Judge Academy Quick Guide
Handling Internet/Software Issues

Sometimes tournament software won't work for you - the servers may be overloaded or the internet connection may go out, and you need to continue running your event *now*. Maybe you've already started it, maybe it's about to begin, but you need a way to assign players to opponents so they can get playing!

Step One: Don't Panic!

There are plenty of solutions, ranging from other tournament software sites and applications to pen and paper methods. This is something that has happened before and there are tools to help the event proceed smoothly. We'll cover the basics of the options available to you and recommendations on how to move forward smoothly, so players have an optimal experience. Keep in mind that if an issue comes up in the middle of a round, you will have time to start implementing a fix while the players are still playing their current match!

Once players are paired and start playing with any of the methods below, you will not be able to continue running that event in EventLink. So while you might prep one of the solutions below, we highly recommend giving your internet, the server, or whatever the issue was one last check before announcing the next round's pairings, in case the issue has been resolved in the meantime.

Digital Solutions

First up there are a handful of other options available online if you still have internet access. We've listed several below, but this is not an exhaustive list. All of these do require the event creator (you) to create an account but do not require players to create an account.

Pick whichever works best for you, and get to work transferring players over. It's a best practice to ask permission from your players before sharing their email with another website, so if there is an option for emails and notifications and you would like to use that functionality, ask any players who would not like to have that information shared to let you know.

If you've already started any rounds, create pairings in the new software based on the played rounds. All of these websites allow you to adjust pairings, so you can relatively easily match pairings in past rounds to the present.

If you don't have access to past round results or pairings, check with the players - ask them if they won or lost each round, and who they played against. Write it down, and then re-create the matches in the tournament software.

It may take some time to move the matches over, but once you do, you should be able to continue tournament play. If EventLink or other software comes back up, you will not necessarily be able to return to it. EventLink does not allow you to adjust pairings, so if the system you used created different pairings than EventLink, it won't be an accurate reporting.

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Tournament Software Websites:

These websites all require an account to create events but do not require accounts for participation. Each of these platforms has its own strengths and weaknesses. If you're in the middle of a round, you can spend a few minutes figuring out which best suits your needs. If you're about to start a round, we recommend just picking one and committing to it, rather than spending time jumping between them - they are similar enough in base functionality that any of these should meet your needs.

Challonge.com

When you create your event, make sure to set the format to Swiss and adjust match points (3 points for wins and byes, 1 point for draws). If your event is large enough to require table numbers, you will need to manually create "Stations".

Tabletop.to

TTT does not have Magic as one of its selectable games, so you will have to select "Generic". TTT also doesn't care significantly about tiebreakers, which can be relevant if you are prizing out based on standing and not record.

AppSpot

This website is relatively light and well-formatted to be used on mobile devices, in case your scorekeeping computer loses power or internet access. It's also designed explicitly for Magic tournaments and nothing else, so you don't need to worry about configuring settings. It doesn't have a bulk-add feature for players, so it takes a little bit longer to initially add players and does not accept player emails or use notifications.

MTGMelee

MTGMelee has a comprehensive suite of features but requires manual approval of your account before you are able to organize events. If you have an existing account with Event Organizer privileges using it to host your prerelease is an option.

(These websites are not affiliated with Judge Academy or Wizards of the Coast.)

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Manual Pairing

This is where things get a little complicated - if you're not able to use any scorekeeping software you can still run the event manually. This requires a decent amount of work and only gets more complicated the larger your event goes.

Start by having each player fill out an index card or other small sheet of paper (like printer paper cut into fourths) with their name, their opponent each round, and their record. You can see in the below image that our sample player has played three rounds and currently has two wins and one loss.

All you need to do to make pairings is sort your index cards by score. In this example, we'd have a pile of 3-0s, 2-1s, 1-2s, and 0-3s (you may have extra piles for players with Draws). Then just match players against other players in the same pile (and therefore players who have the same overall record) and make sure that they haven't played against each other already.

When you're doing this, create all of the pairings first, to make sure you don't have a re-match. If you announce pairings as you create them, you might find yourself with only two players left, but they've already played against each other.

This process does take longer than the click of a button, but you can start sorting out players' cards and making pairings before the round ends. It is recommended that you hold on to the cards between rounds, so they don't get lost or damaged.
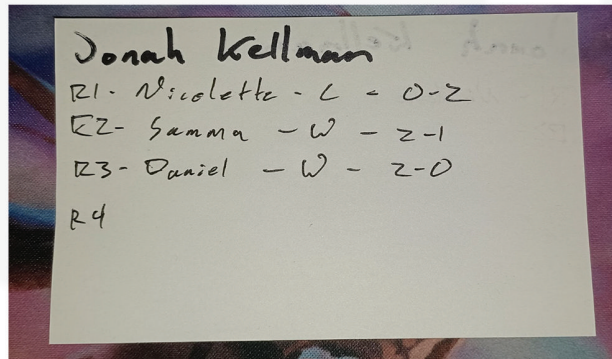
If you don't have an even number of cards in each pile or you have some players in a pile together that have already played against each other, you can have some pair-ups or pair-downs, where players are against someone with a different record. When doing so, try to preserve the balance between pair-ups and pair downs.

In the above example, if we had two players who were 2-0-1 and had already played against each other, pair one against a 3-0 (if possible) and one against a 2-1. Try to avoid large steps in match score, so that a 2-0-1 doesn't play against someone with a record of 1-2 or similar.

Keep the index cards updated and be particularly attentive to the end of the round and collecting match results, as this process will take a little bit more time.