

Alumni Leader Best Practices

Golf Tournaments

Golf tournaments are one of the most effective and enjoyable ways for alumni chapters to raise funds, engage members, and build relationships with sponsors. With thoughtful planning and strong execution, your event can become an annual tradition that people look forward to each year. This guide outlines proven strategies and practical tips to help your chapter host a successful tournament.

Timing is Everything

Choosing the right date and schedule will have a major impact on participation and cost.

Day of the week:

- Select a day that works best for your chapter members.
- Weekday play is typically less expensive than weekends.
- Many chapters find Fridays ideal, especially for half-day participation.

Time of day:

- Consider a structured flow:
 - Breakfast or lunch
 - Tournament play
 - Dinner, awards, and raffle/silent auction
- Afternoon tee times often work well for working professionals.

Time of year:

- Choose a consistent timeframe annually.
- Consider community schedules, school calendars, and weather.
- Early August is popular in many areas, especially before fall commitments begin.

Event frequency:

- Most chapters host one annual tournament.
- Consistency builds recognition and long-term participation.

Plan for Profit

A successful tournament is both a great experience and a strong fundraiser.

Define your purpose:

- Scholarship funding
- Chapter operating support
- Special initiatives or community programs

Understand revenue sources:

- Sponsorships are typically the largest profit driver.
- Donated prizes significantly reduce expenses.
- Player registration should cover costs and generate margin.

Additional profit opportunities:

- Mulligans
- 50/50 raffle (ask Alumni Association staff for an autographed item)
- On-course games
- Raffle baskets and silent auction
- Specialty holes (e.g., advantage tee boxes)

Pricing strategy:

- Total all projected costs first.
- Set registration and sponsorship levels to ensure a clear profit margin.

Promote Your Tournament

Strong promotion is essential to maximizing participation, attracting sponsors, and increasing fundraising success. Use a combination of chapter communication and university-wide outreach to expand your reach.

- Promote the event early and often on chapter social media platforms.
- Post photos and testimonials from previous tournaments to build excitement.
- Tag sponsors and encourage them to share posts with their audiences.
- Utilize the WVU Alumni Association staff for creating graphics, sending emails to alumni in your chapter geography, and posting your event to the WVU Calendar.
- Increase promotion frequency as the event approaches.

Know Your Audience and Deliver Value

Happy golfers return year after year.

- Quality food and beverages are essential.
- Sponsors can help offset costs by covering meals, drinks, or snacks.
- Provide a welcoming, fun atmosphere that feels organized and professional.

Common food structure:

- Breakfast from a local partner
- Lunch handled by the course
- Post-tournament dinner and awards

Sponsorship

Sponsors make your event possible. Deliver strong visibility and appreciation.

Sponsor recognition options:

- Tee signs
- Event flyers
- Social media promotion
- Website listing
- Giveaways at registration
- Verbal recognition at awards ceremony

Create Fun On-Course Experiences

Provide prizes for multiple divisions when appropriate. Some chapters purchase insurance for high-value hole-in-one prizes.

Popular contests:

- Longest drive
- Closest to the pin
- Longest putt
- Hole-in-one prize
- Specialty tee advantages

Use Outside Help When Needed

Some chapters partner with tournament support companies.

- Many assist with logistics, fundraising, or registration.
- Be cautious of high upfront fees.
- Performance-based compensation or transaction fees are often more favorable.

Online payment platforms such as PayPal can simplify tracking by creating separate payment links for:

- Hole sponsorships
- Individual golfers
- Foursomes
- Donations

This makes financial reporting easier for your treasurer.

Build a Strong Volunteer Team

Dedicated volunteers are essential to smooth operations.

Key roles:

- Tournament coordinator
- Treasurer (payment tracking and reconciliation)
- Registration table staff
- On-course game volunteers
- Sponsor relations lead

Golf-experienced volunteers are especially helpful in selecting courses and planning contests.

Offer Additional Fundraising Activities

Layered fundraising increases total impact.

- Raffle and silent auction combination
- Specialty contest holes
- Advantage tee purchases (Ladies Tee, etc.)
- Merchandise or chapter swag sales

Logistics

- Confirm course package details (cart fees, meals, staffing).
- Provide clear signage and check-in instructions.
- Create printed or digital schedules.
- Track registrations and payments in real time.
- Prepare weather contingency plans.

Suggested Planning Timeline

6–9 months prior:

- Select course and date
- Establish budget and fundraising goals
- Begin sponsor outreach

3–4 months prior:

- Open registration and promote event
- Secure prize donations
- Confirm food and beverage plans

1 month prior:

- Finalize pairings and contests
- Confirm volunteers
- Prepare sponsor materials and signage

Week of event:

- Confirm headcount
- Prepare check-in materials
- Review financial tracking process

Day-of Event Flow Example

1. Registration and breakfast
2. Sponsor recognition and announcements
3. Shotgun start
4. On-course contests and activities
5. Dinner reception
6. Awards presentation
7. Raffle and silent auction results

After the Tournament

- Send thank-you messages to sponsors and participants.
- Share event photos and highlights.
- Provide financial summary to chapter leadership.
- Begin planning next year's date while interest is high.