

# HOW TO RUN A GOLF TOURNAMENT

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*Twelve to Nine Months in Advance*

## **Select a Golf Course, Date and Time**

The key to a good turnout is proper planning. Golf courses start booking outings a year in advance. Choose a location and time best suited for your needs. Decide on the format of the tournament because that will help you determine whether your event requires tee times or a shotgun start.

## **Select a Tournament Director**

This person should be detail oriented and dedicated to your cause. The tournament director does not have to be the greatest golfer but has at least played in a few golf tournaments.

## **Choose a Cause**

Why do you want to hold a golf tournament? The answer to this question will decide your theme of the tournament and who will participate in the event.

## **Select On-Course Contests and Events**

Contests during your tournament will keep your golfers interested and looking forward to the next hole. Try to have at least one contest per nine holes and make certain to reward your winners with a prize. (Hole-In-One Contest, Closest To Pin, Longest Drive, Straightest Drive, etc.)

## **Determine Additional Activities**

If you plan to include food and refreshment services, pre-tournament contests, auctions, raffles, guest speakers, etc. make sure to account for the space and supplies necessary.

## **Create a Budget**

Determine your entry fee by what your target market can bear and plan your expenses around that. Make sure you budget for any surprise expenses.

## *Nine Months in Advance*

### **Sign Up Volunteers**

You will need at least 3-5 volunteers on site the day of the tournament and as many you can get to help with selling sponsorships.

### **Plan Publicity**

The more exposure your tournament receives, the more participants and sponsors you will get. Besides the entry form, there are many other ways to publicize your tournament.

- Radio and TV: Search for free opportunities to announce your tournament. Public service announcements, local talk shows, press conferences, and local calendars of events are all effective.
- Newspapers: Local shoppers guide and other free publications are a good way to get the word out. Create a press release kit for your tournament to receive free advertisement. Placing an ad in the local paper can be very effective but very costly.
- Signs and Banners: Place them in high traffic intersections and other areas.
- Flyers and Posters: Post them at golf courses, offices, local stores, etc..

### **Sell Sponsorships**

Selling sponsorships is the way to acquire the commitment that leads to a successful tournament. Sponsorships should be developed between the tournament and local businesses. Design various levels of sponsorship. Each level should entail some form of tournament recognition and participation. Various levels may include:

- Title Sponsor: company name would appear on all golf marketing materials, playing spots, tee sponsor signs, reception signs, etc..
- Supporting Sponsors: receive hole sponsorship signs and playing spots.
- Hole Sponsor: receive hole sponsorship sign and program listing.
- Registration, Mulligans, Beverage Cart, Reception Sponsor: logo and/or message would be placed on signs at the respective locations.
- Arrival Package Sponsor: logo and/or message would be placed on all tees, repair and golf balls.

The key to selling sponsorships is to convey to your sponsors that they are getting their money's worth.

### *Six Months in Advance*

#### **Order Invitations**

Make sure your invitation is appealing because this is your primary source in attracting participants. The invitation has to be laid out with as much detail as possible. These are the essential pieces of information needed:

- Name of tournament and title sponsor
- Date and time
- Name, address and telephone number of the tournament director
- Entry fee
- Entry deadline
- What is included in the entry (green fees, cart, dinner, arrival packages, etc.)
- Prizes and contests
- Name, address and telephone of participant
- Name, address and telephone of others on team
- Handicap
- Foursome Preferences
- Shirt size

#### **Create list of Possible Participants**

This list could range from employees and their family members to local businesses.

#### **Finalize Food and Refreshment**

Decide on the menu, beverages, entertainment, and decorations. Make sure the room you are using can accommodate your tournament size.

### *Three Months in Advance*

#### **Order Arrival and Reception Packages**

Arrival packages are given to each participant and should at least include balls, tee packs, towel and a hat. Reception packages should cover all on course contests and 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup>

places. Order packages as soon as possible because logo and embroidery work takes a few weeks.

### **Start Advertising**

Determine how many signs, banners, flyers, etc. you will need to advertise your tournament.

### **Distribute Invitations**

Make sure you order some extra invitations for last minute requests and some to distribute to local business and friends.

### **Finalize All Tournament Activities**

If you are planning for guest speakers or entertainment, make final confirmation. Purchase and gather all your raffle and auction items. Secure Hole In One, putting and other contests. Find sponsors for all your contests to increase profit. Order all your tee signs.

### *One Month in Advance*

#### **Confirm Tee Times**

Contact the golf course to keep them up to date on your progress. Confirm tee times and other services they are providing.

#### **Confirm Food and Refreshments**

Once again, keep the staff updated with times, dates, and anticipated number of entries.

#### **Prepare Printed Materials**

Prepare on course contest prizes by deciding which holes to place them. Create day of program guide for participants and any other material needed to pass out on the day of the tournament.

### *Three Days in Advance*

#### **Confirm Final Number and Pairings**

Confirm with the golf course, food and refreshment people the final number of participants. Finalize pairings by their request and handicaps. Fax a copy of the pairings to the course.

### **Money and Change Box**

Have a money and change box ready for your volunteers to sell raffles, mulligans, donations, etc.

### **Confirm Contests with Golf Course**

Coordinate your contest requirements such as circles on the greens, lines in the fairways, etc. with golf course. Make sure they have appropriate measuring and recording devices for contests.

### *Prior to Tournament*

### **Put Up Hole In One and Sponsor Signs**

Put each sign in full site on the entrance to each tee. Make sure the tee box is set up for the correct distance for the Hole In One prize.

### **Set Up Registration**

Give yourself ample room to register numerous golfers at a time. Also use this time to start selling raffle tickets, mulligans, etc. and distributing arrival packages.

### **Display Prizes**

Show all tournament, raffle and auction prizes.

### **Set Up Scoreboard**

Make sure to locate the scoreboard where there is room to gather.

### **Instruct Photographer**

Lead him/her to the location of the photos. It's also a good idea to give the photographer a list of golfers.

### **Place Contest Markers on Holes**

Don't forget to put the measuring and recording devices out before the first group gets to a contest hole.

### **Give Last Minute Instruction to Golfers**

Inform all golfers the local and tournament rules and wish them good luck.

## *After the Tournament*

### **Post Scores**

Total all scores and have someone double check for accuracy.

### **Enjoy the Food and Entertainment**

Make sure that all the guests are enjoying themselves and that there is ample food and beverages.

### **Awards Ceremony**

Announce the winners in reverse order. Bring them up to receive their awards and take a picture of them. Announce and present a gift to all your sponsors.

### **Clean Up Site**

Make certain to clean up after your food service and pick up the signs on the course.

## *Post Tournament*

### **Write Thank You Notes**

All sponsors and volunteers must receive a personal thank you.

### **Evaluate the Tournament**

Take some brief notes evaluating the tournament to better prepare for and improve next years event.