, transfers, costs covered, thank you present etc. • Can judges assist the club with promoting event &/or assist with media prior to event? • Expectations for judges to wear race wear & be well groomed. If the judge is unable to provide own racewear outfit, do you have a clothing/millinery sponsor who can loan items to judges/host/organisers to promote their brand (approach individuals to see if they are happy to partake). Beauty/hair sponsors may do hair/make up for judges etc
Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet club standards, theme & seasonal requirements • Examples of guidelines can be found on the It's All About The Sash (IAATS) website • Examples of guidelines of other clubs can be found via the IAATS website • Guidelines to be accessible before day & at events ie QR code to club website where they are advertised, printed & displayed at the track etc
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you wish your judges to score entrants? ie discussion, points, combination of both • Provide judges with score sheets and or pen/paper, folder etc
Theme (if any)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is a theme, advertise any themes well in advance • Think about how this theme matches race day ie Golden Eagle – theme: A touch of Gold
Contestant numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will judges identify contestants ie number paddles, fans, numbers to hold/pin on • Will this number be unique across the entire competition or will numbers be flexible throughout?
Sponsors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach local businesses & previous sponsors • Think about what the club can offer sponsor in return for sponsorship ie marquee tickets, advertising, race named after them etc • Sponsors don't have to offer a physical product they may offer cash/voucher/experience
Photographer/social media – on day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact local paper prior to event with timing of FOTF • Club employed photographers/socials • Possibility of live stream of FOTF to club screens & social media
Photo walls/installations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include event name & year - this encourages posting of event to social media
Prizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure prizes are age appropriate • If low on physical prizes, club could offer up membership or future hospitality • Think if prize is category appropriate ie menswear voucher for Best Dressed Gent • Will you be advertising prizes & value before race day?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some clubs offer gift bags to all entrants which may include small vouchers, samples, cosmetics, stubby holders, pens etc • Sash/ribbon or small prize for every child who enters as an incentive to enter – some clubs do this • Some clubs use local vouchers as prizes for ‘Local’ categories • Flowers – is this a prize your club offers? Does your club have a relationship with a local florist? Some clubs have also given away fresh produce hampers or live plants in lieu of flowers
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things you may consider to advertise: date, theme, timings, judges, guidelines, categories, registration times, contact person (usually organiser) & contact details • The more you advertise about the running of FOTF prior to an event, the less enquiries you will receive • Contact judges & host for bios & photos (ensure they have permission to use photos in advertising) • Where to advertise? Club website, club social media sites, It’s All About The Sash, local papers, local community pages/bulletins, local ‘what’s on’, local radio stations, community groups, neighbouring race clubs, sponsors. See what advertising/articles/interviews can be done for free as well as paid advertising
Registration/nominations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise registration times • Do you have online registration? • Table & sign-up sheets • Sign-up sheets may include social media/photography waiver & terms/conditions ie judges decision is final, competitors must meet age & location requirements , no negative comments about judges/other competitors/club, prizes are not transferable, outfits worn within heats must not be altered in anyway to outfits presented in finals etc • Does registration cost anything? If so this could go back into prizes, be donated to a charity partner etc, If donation to charity, often charities are happy to provide volunteers to help run the event ie setup/pack up, registration table etc Advertise where the registration fee will be going if you have one (majority of clubs do not have a fee to enter)
Heat & finals times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise at FOTF, prior to day, in race book • Keep timings in line with race times ie between races
Categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many & what are the category guidelines/requirements? • How many categories can people enter? • Requirements for entering categories ie for local categories post codes, adult categories over 18 (especially if adult related prizes ie alcohol)
Sashes, rosettes etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many places awarded? • Who will order sashes?
Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will be announcing winners, presenting sashes/ prizes? • Will winners be required for anything else after stage presentation? ie ask winners to stay around for group winners photo after comp (advertise this so people don’t disappear),

	<p>presentation to members room/mounting yard/winning post etc</p>
<p>On the day organisation including marshalling & volunteers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers/ushers to group competitors into lines for stage (will they be in random or numerical order), brief as to process, help onto/off stage (often same person/people manning registration desk & co-ordinating prizes) • Area for entrants gathering prior to stage - think about weather also. Does the FOTF area a good place for competitors to mingle prior to & during comp ie access to seating, bookies nearby, location ie is the track in view, ample shade/weather coverage, food/drinks nearby, any extras offered ie pamper station, mirrors, cloak facilities <p>Create running sheet for everyone involved in running FOTF</p>
<p>Prior to event organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is responsible for what? Allocate jobs to committee/volunteers well in advance ie booking judges/host, creating guidelines, sourcing prizes, ordering sashes, organising sound & stage, advertising, volunteers for the day • Do you have a budget? Document all expenses and keep receipts • Do you have to run decisions past the general committee?
<p>Post event</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly issuing a survey looking for feedback/positive suggestions for next event • Collate any feedback & see if any suggestions are viable • Hold post event debrief & take notes on what worked etc • If handing over to new organiser for the next event, a list of suppliers & rundown is much appreciated, including any feedback/suggestions as above

Some further pointers:

- Other types of competitions ie photo comps, people's choice, judges nomination etc advertise explicitly how these will be run & judged
- Is your competition aligned with other competitions ie regional competitions, carnival competition with overall winners etc? Does your comp need to follow certain guidelines, prizes, judging? Ensure this is advertised to competitors. Are winners expected to return & compete in overall final? If so advertise this & date prior to competitors competing. If winners need to return, do they wear exact same winning outfit with no changes or may they choose a different outfit?

The 'It's All About The Sash' website has a page dedicated to FOTF organisers. Please follow the link to access: [Info for FOTF Organisers \(itsallaboutthesash.com\)](https://www.itsallaboutthesash.com)

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