

How to Run a Royal Court

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Introduction

Running a Royal Court can be nerve-wracking and intense. The Herald In Charge is not just the stage manager, but also frequently (but not always) one of the lead performers. Not only do you need to focus on the organizational components of running a royal court, but you're also going to be reading the words of the Crown up there in front of everyone!

There are four parts preparing for and executing any Royal Court. They are:

1. Preparing yourself
2. Organizing the court
3. Performing the court
4. Reporting the court

If you follow the steps within diligently, you'll be able to get through all four parts without significant problems, serving your Kingdom and your Royalty in the process.

Part One: Preparing Yourself

Aside from mentally psyching yourself up for the court (which is actually covered in part two of this document, there are several things that you can do to organize and prepare yourself for the court.

- Get yourself two good binders. One will hold your Boke of Ceremonies (link below) and one will become your court binder. Fill it with several dozen plastic page protector sheets.
- The Pursuivant's Handbook can be found at this link:
<http://www.midrealm.org/heraldry/forms/MK%20Pursuivants%20handbook%20%20ed.pdf> .
There are several sections of this book dedicated to running court. Keep in mind that these days, the royal staff is responsible for the thrones, so generally you don't have to be.

- The MidRealm Boke of Ceremonies can be found here: <http://www.midrealm.org/heraldry/forms/MKBokeofCeremonies.pdf> . Print out the whole thing, but also print out additional specific pages, and store those pages in your court binder.
 - The Oaths of Fealty for all four bestowed peerages (Chiv, Laurel, Pel, MoD)
 - The Oath of Fealty for Landed Baronages
 - The Oath of Fealty for the Populace
 - Elevation Ceremonies for all four bestowed peerages
 - Generic award verbiage for all awards

DO NOT FORGET TO READ THESE DOCUMENTS. THEY DON'T EXIST IN A VACUUM AND WILL INFORM YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY TO BE A GOOD COURT HERALD!

- Most people don't bring a laptop and printer to events. Download and print out the following documents to bring with you. Put them in your court binder for filling out day of:
 - <http://www.midrealm.org/heraldry/forms/Check%20List%20For%20Court.pdf> (Court Checklist)
 - <http://www.midrealm.org/heraldry/forms/Fill-in%20Court%20Sheet.pdf> (Fill In Court Sheet)
- If you aren't obsessive like me and you don't bring a laptop and printer, bring a legal pad or some other form of LINED paper and multiple pens and pencils. You will be taking MANY notes.
- Practice the names of the Royalty you will be heralding for, as well as any local Barons and Baronesses who may be sitting on the podium with TRM and TRH. You don't want to stumble, or it's off with your head! Also practice the date of the event. Remember, scrolls are dated AS – year of the Society – not CE.

Part Two: Organizing the Court

Now you've arrived at the event with all your supplies and texts and binders. It's time to start organizing the court!

There will be a pre-court meeting near the end of the day, before court. Do not wait for this meeting before getting started.

Here's what you will want to do:

During the Day

- Find out where the royalty room is.
- Find out where the scribes room is.
- Find a place to put your stuff.
- Find out what, where, and when the courts are
 - There are three kinds of courts
 - Field Court (where the royalty walk from location to location to give awards to people on the field)
 - Silent Court (where awards are read into court for people who are not present at the event and then distributed to be handed out locally)

- Formal Court (where the populace gather and the royalty process in for giving awards)
 - All three kinds of court require a warranted herald and warranted seneschal.
- Find the Event Steward
 - Tell them that you're the Herald In Charge for the event.
 - Ask them to have the site herald cry the site for anyone who has business with the Crown during court, and have those people come find you.
 - Ask them who will be the seneschal for Court.
 - If they do not have a seneschal for Court, it is your responsibility to get one.
 - Ask them for assistant heralds if you do not have any and you want them.

It's not a good idea to perform an entire court by yourself. Always have a backup in case you have some kind of problem that affects your voice.

- Find the Royal Chamberlin or Head Retainer and make sure they know you are present on site.
 - Ask them if you can meet TRM and when
 - Ask them when you can start looking at scrolls and glosses
 - Ask them if there will be any courts outside the main Court held in the evening (such as field courts)
 - Ask them where and when the Pre-Court meeting is.
- When you meet with TRM, ask Them for:
 - A list of awards in the order They wish
 - Preference about when to start reading (ie, when the recipient stands up, or when they arrive at the thrones)
 - Preference about missing recipients
 - If They prefer "Hoobah" or some other cheer
 - Who else will be on the dias (TRH, foreign royalty, landed Barons and Baronesses)
- Find the Signet for the event.
 - Make sure they have the court list with the proper order and that their list matches your list
 - Review each scroll to make sure that there is a gloss, and that you can read and pronounce the names.
 - Start working together to fill out your Court Sheet and checklist
- Check back in with the Event Steward for business in court before the Pre-Court Meeting and make a list
- Prepare boasts for processional and recessional

A boast doesn't have to be a big, poetic rousing piece. It can simply be announcing the royalty as they process in.

Pre Court Meeting

- Make sure everything is written down
- Present the full court list, with all the non-awards business and confirm the order
- Ask TRM if They have anything to add, such as fealties.

- Review Their choices from earlier
- Meet with your assistant heralds
- Review the list of names and make sure everyone can pronounce them
- Split the pieces of business up between your assistants
- Warm up your voice with vocal exercises
- Make sure everything is written down

Make sure everything is written down.

Part Three: Performing the Court

- Take a deep breath.
- Remember the names of the King and Queen
- Check things off as they are completed
- You got this
- Rock the joint

Part Four: Reporting the Court

The event is over. You rocked the court, got all those weird names right, and the Royalty are happy.

Here's the thing – if you don't file your court report, none of it matters, and none of it counts. So once you get home and you decompress and get a good night's sleep, it's time to send that report in.

- Browse to <http://www.midrealm.org/heraldry/courtreport/>
- Review the instructions at the bottom of the page
- Enter the appropriate information related to yourself, the date of the court, who held the court, etc.
- Click the link to add lines to the report several times, until you have enough lines.
- Enter the awards given IN THE ORDER THEY WERE GIVEN. The OP cares about precedence even from one award to the next. Get the spellings as close to accurate as possible. One way to do this is to browse to the Order of Precedence, which will have the officially accepted spelling. Do your best.
- In the notes, you can choose to put in presentations, who was put on vigil, etc.
- Be sure to click the Submit Report button!

Now you're really done. And you can start thinking about volunteering to be Herald In Charge again! Think about what went well, and what didn't, and what you might want to try next time. Remember, everyone makes mistakes; so don't obsess about them. Congratulations, and thank you for your service to the Kingdom!

(Thanks to THL Jean Yves for much of the foundational information in this document.)