

Planning and Promoting Benefit Tournaments

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A GREAT deal of planning and even more leg work is involved in staging a golf benefit tournament. But if you're looking for personal gain, don't undertake it. All I can personally guarantee is the satisfaction that comes from helping persons less fortunate than yourself, and the fine contacts that you make with a lot of understanding and helpful people while doing all the things that have to be done to make a tournament of this kind a success.

I've been running tournaments for crippled children for several years. I don't claim to be anything like an authority, but during this time I have learned a few things about promotion and the actual staging of tournaments that I'm happy to pass along to other pros who may be planning similar undertakings. Here they are:

1—Get in touch with an outstanding, civic-minded person in your community (such as a business man) and tell him your story. (I am fortunate to have a man like O. W. Houts sponsor my annual Crippled Children's tournament!) Ask him to donate a trophy and to underwrite the expenses of the tournament. What will the "expenses" be? Cost of posters, envelopes, entry blanks, postage etc. plus any deficit which might result from the difference between total amount of entry fee receipts and the amount of the prize purse. Decide with your sponsor how much the prize purse will be.

2—Ask permission from your club board of directors to have the course turned over to you exclusively for this tournament. Set a date with the board. Your members undoubtedly will be willing to give up the course for a day. Aside from a "good reason" you will be staging an outstanding sports event at the club. But even more important, a benefit of this type will earn the respect and goodwill of the people of the community. (In your news items concerning this event, your club should be given credit for donating use of its course.)

3—Decide on the type of tournament you wish to stage. Will it be an open, amateur, pro event or a Pro-Am.

4—Set a "Closing Date" for entries. Al-



The little girl in the picture will benefit from the check O. W. Houts (left), yearly sponsor of Centre Hills CC Crippled Children's tournament, is turning over to the author of this article.

low sufficient time to enable you to send out starting time to all contestants. Great care should be given to figuring starting times, particularly if you have a 9-hole course.

Promoting the Tournament

5—To promote the tournament send notice of the event to all golf magazines for listing in their Calendar of Events.

6—Prepare your Mailing List. I circulate all clubs, newspapers, radio and TV stations within a 300 mile radius. P.G.A. secretaries have a list of member clubs with names of the pros. Newspaper offices have a register of newspapers, and likewise the radio and TV stations can supply you with a list of stations. Take a count of your list so that you will know how many posters to have printed. Distribution of posters

should be in store windows in your community. You'll get a lot of cooperation.

7—Give your sponsor a big advertising boost on the poster! Even though you are doing all the work, he is putting up the cash, so keep him happy! If your sponsor has an advertising man on his staff, you probably can get valuable help from him and also save money by ordering all your printing through his business. You might sell advertising space on the bottom of the poster, to a few hotels and motels. (This will help out-of-town contestants in making room reservations.)

8—Order your posters, envelopes, entry blanks and trophy.

9—Start addressing envelopes as soon as you receive them. If you have enough time, you may be able to enlist volunteer help for this. (Mail posters about one month before closing date.)

10—Contact your local newspaper editors and radio and TV station managers. Give them all details of the tournament. You'll find they will be happy to "plug" for a benefit of this kind and they may come up with some valuable advertising suggestions. Feed them news constantly. When entries start arriving send them special items of interest about the contestants. About two weeks before the tournament concentrate on the daily newspapers.

11—Use street banners advertising the event if you can arrange to do this.

Sponsor May Pay

Probably you won't make money from entry fee receipts. Quite likely your sponsor will have to pay out of his pocket to make up the deficit. My tournament (because we have a 9-hole course) is limited to 100 entries. The first year the entry fee was \$10 and prize purse was \$1,000. We had about 60 entries. When it became an annual event and was better known entries went up to 90. We now have a \$15 entry fee and give \$1500. in prizes, plus a trophy. Each year my sponsor has had to pay out of his pocket between \$300 and \$400 plus advertising costs. (About 90% of our contestants have been pros and they come from all over Pennsylvania as well as neighboring states.)

I have made an average of \$750 annually for crippled children. Here's how I did it: I sold newspaper display advertising to local merchants. Ads ranged from \$5 to \$25. This must be done through personal contact, takes a great deal of time and should be started early. If your event becomes an annual one it becomes well

enough known so that many contacts can be made by phone. Many of your club members will be excellent prospects for advertising.

I bought full-page newspaper space. (You can probably get a cheaper advertising rate if it is ordered through your sponsor's business.) The center of the page was used for large display advertising of the tournament. Donation ads surrounded it. The number of pages you buy depends upon the amount of advertising you sell.

I had admission tickets printed (which are tax free for a charitable event) and asked my women club members to sell them. This gives you rain insurance on gate receipts in addition to the opportunity to sell tickets to many people who probably won't attend the event.

Volunteers Among Members

You'll find that club members will be happy to assist with this benefit and will enjoy "helping out." Recruit volunteers for: ticket takers, parking lot attendants, starters, announcers, score keepers and hosts.

Work your volunteers in shifts of 2 or 3 hours. Have a written schedule for workers, their duties and time etc. and give each a copy so there will be no mixups. Don't forget to mention names of your volunteer workers in your news items!

Be sure your club manager knows all details of the event so that he has a sufficient staff in locker room dining room, etc.

Be sure to have an ample and competent staff in the pro shop. You'll find contestants coming in for many services and for little items they've forgotten. See that you have plenty of extra change on hand because your cash register will be kept busy making change for contestants to pay their caddies. See that the refreshment concession is well stocked and staffed.

After all entries are received, inform your caddiemaster of the number so he can arrange for enough caddies. This is a must. Your caddiemaster should definitely have extra help to keep his caddie assignments running smoothly.

Be sure to have direction signs posted on all roads leading to the club so that out-of-town people will find no difficulty in locating it. Have your course posted for all special rules, practice areas etc. Have rules posted on a bulletin at the first tee and if you have a P. A. system, call attention to all special rules.