

Here's how to organize a golf tournament



A golf tournament is a popular way to combine fundraising for a good cause with giving union members a day's worth of networking, camaraderie, and fun. Organizing one is a lot of work, but it's a worthwhile venture that members and community supporters are likely to participate in over many years. And once done the first time, subsequent events are much easier to manage.

The IUPAT's District Council 11, which covers Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Western Massachusetts, has been holding a golf tournament for nine years now that raises \$10,000–\$12,000 per event, with proceeds going to PATCH. "You can organize it all in about four days," says Mark Komaromi, business development representative for DC 11. "Don't make it harder than it is, and don't let it consume all your time."

Here's a template for creating a new golf tournament—or smoothing out the process for an existing one.

1. "The first step is getting in touch with the golf course to lock in the date," said Komaromi. And that isn't just for a first effort, but for every subsequent year as well: "You have to go early—as soon as you finish a tournament, give \$100 to the course to lock up the date for the next year."

When doing this for the first time, "get the costs for the day—for golfing, lunch, and dinner—to set your prices." Prices depend on the goal of the event: "You have to balance profit with providing a great event for your members," said Komaromi.

While most golf tournaments are held during the week, DC 11 uses Saturdays. "We might make a little more money if we held the event on a weekday, because we might get more corporate types, but it would be harder for our members to participate." About 70 percent of participants are union members.

2. Establish fees and sponsorship guidelines, and develop a flyer or invitation, one for golfers and another version for sponsors. Make sure it includes spaces for players to indicate their handicaps, lines for the names of everyone in foursomes who sign up together, and a cut-off date. "I only do print versions," said Komaromi, but e-mail, Web site, and Facebook outlets are worth considering nowadays. "We mail the sponsorship form to every vendor we deal with. That's where you make your money."

DC 11 has several ways for participants and sponsors to support its tournament. Individual golfers and foursomes pay to play at \$100 per person. A tee sponsorship is \$300. A lunch sponsorship is \$1,250, which covers four golfers, a tee sign, and a table sign; dinner is \$1,500, for similar benefits and a bigger sign. The council also offers a \$10,000 Hole in One award through Hole in One International, an insurance company specializing in such events (the host organization purchases a policy for about \$250, and the company pays up if anyone gets a hole in one). There also is a dinner-only fee.

Hole in One International is quite flexible, Komaromi noted: "You can call on the day of the event with your final players' list."

3. Keep track of registrations. "You need to log how many players are going to participate as their sign-ups come in," Komaromi said.

4. Get the goodies. "We get gifts for our individual players," said Komaromi. "We give away golf balls with the PATCH logo, pullovers, and tees."

5. Set up a raffle—proceeds can add to the amounts raised and the activity is another way to make the day more fun, especially for those who don't play golf but would like to participate in the day. "You can go to a sporting-goods store to get raffle items," Komaromi said. "We use Dick's, where we get reward points, so we can get more the following year for the same cost."

6. At the cutoff date, pair up the players, matching them by handicap, other than those who sign up as foursomes of their own.

7. Manage the day. "You need staff and members to sign people in and register them, watch over the Hole in One holes, and sell raffle tickets at registration and throughout the day," said Komaromi. "We use all our staff and ask for volunteers; we give them lunch and dinner." DC 11 assigns two staffers to cover the event for the council newsletter, one taking photos all day and the other spending the day with the players and writing up the event.

8. Offer recognition. At the dinner, do the raffle and thank the sponsors.

9. Follow through. Send written thank-you notes to all sponsors, and, urged Komaromi, "send your photos to the International for the *Journal!*"