

# Organizing a golf tournament in 40 easy steps

BY LYNE BRANCHAUD

At least once in your career as an event organizer, you will be expected to organize a golf tournament! I have put together a summary of the key steps to setting up such an event based on a checklist from the *Association des directeurs généraux de clubs de golf du Québec*.

1. Set your tournament's mission and goals and decide what kind of people you want to attend. Establish guidelines for developing the event, ideas to convey in your communications and a list of prospective (employees, customers and suppliers) guests. Will they come alone or with a friend?
2. Calculate the likely maximum and minimum numbers of players.
3. Select two or three possible dates (and make sure your bosses OK them and will be free on those days).
4. Check if the suggested dates conflict with any other tournaments (organized by organizations in the same field as yours or with the same guest list).
5. Determine the most accessible region (and its northern, southern, eastern and western limits) for your guests.
6. Select two or three greens that are up to par for you and your guests (private, semi-private or public course).
7. Make sure these greens are suitable. Check the minimum and maximum numbers of golfers they can accommodate, the number of available parking spaces, the number and size of reception rooms, the number of golf carts, etc. Eliminate any courses that do not meet your criteria.
8. Check if the course is available on your preferred dates. If not, see if a different day will work. Also find out if any other tournaments will be held at the same time as yours (in which case, the respective sites should be clearly marked out).
9. Find out rates for green fees, golf carts, meals, pro demos, practice balls, etc. and prepare a working budget.
10. Ask the club to email your information on its menus, rules, scorecard, etc.
11. Visit potential clubs to make sure they have the necessary facilities (showers, locker rooms, lockers). Also make sure you can eat outdoors and determine what kinds of signs you will need to produce (directions to the course along local roads, directions from the parking lot to the reception area, directions to the locker rooms and meal areas, etc.). Finally, check how the site's standards of quality and cleanliness.
12. Select the club and date that will best meet all your requirements.
13. Produce a schedule and a working budget.
14. Check with the club on:
  - The starting format: shotgun, criss cross or consecutive.
  - The tournament format: match, per hole or Las Vegas, for example.
  - Car to cart golf bag transfer service (do the bags need to be labelled with the participant's name and the number of his/her hole or tee-off time?).


- Activities during the tournament on the course and the nature of any competitions there might be (Will you hire a photographer for photos of all foursomes or a corporate video to be shown in the evening? Do you want to set up competitions: hole in one, longest tee-off, ball closest to the hole, etc.? Will you organize tastings by the holes?).
  - Where will your registration table be located and how and where will activities be situated along the course?
  - Does the club offers an end-of-day score compilation service (if necessary and if you can produce scorecards with the company's or a sponsor's logo).
  - If the club provides tech support for posting your signs (welcome, competition, activities, sponsorships) and if it can provide carts for organizing committee members and volunteers.
  - If it will provide you with an official in charge of your tee-times.
  - If the club furnishes box lunches on the green, refreshments at the ninth hole or if it will allow you to set up sponsored refreshment stops.
  - The number of showers available and if certain items (soap, shampoo, towels, locks, etc.) are provided.
  - The cost and number of lockers.
  - The layout of the room to be used for the evening's event (based on your planned activities).
  - Whether seats at tables are or are not assigned (if so, make sure to tell guests their table numbers).
  - The number of seats per table (from 8 to 12 people depending on the size of the tables used).
  - Selection of menus (brunch, lunch, barbecue or supper) as well as prices.
  - Selection of drinks and prices, as well as style of service – open or cash bar. Also, will you provide a pre-supper cocktail.
  - After-tournament activities (DJ, entertainment and prize awards, door prizes, comedian, video projections, auction, etc.).
  - Club rate and method of payment policies.
  - Regulations on the course, the dress code and outdoor sponsorships.
  - Bad weather policy.
  - The club's tipping policy.
15. Tweak the working budget and submit the project plan to your bosses for approval.
  16. Sign the agreement with the selected golf club and pay a deposit to hold the date.
  17. Decide what to charge your guests and what will be included (green fees, cart, meals, activities, etc.).
  18. Prepare invitations and registration forms and send them to participants, highlighting the registration deadline. Ideally, you will send the invitation and receive registrations by Internet.
  19. Prepare tickets or e-mail confirmations containing all relevant information: dates, schedules (registration, brunch, tee-off, BBQ, cocktail, supper), prices, names, club name, address and phone number, course, photos, numbering, coupons if necessary (for

## The best advice: Be prepared

- brunch, golf, meals, cocktails, etc.) and the corporate or tournament logo. You can email the ticket or confirmation to your participants.
20. Create a ticket sale committee and appoint an honorary chair (if relevant).
  21. Make sure of media coverage, if necessary.
  22. Reserve event hosts and the necessary technical equipment (DJ, hosts, sound system, etc.).
  23. Take out insurance for the event.
  24. Set up an operations commitment to make sure the event goes smoothly and check if you must provide them with clothing (golf shirt, caps) in the company's colours or bearing the tournament's or sponsor's logo.
  25. Reserve a truck to deliver materials (posters, presents).
  26. Set up an action plan and produce a scenario for the event that includes all important details and everyone's responsibilities. Transmit the scenario to all parties concerned.
  27. Make sure you have enough volunteers to greet your golfers and handle activities (some clubs may provide staff for a slight additional charge. Be careful about the age of volunteers, because some insurance companies require hole-in-one supervisors to be at least 18 or 21 years old).
  28. Find and purchase any prizes. Label each gift with its corresponding activity. Select presents based on participant profiles and identify them with the logo of the company, the tournament or the sponsor. Also think about the wrapping!
  29. Form foursomes.
  30. Send tee-off locations and schedules to all participants with their confirmations or tickets, based on the club's rules and policies.
  31. Draw up a list of participants, including their names, company names, free or paid tickets, tee-off time and hole (if applicable). Print two lists to make it easier to greet people with a quick search:
    - One list by tee-off time or hole.
    - One alphabetical list with the tee-off time and hole.
  32. Send participant lists to the golf club one week prior to the event with confirmation of the number of golfers, the number of carts, the number of meals and the desired layout of the room for your activities.
  33. Prepare all printed materials (posters, thanks to sponsors, banners, scorecards, card posters, menus, etc.), along with the logo of the business, the tournament or the sponsor. Since some of these items will be installed outside, make sure to use water resistant materials and punch holes in the banners so wind can pass through them. Also think about how you will suspend, hang or post these materials.
  34. Prepare kits or presents to give your golfers at registration, if you wish. They will be pleased with items that they can use during the game, such as golf balls (with the company's or sponsor's logo, naturally), T-shirts, mosquito spray, bottled water, Kleenex, pencils, stain remover, markers, umbrellas, windbreaker, etc.

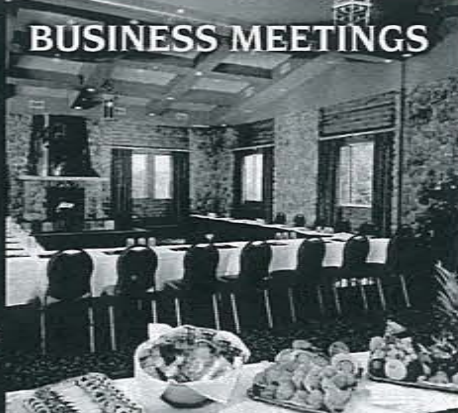
35. Set the winning numbers (gross score, net score, Las Vegas score, highest score, closest to hole, longest tee-off, hole in one, putting competition, approach shot competition, closest to the line, the colour ball, the water ball, etc.).
  36. Determine how draws will be decided.
  37. Preferably meet at the golf club with your operations committee before the tournament, so that everyone understands his or her roles and is familiar with the site.
  38. Prepare a list and make sure necessary materials will be transported to the site for the event. If possible, deliver all required materials the day before. Club staff may be able to start setting it up the evening before or early in the morning. Get together with your team at least 45 minutes before participants arrive on the day of the event to make sure everything is ready (registration table, presents, posters, etc.) and be there to greet your guests.
  39. Make a final check of all tournament details with each supplier and those concerned, hang a rosary on your clothesline and pray for good weather.
  40. Implement your action plan to make sure your tournament is an unforgettable event and give yourself an extra half hour to make sure everything is in place.
- Have a great tournament!

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