

Sir Par's Guide to Day Events

So, you've decided you want to run a day event. That's great! Day events are an excellent way to bring your local community together. The common assumption is that running a weekend event is harder than running a day event, and while weekend events have some big issues that need to be addressed, running a quality day event is, in my opinion, a lot harder. But don't worry, I'm here to help.

Location-

Choosing a site is the most important first step in running any kind of event. Before you can make an announcement post, plan battles or arts and sciences events, decide on feast or after parties, you have to pick a location. I think that this step is actually harder for day events than weekend events, and I'll lay out those reasons below, but chiefly it's because of the range of options you have for a day event. You aren't necessarily looking for a campground, most of the time a city park will do. And narrowing down this location can be tricky, so here are the things to consider when picking a site. Some sites may require a deposit or rental fee, so consider your budget as well.

1. **Parking-** For a weekend or week-long event, camp space and a field are your primary concerns. For a day event, most parks or locations you might choose already have grass fields, and you don't need to camp. What you do need is lots of parking. Having the event be local means that you'll attract fewer people who car pool. You're also less likely to get long distance attendees, but don't let that fool you, more of your locals will come out to a day event, since it only requires one day off work. People are less likely to be OK with being away from their vehicles as well. At a longer event where people have what they need with them, and overflow parking lot works great, since most people won't go back to their cars. But for a day event you can expect just about everyone to want to go to their vehicle at least once. You also need to consider accessible parking for anyone who might have a placard. Making day events accessible to everyone is sometimes more of a challenge than you would think. To ensure this make sure you choose a location with good parking, and at least two, close by, reserved parking spaces.
2. **Restrooms-** This is the next thing you should think about. Does your location have a close by, and accessible restroom? This might be difficult if you're hosting an early season event in an area where restrooms get locked for the winter. But if the park doesn't have them is there a public building close by that will be open? For instance, Highlands of Chaos Opener has traditionally been hosted in Twin Falls City park in early March. The city doesn't open their restrooms until April, but next door to the park is the Library, which is open and has a public restroom. If you're hosting an event on private land somewhere, make sure you have restroom access, and if you don't, you'll need to rent some porta-potties.

3. Shelter- Weather happens. This means you need to be ready for it. If you can, consider reserving a pavilion in your park so attendees can get out of the rain. If this isn't an option then the event should have some portable shelters on hand to make sure event attendees aren't stuck in the rain if they don't want to be. This step is frequently overlooked, and you can't rely on your attendees to provide this. It needs to come from the event or the realm that's hosting.

The Field- Belegarth events are primarily fighting events, and this is truer at day events than weekend events. We'll discuss non-fighting activities in the next section, but after you've found your location your next concern should be the fighting. For a day event, a flat, open piece of grass is ideal. You can mix it up with woods battles or a hill if you have one, but for the most part fighting is going to take place between 10 or 11 and 4. That's not enough time for people to get bored if the fights are organized well.

1. Line battles/Ditch fights- This is what most of your fighters are coming for. These should dominate most of the field time. They're old reliable and they're hard to mess up if you have active Marshals. There are two key concerns for these types of fights. The first is safety. Your marshals need to make sure that any field hazards are dealt with quickly, and that unsafe behavior is corrected efficiently. The second concern is a lot harder to get right, and that's balancing the lines. At day events you're less likely to have fighters come on and off the field every round. It might happen, but it's not your primary concern. What most marshals don't understand is how to balance. You should always balance your field from the middle. This means that you don't bounce the best, or newest fighters back and forth, but rather from the mid-point of the skill on your field. New fighters getting moved are unlikely to actually balance the outcome, and S-tier fighters have the potential to swing it drastically the opposite direction. Taking from the middle is always more likely to actually balance your field. Also, consider how often to balance. I recommend not balancing until one side has won two or three fights in a row without getting or losing people. Also, I recommend assigning walk-ons to the side that lost the previous battle, taking skill level into consideration. Obviously, this requires you to actually know your attendees. This can be hard if you have unknowns or your marshals are new, but is also a great opportunity for marshals to meet people.
2. Unit battles- My advice is to not run these in the traditional sense. Introducing the 'Five Armies' style of traditional unit battles to a day event is a nearly guaranteed way to introduce salt to the field. The best way to run units is, for an hour or so, split the teams based on units. Two team ditches, but with each side made up of whole units. This is challenging to balance, but is doable and has been the hallmark of the Highlands of Chaos Opener for years.

3. Tournaments- These should be avoided at a basic day event. Now, Tournament days are they're own kind of day events and can be super fun if handled well. I've gone to several and always had a good time. But for a basic day event all they'll do is kill field fighting. If you absolutely need to run them, then no more than three. Make them as lighthearted as possible, and do them either at the end of the day or over a designated lunch break.
4. Scenario Battles- One at the most. If you can't explain it to a newer person in under two minutes, then it's too complicated for an event like this. Capture the Flag, King Battles, Ring the Bell, Steal the Bacon, and others like it can add some flavor to field fights. Make sure you do these after a lunch break or late in the day. Also be flexible, if you've had good field fighting all day and people are having fun, there's not need to interrupt that with a scenario.

Non-fighting Activities- While fighting is still the main focus of Belegarth, we are a Combat Society, non-fighting activities have risen in popularity over the last ten years and must be considered for a day event. Arts and Sciences competitions are a great way to add a non-fighting activity. You can't treat this as an afterthought. If you're going to incorporate these into your event you need to designate a point person to run them.

1. A&S Tournament- This is a great way to showcase the work Belegrim have done before the event, but will not occupy as much time at the event as you think it will. I would recommend not using these at a day event unless it's early in the season and you want to use it as a venue to highlight work done over the off season, if your area has one.
2. Crafting Challenges- This is an activity similar to an A&S Competition, but requires active participation at the event. Several realms already run some form of these and can be resources if you're looking to add them. This could be anything from a 'Chopped' style competition to a joint miniature painting event where folks bring crafts to work on. They can be competitions or simply participatory, but either way your day events should focus on something active.
3. Games- An easy way to incorporate non-fighting activities is to provide a small game library, weather permitting. There are great games like Liar's Dice and Shut the Box that are historical. Or you can go the fantasy route and include the Song of Ice and Fire boardgame, or even a Magic: The Gathering event. These can be either passive entertainment or you can have someone specifically assigned to run these.

End of Day- When you have a day event you won't likely have a main fire where people gather to socialize after the event. Weekend event staples like a pub night or feast also may not make sense. Consider this when planning your event.

1. Feast- This should be obvious but skip feast. There are some folks who may still want to share a communal meal, but it shouldn't be event provided. This adds a LOT of stress and normally means field fighting has to end a little earlier. Instead you might suggest that some of you head to a restaurant or a dessert place after the event to socialize. Normally groups like Units and Realms will self-organize into these outings so if you choose to skip an after meal all together that's totally acceptable.
2. After party- If you have the space you may choose to host some kind of after party or pub night. Understand that any out of town guests likely either won't attend or will need crash space. If you choose to offer this type of activity you need to announce it and make sure out of town guests have secured crash space.

Critical Review- This is the most important step of running any event. It's not enough to just put on an event. Process improvement is critical if you want to have attendees come back to your event the next year. As the head EC you need to check in with all of our division heads for what went well, and what needs to be addressed. Do not shy away from these conversations. This is how we better serve our communities. If something didn't go well don't leave it all on your own shoulders to fix it either. Asking for help or ideas can be difficult, but is a crucial step in any process improvement. And I'm here to help! I am happy to be the first person you ask for help in improving any process. And the best part is I'm still learning too! We all learn best when we work together.

-In Service

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