



**INSTRUCTIONS
FOR
ORGANIZERS
AND
PARTICIPATING NATIONS**

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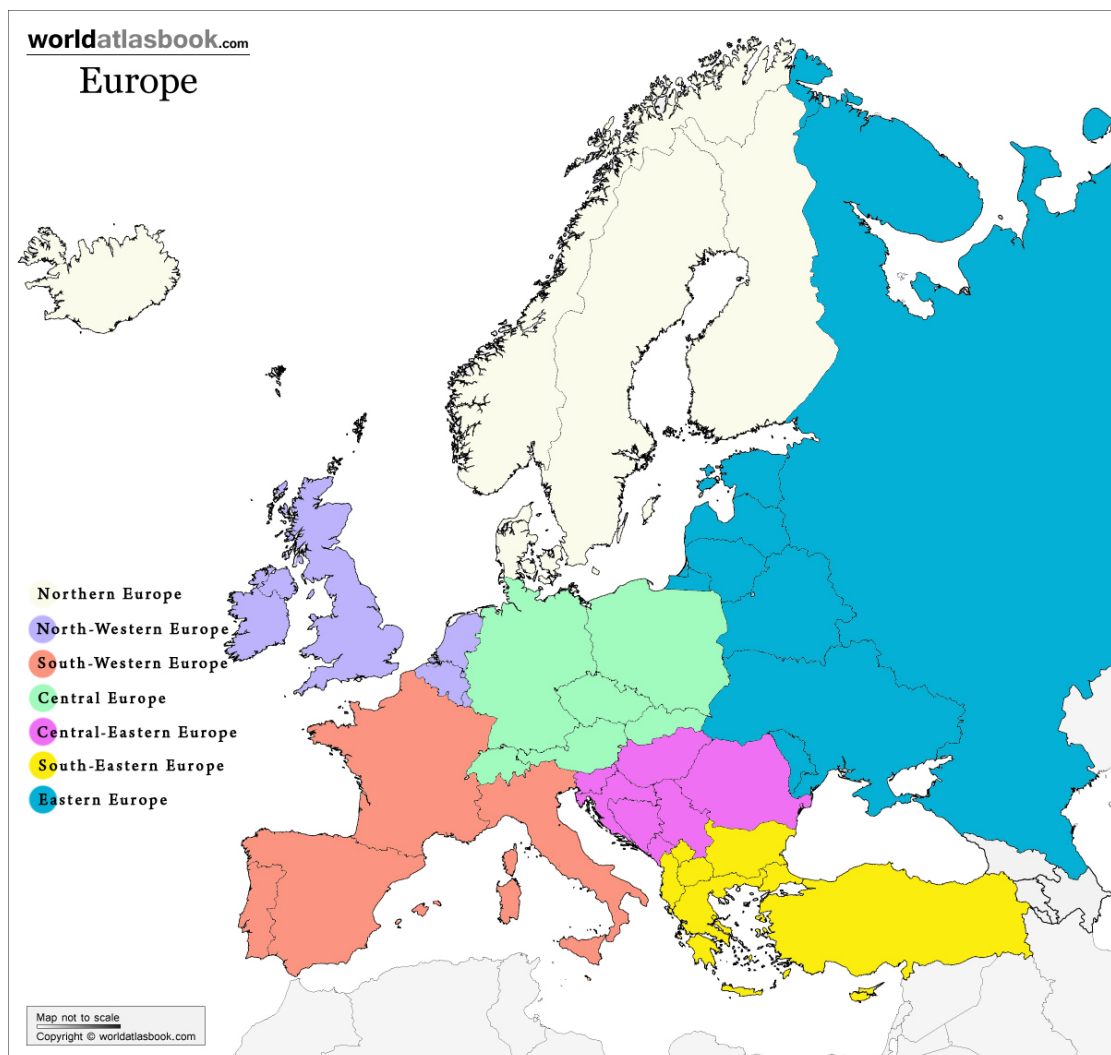
1. General information

ICO Nations Cup is an annual crossminton competition between national teams. ICO Nations Cup tournament mode is based on two-level group and elimination system – first regional tournaments are played in groups and then the winners of these regional tournaments (Regional Champions) battle it out for the title of ICO Nations Cup Champion at the final ICO Nations Cup tournament. All tournaments are organized as independent events, not related to World Series tournaments or World/European Championships, as this is the only way to give the appropriate attention to ICO Nations Cup competition.

1.1. Regional division

All participating nations are first divided into geographical regions. In the first part of the year Regional tournaments are carried out in all regions as one or two-day tournaments. The winners of these tournaments, Regional Champions, advance to the ICO Nations Cup Final tournament, organized at the end of the year by a selected host country, which is automatically qualified for the final tournament.

Countries are divided into following seven European regions, as presented on the map and listed below the map (next page):



- **Northern Europe (NE):** Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finnland, Denmark, Faroe Islands;
- **North-Western Europe (NWE):** Ireland, United Kingdom, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg;
- **South-western Europe (SWE):** Portugal, Spain, Andorra, France, Monaco, Italy, San Marino, Malta;
- **Central Europe (CE):** Germany, Czech Republic, Poland, Austria, Slovakia, Liechtenstein, Switzerland;
- **Central Eastern Europe (CEE):** Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, Bosni and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania;
- **South-Eastern Europe (SEE):** Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus;
- **Eastern Europe (EE):** Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova.

1.2. Time-frame

Each year, Regional tournaments should take place on one of the weekends in April of the respective year, while Final tournament must take place on one of the weekends in October of the respective year.

Regional and Final tournaments can take place on the same weekend and venue as 250 or 500 points tournaments, but not the same weekend and venue as ICO 1000 points tournaments.

1.3. Venue

A venue is to be chosen by organizer and confirmed by ICO. Matches can be played indoors or outdoors, weather permitting. Spectacular venues with the possibility of many spectators (town squares, beaches etc) are to be encouraged. Six courts are recommended, but the number of courts mostly depends of the number of participating nations at the tournament. Theoretically, a clash between only 2 or 3 participating nations requires only 1 court and could even be played in a shopping mall, for example.

1.4. Referees and head umpire

Referees must be provided by the organizer for all matches, if possible. If elimination system is used (more than 4 national teams at a tournament), referees must be used in semifinals and final. Scoreboards must be provided and used in all matches.

A head umpire is in charge of overseeing the tournament, solving disputes and signing the final results sheet. The name of the head umpire must be sent by the organizer by email to ICO not later than 24 hours before the start of the tournament. A member of a participating national team (player or national team captain) cannot be head umpire.

1.5. Speeders

Speeders must be provided by the organizer.

1.6. Flags and banners

Flags of the participating nations must be provided by the organizer. If asked for help by organizer, a participating nation must provide the organizer with its flag not later than at the national team captains meeting.

ICO banners, ICO Nations Cup banners and banners of ICO sponsors can be provided by ICO and – if provided – must be used by the organizers and must be clearly seen on the photo materials, provided for the press. Organizer has the right to use banners of his own sponsors, but must get the approval to use them by ICO before the start of the tournament.

1.7. Trophies/cups

A trophy/cup for a Regional Champion is provided by the ICO and must be of same shape for all Regional Champions. No other trophies or medals are provided by ICO for Regional tournaments. Organizer may provide medals for best participating teams at his own expense. Medals must bear the ICO logo and must be approved by ICO in advance.

A trophy/cup for an ICO Nations Cup Champion (the winner of final tournament) is provided by ICO. Medals for all members of the winning, runner-up and two third-placed teams are also provided by ICO. Organizer is not allowed to provide his own trophies or medals.

1.8. ICO ranking points

ICO ranking points are awarded for each won match. Each won singles match at a regional tournament is worth 150 points, while each won singles match at a final tournament is worth 300 points. Same points are awarded for won doubles matches to both players. No points are awarded for lost matches.

1.9. Participation fee

Each participating nation is to pay 100 EUR participation fee directly to the organizer prior to the ICO Nations Cup Regional or Final tournament, not later than at the national team captain's meeting, which takes place 45 minutes before the start of the tournament. Participation fee covers participation at the tournament, all other costs (transport, accomodation) must be covered by participating nations themselves.

1.10. Cancellations

A team that cancels its participation after submitting the Players list or does not show up at the event itself, receives a financial punishment of max. 1.000 EUR and a ban on competing at all ICO Nations cup competitions for max. 3 years, as decided by ICO Board.

1.11. Media plan

A “Media plan” with a detailed promotional strategy must be a part of every application to host a Final tournament. This document must be submitted together with the application itself well before the tournament and must describe the ways the organizer plans to promote the Final tournament (e.g. media sponsor, video film with interviews, billboards, ...). “Media report”, which must be submitted to ICO after all ICO Nations Cup tournament, is covered in point 6.2.

1.12. Live coverage

Live-stream of the Final tournament must be provided on the internet.

2. Announcement of national team captains and participating players

2.1. National team captain

Each participating national team must have a national team captain, which is named by his/her national federation. His/her name, mobile phone number and e-mail address must be submitted to ICO and the organizer by email not later than 1 week before the start of the ICO Nations Cup tournament. National team captain is responsible for all the communication with ICO and the organizer and must be present at the ICO Nations Cup tournament. One of the participating players can also be named as national team captain. A national team captain must attend the national team captains meeting with the organizer 45 minutes before the start of a tournament.

2.2. Players list

A national team consists of 2 male and 1 female player, with the possibility of 1 additional male and 1 additional female player as reserves. It is up to each national team to decide whether to have reserve players or not.

The names of the participating players must be submitted in the form of a players list to ICO and the organizer by email not later than 1 week before the start of the ICO Nations Cup tournament. Players must be positioned on the players list as

Player 1 male: xxx xxx - name surname

Player 2 male: xxx xxx - name surname

Player 1 female: xxx xxx - name surname

Reserve player male: xxx xxx - name surname (will play doubles instead of Player 1 (2) male) – if relevant! – check point 1.4.

Reserve player female: xxx xxx - name surname (will play doubles instead of Player 1 female) – if relevant! – check point 1.4.

2.3. (Ir)relevance of ICO rankings

While all participating players of one national team must be named in positions (for example Player 1 male, Player 2 male, Reserve player male), their current ICO rankings are irrelevant in this regard. Players must be named in positions by their national federation or national team captain according to the rules/decisions accepted by their national federations, which may or may not decide according to the ICO rankings.

The same rule applies to the naming of national teams. It is completely up to each national federation and its rules to decide which players will be part of its national team.

2.4. Reserve players as nominated doubles players

Reserve players are allowed to play doubles instead of one of the named players (Player 1 male, Player 2 male, Player 1 female). In this case when a name of a reserve player is written down and submitted to ICO and the organizer, it must also be noted that this reserve player will play doubles: for example »Reserve player male: xxx xxx (will play doubles instead of Player 1 male)«. Male reserve player can only substitute one of the two male players (Player 1 male OR Player 2 male) for doubles. Both reserve players (male and female) can be named and play as doubles players at one tournament.

If Reserve player male is named as doubles player instead of for example Player 1 male, but needs to substitute Player 2 male during the tournament due to an injury/illness etc, the Reserve player male assumes the position of Player 2 male in

singles and doubles matches. This way, Player 1 male must play his singles and doubles matches, even though he originally was not named to play doubles matches.

2.5. Calling a new player before the start of the tournament

In case of injury or illness of one of the nominated players, a national team captain can substitute a nominated player (Player or Reserve player) with a new player by email, mobile phone or in person to ICO and the organizer not later than 24 hours before the start of the tournament.

In this case, medical evidence in support of the need to substitute the player must be provided to ICO by email or mail not later than 1 week after the start of the tournament. If not, no ICO ranking points are awarded to the players of this national team and the team is disqualified from the competition. All the medals and trophies that this national team had won at this competition are to be returned to ICO immediately after the ICO decision to disqualify the team has been received by the national federation of the disqualified team.

3. Tournament draw with time-schedule

3.1. Draw communication

The tournament draw with a time-schedule and player names included must be made by the organizer and sent to ICO for confirmation by email not later than 48 hours before the start of the tournament. After receiving back the ICO confirmation, final version of the draw with player names included must be sent by email to national team captains of participating nations, ICO and related press contacts at least 16 hours before the start of the tournament.

3.2. Making a draw

The draw consists of simply drawing each participating country a number, thus giving it a starting spot to complete the draw with the names of nations. Host/organizer nation is given spot number 1, the last years regional champion (if participating) is given spot number 2 and all the other participating nations have their spot numbers drawn in order to create a playing system.

According to the drawn numbers and the playing system, final version of the draw is made with all the clashes and matches written down with names of players according to the submitted players list.

For example, in case of 4 participating nations, round-robin system is used, meaning that the first round clashes are played between Nation 1 and Nation 4 and between Nation 2 and Nation 3 according to the tournament mode.

3.3. 30-minute rule for time-schedule

Time-schedule is then made according to the number of participating nations with 30 minutes used as an average length of one match.

4. Tournament mode

4.1. Regional tournaments

Regional tournaments are carried out in the first part of the year (April) as one or two-day tournaments in ICO selected host countries (organizers). The winners of these tournaments, Regional Champions, advance to the ICO Nations Cup Final tournament.

In case of 4 or less participating teams at a regional tournament, the round robin playing system (all nations play against each other) must be used. In case of 5 or more participating teams at a regional tournament, the elimination system must be used.

4.2. Final tournament

The winners of regional tournaments (7 Regional Champions) advance to the ICO Nations Cup Final tournament, where they are joined by the directly qualified host nation (organizer of the final tournament) as participant Nr. 8.

Current Champion and Vice-Champion are directly qualified for the next year's Final Tournament, but only under the condition that they compete at the next year's respective Regional Tournament as well. In case of winning their Regional Tournament, second placed team is then also qualified for the Final Tournament. If case of not winning their Regional Tournament, they and the winner of the Regional Tournament are qualified for the Final Tournament.

In case of 4 or less participating teams at a final tournament, the round robin playing system (all nations play against each other) must be used. In case of 5 or more participating teams at a final tournament, the elimination system must be used.

Only seeded nations are the last years finalists, seeded as Nr. 1 (winner) and Nr. 2 (runner-up) at the final tournament.

4.3. Number of players and matches for regional and final tournament

A national team consists of at least three players – 2 male players (open category, but not as a rule) and 1 female player (women's category, but not as a rule) – and not more than five players (3 players + 2 reserves that can step in for either singles or doubles matches).

A clash between two national teams consists of 6 matches – 4 singles and 2 doubles matches. Matches (2-winning sets) are played in the following playing order:

Match Nr	Category	Team 1		Team 2
1	singles	Player 1 male	vs.	Player 2 male
2	singles	Player 1 female	vs.	Player 1 female
3	singles	Player 2 male	vs.	Player 1 male
4	doubles	Player 2 male Player 1 female	vs.	Player 2 male Player 1 female
5	doubles	Player 1 male Player 1 female	vs.	Player 1 male Player 1 female
6	singles	Player 1 male	vs.	Player 1 male

The winner of the clash is the national team with more victories in first 6 matches (6:0, 5:1, 4:2) and receives two points, while the defeated team receives 0 points. In case of a tied clash (3:3) after 6 matches in a group clash, the clash is tied and both teams receive 1 point.

In case of a tied clash (3:3) after 6 matches in an elimination clash, the winner is decided by better sets ratio. In case of equal sets ratio, the winner is decided by better points ratio. In case of equal points ratio, the winner is decided by draw.

In case of a two or more teams with the same number of points on first place at the end of a group tournament, the winner is decided by:

1. the result(s) in a clash between these teams;
2. the ratio between won and lost matches during the whole tournament;
3. the ratio between won and lost sets during the whole tournament;
4. the ratio between won and lost points during the whole tournament.

4.4. Number of courts

The number of required courts depends of the number of participating national teams and available time. Standards regarding number of courts are not set as standards, but only as recommendations.

In case of 2 participating nations, 1 court is recommended, but 2 or 3 courts could also be used. With only 1 court, 6 matches will be played subsequently and the clash/tournament would only take about 3 hours according to 30-minute rule. Each match will receive maximum attention.

In case of 3 participating nations (round-robin system), 1 court is possible, but then tournament would then last about 9 hours. Therefore, the use 2 or even better 3 courts is recommended. With 2 courts, Matches Nr. 1 and 2 of each clash could be played simultaneously, thus shortening the tournament by 1,5 hours. With 3 courts, Matches Nr. 1, 2 and 3 can be played simultaneously. In such case, a tournament should last only about 6 hours according to 30-minute rule.

In case of 4 participating nations (round-robin system), 6 courts are strongly recommended. With 6 courts, 2 clashes are played at the same time with Matches Nr. 1, 2 and 3 played simultaneously in both clashes. In such case, a tournament should last only about 6 hours according to 30-minute rule.

In case of 5 to 8 participating nations (elimination system), 6 courts are strongly recommended. With 6 courts and, for example, 8 participating teams, a tournament starting with the first two quarterfinal clashes, should last about 8 hours according to 30-minute rule.

4.5. Expansion to other continents

A wild-card can be given to teams from other continents than Europe, so that they could take part at the ICO Nations Cup competition as well. Two wild-cards are available per continent (Africa, Asia, North America with Carribean Islands and Central America, South America, Australia, with new Zealand and the Pacific nations). To receive a wild-card, national federations from other continents must apply for it till the end of April of the respective year. If there are more than 2 applications from the same continent, Regional tournaments must be played in accordance with ICO.

5. Playing a tournament

5.1. National team captains' meeting

A national team captains' meeting with the organizer takes place 45 minutes before the start of the tournament at the tournament venue. At the meeting, tournament mode and time schedule is explained and all related issues are discussed.

5.2. National team captain's choice substitution

A national team captain is allowed to make a last-minute substitution, which must be announced to the head umpire not later than 45 minutes before the start of the tournament. National team captain's choice substitution can only be made for a doubles match.

In case of male players this means that the Reserve player male can substitute Player 1 male or Player 2 male for one of his doubles matches or all of his doubles matches. In the announcement it must be clearly specified in which matches the substitution will take place and only one of the players can be substituted in one tournament (Player 1 male or Player 2 male). Once the Reserve player male assumes the position of one player (the moment when the announcement is given to the organizer), for example Player 1 male, he can not substitute Player 2 male anymore during this tournament, even in case of his injury (or illness or any other similar justified reason). In this case, Player 2 male would have to surrender all his remaining matches by the score of 0:16, 0:16, while his national team would still be able to finish the tournament.

In case of female players, Reserve player female can substitute Player 1 female in one or both of her matches during one clash, in one or more clashes and even in all clashes. Again, in the announcement it must be clearly specified in which matches the substitution will take place. In case of injury (or illness or any other similar justified reason) of the substituted Reserve player female, Player 1 female can assume her position back in the next match after the injury of Reserve player female.

5.3. Warming-up

Warming-up must be provided to all national teams at least 30 minutes before the start of the tournament at the tournament venue. All national teams must have equal warming-up space and the warming-up conditions must be the same for all national teams.

5.4. Playing matches

All matches must be played according to the tournament draw, time schedule and ICO standards for ICO World Series tournaments. All matches are played by the system of two winning sets.

Players must be officially announced to spectators and scoreboards must be used in order for spectators to be able to keep track of the score.

5.5. Injury substitution

In case of an injury (or illness or any other similar justified reason), national team captain must announce an injury substitution to the head umpire any time before or during the tournament.

In this case, Reserve player can substitute Player male or Player female for all of his singles and doubles matches for the rest of the whole tournament. Injury substitution can only take place if Reserve player had not been selected as National team captain's choice substitution to play one of the coming matches in place of the other Player male. For example, if Reserve player male had been named as National team captain's choice substitution to play doubles in place of Player 2 male in their last clash of the tournament, but Player 1 male then suffers an injury before the last clash, the injury substitution can not be made (because Reserve player male is already substituting Player 2 male for some of the coming matches) and Player 1 male loses all his remaining matches by the score of 0:16, 0:16.

Reserve player female is allowed to make an injury substitution anytime (not during a match), but must then also play all of her singles and doubles matches for the rest of the whole tournament.

6. After the tournament

6.1. Medals ceremony

Medals ceremony must be announced immediately after the end of the tournament and carried out not later than 15 minutes after the end of the tournament. A national anthem must be played for the winning team.

Regardless of the tournament mode (round-robin or elimination), a winner, runner-up and two third-placed teams are announced at the medals ceremony. In case of 4 participating teams, 3rd and 4th placed teams are officially announced as joint third placed teams.

6.2. Tournament and media report

A tournament report with ALL scores (points included) of all matches must be sent to the ICO not later than 24 hours after the end of the tournament. All substitutions that took place must be clearly notified and explained.

A tournament report must be accompanied by a media report, consisting of a short text about the tournament and at least 5 photos. One of them must be a photo of the medals ceremony.