



# Planning a Golf Tournament: 10 Steps to Success

Proper planning is the key to a successful golf tournament! They're a great way of hosting a corporate outing, running a charitable event or simply getting together with friends and colleagues! We have come up with 10 steps that if followed, will result in a great tournament every time!

## 1. When and Where Will the Tournament Be?

Choose a date and time that best suits the schedules of the participating players. Consider if a weekend or weekday will be the best fit for the majority. Other major considerations include:

- Is it a full or half day tournament?
- Are there travel considerations to keep in mind? Willow Valley is easily accessible from the highway for those travelling from out of town.
- Is the course difficulty such that ALL skill levels can be accommodated?
- Does the course provide the proper amenities?

## 2. Purpose of the Tournament

Many golf tournaments are held as a charity event or fundraiser. Your needs will vary depending on the purpose of the tournament. A couple of factors to consider may be:

- Will there be celebrities in attendance?
- Will there be an auction and/or raffle?
- Are sponsorships required?
- What is/are the best way(s) of promoting the event?
- What types of events or contests should I include in my tournament?
  - o Ex, hole-in-one contest, longest drive, closest to the pin, etc.

## 3. Format of the Tournament

There are several different formats to choose from when planning a tournament. One of the most popular formats is a scramble. There are others to choose from including match play, better ball and stroke play. Our knowledgeable staff can explain the different formats and help choose which one best suits your tournament needs. Before choosing you should consider:

- How many golfers will be participating?
- Will it be a shotgun start?
- What are your timelines for the day?
  - o Are you serving lunch or dinner at a set time, etc.
- Is it a 9-hole or an 18-hole round?

Willow Valley hosts several tournaments throughout the year, and is easily accessible from the highway. A tournament liaison can assist you with any questions or concerns you may have. Our course is well suited for golfers of all skill levels, and has 4 tee blocks for the golfers to tee off of. Willow Valley is also flexible with time and dates, depending on your tournament requirements. We are also prepared to provide you with innovative ideas, whatever the theme or format may be!



#### **4. Cost and Budget**

When planning an event it is important to keep your budget in mind. You should try to take advantage of cost-effective deals such as discounted course rates, sponsorships, donations or food and beverage packages if available. Keep in mind the cost of prizes, trophies and promotional costs. There are several ways to reduce your tournament costs, which we are happy to discuss at length! Willow Valleys Advantage Package Program provides reduced green fees for your tournament. You can discuss this with the manager at the course for more details.

#### **5. Food and Beverage**

When planning your tournament, it is important to take food and beverage needs into consideration:

- Does the course have the required means to provide for the number of golfers?
- Will there be a breakfast or lunch before the tournament begins?
- Will there be a dinner provided afterwards?
- If dinner is included, will it be on site or are there restaurants nearby that can accommodate your group?
- Are food and beverage carts available at the course? If so, can the golfers run a tab?
- How will the costs of food affect the registration fee? Can non-golfers pay for dinner only?

#### **6. Sponsorships**

Many, if not most, golf tournaments include a fundraising aspect. When planning, your local community can be a valuable resource in gaining sponsors. When contacting sponsors to contribute to your event consider:

- Should I form a committee to contact potential sponsors?
- Is the sponsor able to contribute a prize, or donate towards the cost of the tournament?
- Do I want to provide goody bags to each participant? If so, what will be included and how will they be distributed?
- Will I need sponsorship signs? If so, how many?
- Am I going to promote this event? If so, can social media play a role?
- Do I want to contact local media outlets to help promote the event?

Naturally, there are many factors when planning meals for your event. Willow Valley is willing and able to help you plan, and have a large dining area adjacent to the clubhouse that can accommodate up to 200 guests. Willow Valley has the facilities to support whatever types of meals you wish to include in your tournament package, and is sensitive to individual and special dietary restrictions. We are also more than capable in assisting you to effectively promote your tournament, as well as decide on sponsorship sign placement.



## 7. Contests

Almost all tournaments include 'events within the event' to add to the overall excitement of the day. As a result this also makes it a great way to fundraise and get people involved. Here are some examples of fun contests that might possibly encompass the days' activities:

- Hole in one contest
- Putting tournaments
- Closest to the pin on par 3's
  - o This can also be done blindfolded for a fun twist
- Longest drive (men and ladies)
- Closest to the keg
- Closest to the rope
- Par 3 contests – pay to enter – hit the green, get double your money back
- Beat the pro – pay to enter – longest drive, closest to the pin, etc.

Willow Valley can help you choose contests to add to the overall enjoyment of the day! In addition, keep in mind that on-course activities may affect the pace of play. Therefore you do not want to include too many on-course contests otherwise the golfers will be in for an incredibly long round! For this reason we suggest choosing a mix of on and off the course activities.

## 8. Amenities

How can the golf course assist you in running your event? First and foremost it is important to know that the staff at the course did everything in their power to make the tournament a success. Here at Willow Valley we can assure you that the customer's needs are our number one priority. Therefore our manager is available at all times to answer any questions or concerns. In addition, we also provide you with a tournament liaison to assist with your tournament planning needs. Here are some of the ways that Willow Valley can assist with your tournament:

- Assist in choosing a date and time
- Planning a tournament within your budget
- Provide registration tables and prize tables
- Assist with creating lunch and/or dinner menus, as well as accommodating special dietary restrictions
- Provide a large dining tent to accommodate golfers and guests
- Provision of goody bags and beverages for each cart
- Assigning tee times and accommodating last minute changes in pairings and groupings
- Greet guests upon arrival and assist in finding their cart
- Provides clubs available for rent if required
- For shotgun starts, we lead golfers out to their starting tee blocks
- Provision of marshals to ensure an adequate pace of play
- Provision of required materials for contests
  - o Ex, markers for closest to the pin and longest drive contests
- Provision of food and beverage carts for use throughout the round
- Suggestions and ideas for tournament format



- Assistance in promotion and marketing for the tournament
- Provides a beautiful and relaxed atmosphere to ensure your guests enjoy themselves.

In addition, please let us know what else we can do to help make your tournament day a success! We can accommodate any special restrictions or needs.

### **9. The Tournament Has Begun... Now What?**

We are committed to ensuring a safe, enjoyable experience for everyone involved. We provide marshals that patrol the course. They assist golfers by providing directions, as well as answering any questions or concerns regarding the rules or tournament format. They ensure an acceptable pace of play, which leads to the best possible experience for those on the course. As the tournament progresses, Willow Valley will provide food and beverage carts with a variety of payment options. You will also be provided with course rules and regulations regarding the purchase of alcohol on the course.

The weather is a factor that is watched closely the day of the tournament. If there is threatening weather in the forecast, our staff monitors the up-to-the minute radar. If dangerous weather becomes imminent, the marshals will sound a number of horns to call the golfers off the course.

Should you decide to hold any contests, Willow Valley will provide for whatever needs are required. For this reason we have a putting board available. We also provide markers for activities such as 'closest to the pin' and 'longest drive'. After the players have finished their rounds, the pro shop will collect the scorecards and tally the scores. This is required if you are planning on announcing a winner as well as awarding prizes or trophies. We encourage you to let us know of any additional needs or requirements for the tournament, as we strive to ensure the best experience possible! The staff at Willow Valley is flexible and very accommodating to any requests made.

### **10. After the Tournament: Feedback & Reflection**

Once the tournament has ended there will be quite a bit to reflect upon.

- Were all of your expectations fulfilled? If not, why?
- Did the course itself meet your needs? Was it too easy, or too hard? Was the course in adequate condition?
- Was the registration fee appropriate for the services provided?
- Did the facility meet all of your needs?
- Would you recommend the course to others looking for a tournament venue?
- Did you market the event appropriately? What might you do differently the next time?
- Did you have a suitable number of volunteers?
- Were your goals met? Were financial goals met? If not, what can you do differently next time? Were the auctions and raffles run appropriately?
- Were there any last minute or unexpected problems? If so, could they have been avoided through more careful planning?
- Did the post round ceremonies go off without a hitch?



- Were the tournament rules and format clear to all of the golfers?
- Was this an event the golfers would want to participate in next year? Did everyone involved feel as though it was an enjoyable experience?

Let us know how Willow Valley can make your tournament even more of a success! Our number one priority is to make our customers happy, so we love to know how we can improve. We greatly appreciate any and all feedback! For more details into the tournament planning process or to book your tournament, give the pro shop a call at (905)-679-2703.

