

Golf Tournament Planning Guide



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Planning a Golf Tournament

Have you ever been to a golf tournament where you were late because you had poor or no directions? All you received for tee prizes was a sleeve of golf balls or a bag of tees? You were put into a group where everyone was so serious that it was no fun? All the food or beverages were gone before you got in line? The golf course ran out of golf carts before you got one (so you had to walk)? There were not enough tables for everyone to eat at?

These and worse things might happen without proper preparation. If any of these things have happened to you, you probably left feeling that someone did not plan the event very well.

This planner is designed to help make sure the next event you put on is planned perfectly. It will also make others realize the amount of work and planning that is required to make a memorable event. One important thing to remember is that some items may need to be planned up to one year in advance, such as reserving a golf course, golf carts or the dining hall.

Where Do I Get Started?

First, determine your tournament objective. Is it to raise funds for a charity, gain recognition, provide recreation, gain goodwill as a thank you, or as a competition for members? Knowing that, you will be better able to select your golf course, guests and event format.

Formats include: stroke, match play, best ball or scrambles (best shot); individual or teams. Handicapping of players (to equalize players abilities) is done by using the course rating along with the players USGA handicap. Many players will not have a USGA handicap, so you may have to use a modified handicap system (see page 6). For most corporate outings, scrambles work best. This format is less intimidating and more enjoyable for all participants.

A scramble is where everyone in your group tees off and the best shot is chosen, then everyone hits from that spot, etc. Best ball is where everyone can play their own ball and you use the best 2 or 3 scores per hole (with handicap) in the group.

Next you will have to determine the number of golfers you would like. Most 18-hole golf courses can handle up to 144 golfers (36 groups of four). If you have a shotgun start, this would require two groups on every hole. If your group is larger, you will need two courses or a morning and afternoon start.

What Needs To Be Done?

As mentioned previously, there are many tasks to coordinating a golf tournament. Here are some areas you will want to make sure you recruit assistance in: team pairings, marking of golf course, scorecards, scoreboard, rules sheet, first tee coordinator, bag drop, special events, gifts/tee prizes, award presentations, and food service. Other areas you may need help include: flyers for mailing, rule sheets, score sheets and bag tags.

You may also need to arrange for check-in tables, special event signs, a list of participants, photographers, entertainment or speakers to name a few.

You will want to meet with the director of golf and the general manager at the golf course you choose to see what they will do for you and at what cost.

Eat, Drink And Be Merry

Food and beverage is an important part of the event. You will need to know the number of people, arrival and departure times, type of meal (sit down, buffet, off menu), bar services, hors d'oeuvres, meal prices and method of payment.

Make arrangements for a head table, guest speaker, podium and microphone, prize and award table and special seating.

Bar arrangements can be either a cash bar, billing to the event or tickets. During the event it is customary to offer beverage service on the course. You must decide if this cost is to be included in your entry fee.

It is very important that you have planned for proper timing between the golfing and the meals. A scramble event will take anywhere from four to six hours. You may also need to plan for possible rain delays.

Where Are We Going To Play?

Prior to contacting some golf courses you will need to know if you need food, beverage or social services from the golf club. You will find most private clubs only allow outside events on Mondays. Now it is time to contact some golf courses. You will want to ask them for a tournament information sheet. When selecting a course, you first need to pick a date.

Once your course is selected, you will be able to establish your budget. Items to consider include: green fees, golf carts, beverages, food services (breakfast, lunch, hors d'oeuvres, dinner), use of driving range, tee prizes and awards, staffing, bag room, parking, photography, entertainment, insurance, locker room, lodging, and transportation. It is customary for prizes and awards to be 10% of your budget.

Once you have collected all this information, you will be able to establish your entry fee.

Sponsorships can help subsidize the cost of the event. Do you want a sponsor for the entire event or do you want a large number of small sponsors? If seeking a major sponsor to fund the entire tournament, obtain facts about the company to show you are informed and interested. If your event involves a charity, the appeal of tax deduction can be used as a selling point.

Sign Me Up!

Who wants to play in your outing and how do you get them to sign up? You probably have a good idea as to your target audience. It is important that you post, advertise or send out invites as much as two months in advance. This will give you the jump on other activities. You need to take into consideration whether people are coming from out of town and if they need airline tickets.

Invitations should include the event date and time, location, format, cost of the event and entry due date. If you are handing out apparel, you will want to be sure to ask for shirt, pants or glove size and hand. You will also need to ask if anyone will require rental clubs.

Thirty days prior to the event you will want to send out an information packet with all the above information as well as a map to the course, phone numbers, housing information, any dress codes and golf shoe spike rules, shop hours, range hours and the hours of any social activities.

FORE!

The registration table is your first chance to make a favorable impression on the tournament participant. The table should be located near the clubhouse entrance or the first tee. Items you will need include: pencils, scorecards, bag tags, tees, divot tools, tee gifts, hard candy, housing and dining information, pairing sheets, tee times, golf cart number, alphabetized player rosters, cash box, rules and format sheets, paperweights and a trash can.

Visitor welcoming information should include the golf club and lodging phone numbers, hours of the golf shop, driving range, coffee shop, dress code and golf shoe and golf cart rules. shop, driving range, coffee shop, dress code and golf shoe and golf cart rules.

Are You Having A Great Time?

If you are using golf carts, a rental fleet may be needed and must be reserved as much as a year in advance to ensure availability. You will want to request a few extra carts to cover breakdowns, rangers, delivery of messages and for food and beverage assistance on the course. Two-way radios can also be used to maintain contact between rangers and clubhouse. Use a print shop to create a sign with your corporate sponsor and lines for the player's names and starting hole. The player's names can be handwritten later with a magic marker.

To avoid confusion and for safety's sake, you will want to keep the keys out of the carts for a shotgun start until just prior to the start.

During the event someone will need to be available for first aid, rules interpretations, monitoring the free car for a "Hole-in-One".

How Do We Figure Out Who Won?

The players or teams are responsible only for their individual hole scores, not the addition of the totals. Totalling the scores and handicapping* is the responsibility of the official scorer. Each player or team should sign and witness their score card.

The scoreboard should be centrally located in an area that is easily accessible. All scores should be posted for everyone to review.

*Modified handicapping methods include: Callaway, Wilson, and Peoria.

What Did I Win?

I once read a poster that said, its okay to lose...until I lose. What's nice about golf is that the handicap system makes everyone equal so anyone can win. Also, it is easy to have multiple winners of the team event in addition to all the individual winners you can have for long putt, hole in one, long drive, closest to the pin, fewest putts, most greens in regulation, closest drive to the center of the fairway. You can also set up putting contests on the practice green or offer raffles to allow more winners.

Shown on this page are examples of some awards. Other ideas can be free trips, pro shop credit, dinner certificates, or money. It should be something they will appreciate.

Thanks For The Memories

After the event was over, did everyone have a great time? Will they remember the event as one they would like to return to next year and invite some of their friends? You may want to send them a thank you note, a team or group picture or how about a piece of art that will get displayed! Also, don't forget to thank the assistants who helped you make the event a great success.

Now that the event is over, you thought you were done. The best time to plan next years event is now. It would also be a good time to reserve your facilities for next year as well as start to plan the prizes and awards. Have a fun time and Good Luck!

Handicapping The Unhandicapped

For those tournament directors who are faced with one round handicapping where participants have no established handicaps, here are three systems for handicapping the unhandicapped. To assure equal play and prize distribution, players having USGA handicaps should compete in separate classes from those using these systems. Current USGA handicaps should be used where possible. The "instant" handicapping system presented here are to be used only if no handicap of any kind has been established by the player.

Each of the following methods can be used to equalize non-handicapped players. Individual tournament directors should consider specific circumstances of the particular competition and use the system which appears most suitable.

THE CALLAWAY SYSTEM

THE CALLAWAY HANDICAP SYSTEM (For 18 Hole Regulation Course)

This system offers an interesting solution for providing handicaps for novice or occasional golfers. Under this system, a player's handicap is determined after each complete round by deducting from his gross score the scores of the worst individual holes during the first 16 holes of their 18 hole round.

The following table shows the number of worst hole scores the player may deduct and the adjustment to be made, based on their gross score.

If a player shoots a 97 on 18 holes, they may deduct the total of their 3 worst holes (holes 1 - 16 only). If the player had a 9 and two 8s, their handicap total is 25. From this total, a further plus or minus adjustment is made according to their score (in this case 97 gives a -1 adjustment) this results in a final handicap of 24 (3 worst holes total = 25 minus 1 is 24). This gives the player a net score of 73 (97 gross minus 24 handicap).

CALLAWAY SYSTEM OF HANDICAPPING

SCORE					DEDUCT
		70	71	72	Scratch – No Adjustment
		73	74	75	½ Worst Hole and Adjustment
76	77	78	79	80	1 Worst Hole and Adjustment
81	82	83	84	85	1 ½ Worst Holes and Adjustment
86	87	88	89	90	2 Worst Holes and Adjustment
91	92	93	94	95	2 ½ Worst Holes and Adjustment
96	97	98	99	100	3 Worst Holes and Adjustment
101	102	103	104	105	3 ½ Worst Holes and Adjustment
106	107	108	109	110	4 Worst Holes and Adjustment
111	112	113	114	115	4 ½ Worst Holes and Adjustment
116	117	118	119	120	5 Worst Holes and Adjustment
121	122	123	124	125	5 ½ Worst Holes and Adjustment
126	127	128	129	130	6 Worst Holes and Adjustment

THE WILSON SYSTEM

THE WILSON HANDICAP SYSTEM (For 18 Hole Regulation Course)

With this system, a par 3, a par 4, and a par 5 are chosen from each nine. Handicaps are based on the total strokes on these 6 holes. The total par for the 6 holes is 24 and handicaps are determined using the chart below. For example, a score of 28, or 4 over par would give a player a 10 handicap. A score of 36, or 12 over par gives a player a 29 handicap.

WILSON SYSTEM OF HANDICAPPING

PLAYER'S SCORE	PLAYER'S HANDICAP
24 Strokes	0
25 Strokes	2
26 Strokes	5
27 Strokes	7
28 Strokes	10
29 Strokes	12
30 Strokes	14
31 Strokes	17
32 Strokes	19
33 Strokes	22
34 Strokes	24
35 Strokes	26
36 Strokes	29
37 Strokes	31
38 Strokes	34
39 Strokes	36
40 Strokes	38
41 Strokes	41
42 Strokes	43
43 Strokes	45
44 Strokes	48
45 Strokes	50
46 Strokes	53
47 Strokes	55
48 Strokes	58
49 Strokes	60
50 Strokes	62

