



GOLFSTATUS

GUIDE

# A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO ORGANIZING A GOLF FUNDRAISER

For First-Timers & Veteran Event Planners





Golf tournaments have long been an important source of fundraising dollars for nonprofits and charities. Even more organizations stand to benefit from holding a golf fundraiser, but are unsure where to start and even unsure if it's worth it. The short answer—yes, it's worth it. Tools and technology make planning a golf event easier than ever. It also doesn't take as long as you might think. While planning ahead is certainly advantageous, with the right technology, it's possible to plan a successful golf fundraiser in just a few months.

This guide outlines the considerations you'll need to make and the action steps needed to hold a successful golf tournament.



# 10 EASY STEPS TO A GOLF FUNDRAISER

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## STEP 1:

# Outline Goals for the Event

While most organizations primarily want to raise money for general operating or for a specific program or initiative, you may also want to raise awareness about your mission and cause in the community, attract new donors, steward existing donors, forge or strengthen sponsor relationships, connect donor and sponsor networks, or launch a new outreach effort.

The beauty of a golf tournament fundraiser is that it can simultaneously accomplish many of these things in a single event. But if raising funds is the main goal, you may approach things differently than if raising awareness is the primary outcome. Your goals will determine how key details fall into place, like who should be on the planning committee, the event's schedule, the target audience, golf facility, your overall budget, and how you approach the following steps in the planning process.

### **Important questions to ask:**

- *What is the primary goal of the golf event?*
- *What other things do you hope to accomplish?*
- *How much money do you hope to raise?*
- *What will the proceeds be used for?*
- *How will you determine if the event is a success?*
- *What data needs to be captured (donor info, sponsor info, donation amounts, etc.)?*





## STEP 2:

# Determine Your Budget

Setting a budget—and sticking to it—will go a long way toward meeting your goals and holding a lucrative event. Your budget should include event expenses as well as sources of revenue.

Use this [Sample Golf Fundraiser Budget Spreadsheet](#) to keep track of estimates, revenue, and expenses.

### Typical expenses include:

- *Golf facility usage*
  - *Green fees*
  - *Cart rental*
  - *Range balls*
  - *Banquet space*
  - *Service fees and gratuity*
- *Food and beverage*
- *Player and sponsor gifts*
- *Prizes*
- *Marketing materials and signage*

The cost to use the golf facility (and/or green fees) is typically the largest incurred expense for a golf tournament, as you'll essentially be reserving the facility for most, if not all, of the day. It's in the best interest of the facility to offer you a fair price, as it guarantees that tee times are booked for the day, in addition to food and beverage purchases associated with the event.



**PRO TIP:**

If you're using a shotgun start, consider starting your golf tournament in the morning. If you start the event in the afternoon, you might end up paying for the entire day since golf facility staff will need to use the morning to prepare the course for your event.

Events planned by organizations and individuals outside of the golf facility are referred to as “*outside outings*” (outside, meaning not a member-affiliated event and outing, being another term for tournament). Outside outings are vital to many golf facilities’ bottom lines, which means that they want to make the process as easy as possible and provide excellent service to earn your business and keep your event coming back.

The nature of your event will dictate your budget for each of the above mentioned line items, which will also help in setting player, team, and sponsor registration package costs. An event at a local public municipal golf course, for example, will likely have a more conservative overall budget as compared to a tournament at a high-end private facility; at the same time, you can expect to set a higher price point for team/individual registration packages and sponsorship tiers if the event is played at a more exclusive and/or private facility.



**You can expect the following event components to generate revenue and should be included in the budget as such:**

- *Sponsorships*
- *Individual and/or team registration fees*
- *Extras like raffle tickets, mulligans, games, and contests*
- *Live and/or silent auction*
- *Online donations before, during, and after the event*

Pricing for registrations and sponsorships should be based on factors such as the demographic you expect to attract, the quality of the venue, past years' price points (if applicable), and the expenses you'll need to cover.

**PRO TIP:**

Using GolfStatus' golf event management platform opens the door for additional sponsorship options unique to the golf tournament and previously only seen at high-end, professional-caliber events, such as pin flag sponsorship, live leaderboard sponsorship, and a technology sponsorship that includes attractive digital exposure in a number of formats.

Sponsorships will likely bring in the most revenue. Typical sponsorships for a charity golf tournament include title sponsor, hole sponsor(s), dinner or cocktail reception sponsor, on-course contest sponsors (closest to the pin, hole-in-one, or putting contest), driving range sponsor, and cart sponsor. Don't be afraid to get creative and try new sponsorships! Look at the tournament's hard costs and create sponsorships to cover them.





To help better plan for expenses, reach out to vendors to get quotes and estimates for things like apparel, food and beverage (if not available or included in the course's offerings), signage, printing, and player gifts. You can use a simple spreadsheet to track and manage costs, keep track of vendors, and track payments. Vendors may be willing to donate items or give you a nonprofit rate, so be sure to ask. Sponsors may also be willing to underwrite some expenses.

Use the [Registration Package Pricing Worksheet](#) to help set your tournament's team package prices. Pricing for registrations and sponsorships should be based on factors such as the demographic you expect to attract, the quality of the venue, past years' price points (if applicable), and the expenses you'll need to cover.

## STEP 3: Form Your Planning Team

Determine whether you'll recruit volunteers to help in planning and execution, rely on staff or board members, tackle the process on your own, or a combination of these approaches. Choose someone to run point for the event, overseeing the efforts of the committee (though not necessarily doing all the work). When working with a team, it should be as easy as possible for folks to help. Web-based tools keep everyone on the same page and make coordinating easy and seamless. Use a platform designed for golf events and equipped with various user access permissions lets you quickly and easily delegate planning components to keep things moving forward and running smoothly. What's more, this type of technology also makes it easy to coordinate



with golf facility staff to handle hole assignments, print tee sheets and cart signs, and automate other normally time-consuming tasks in the days and weeks leading up to your event. When everything is handled ahead of time, golf staff is more available to provide assistance and service to event attendees and organizers during the tournament.

If you need to recruit volunteers, five to ten people is a good number for a planning committee. Too many more and the group becomes harder to wrangle and creates more work for whomever is spearheading the event. For established events, there's likely a committee in place, though it may benefit from some fresh faces and ideas. Look for people to serve on the planning team who are committed to your cause, have connections to potential sponsors, are members or otherwise connected to a golf facility and/or are themselves avid golfers, or are active in your community.

You'll want to make sure the planning team is available to help with any tasks the day or days of the event. They can also be tasked with recruiting additional volunteers as necessary.

A common misconception about organizing a golf event is that you have to know a lot about golf. That's simply not true. Not only can you lean on your committee and golf facility staff, but when you utilize technology from GolfStatus, a team is there to support you through the entire process, from choosing a facility and determining a format to launching the event and attracting players and sponsors.



**Important questions to ask:**

- *Who has helped plan a golf event in the past?*
- *What networks can I tap into?*
- *Who is on my organization's board that may have connections to potential sponsors or golf facilities?*
- *Who are my engaged volunteers?*

## STEP 4:

# Launch an Event Website

This step is one of the most critical—and easiest—for a successful event. It can also be done relatively early in the planning process. While it can be advantageous to have a golf facility selected when launching your website, don't let that stop you. A simple “*to be determined*” as a placeholder is an effective way to let folks know that this information is forthcoming. One of the best things about having an event website is that it's easy to make updates as details firm up, so you can add specifics about format, time, schedule, sponsorship packages, and more once they're set.

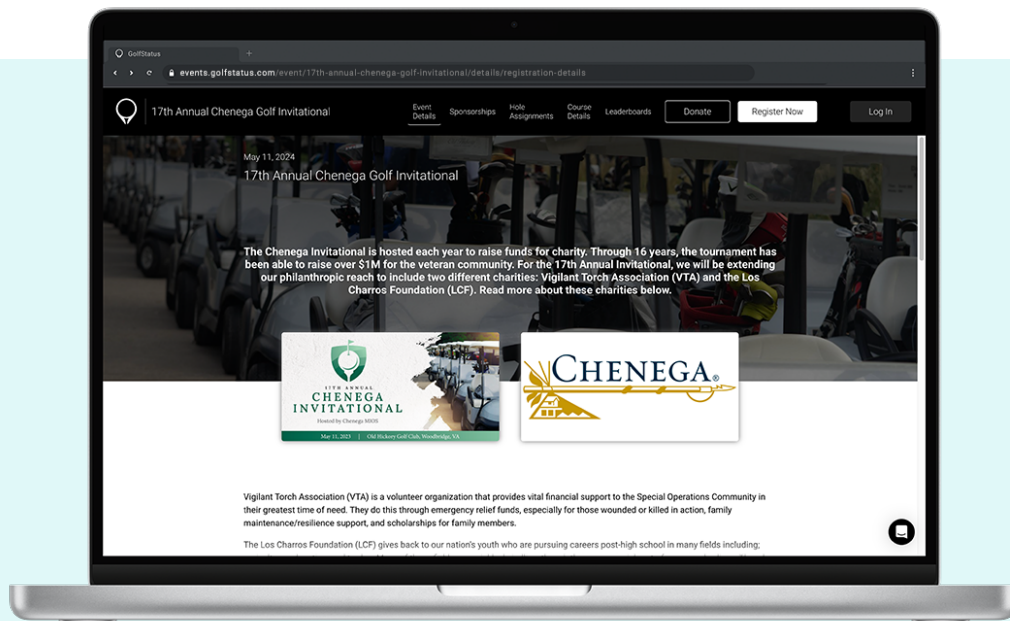
An event website also makes the event easier to promote—simply direct all marketing right to the event website. When folks can commit to participating with just a few clicks, they're substantially more likely to do so, so you'll want to get your website up and running sooner rather than later.





**PRO TIP:**

Use the event website to highlight the work your organization is doing, what you're raising money for, and why people should get involved.



*An attractive event website makes your event more professional and easier to promote.*

Be sure to choose a website platform that's tailored to the specific needs of a golf event and one that includes online registration with secure payment processing. Collecting registration information online provides a ton of time-saving advantages: there's no need to handle mailed-in forms, checks, or receipts; no need to manage information across endless spreadsheets and emails; and no need to enter and re-enter information. When teams and sponsors register online with the right website provider, their information drops into the back end of the platform in real-time, so your team is working with the



same up-to-the-minute information, instead of coordinating multiple spreadsheets and documents. What's more, a website with online registration is an easy way to collect crucial donor and sponsor data, which can then be seamlessly exported into your donor CRM so supporters can be stewarded appropriately.

**Important features to look for in an event website:**

- *Online registration with secure payment processing*
- *Ability to export sponsor and player information to include in your organization's donor CRM*
- *Ability to accept donations before, during, and after the event*
- *Live-scoring and online leaderboards for broad sponsor exposure*
- *Ability to easily make updates to information and other details*
- *Ability to list and sell custom team and sponsor packages*
- *A clean design that keeps donors focused on registering and donating and provides professional exposure for sponsors*
- *A responsive support team to get your website up and running and provide assistance when needed*

**PRO TIP:**

Qualifying nonprofits can get a free professional event registration website built by the GolfStatus team at no cost through the Golf for Good program. Get qualified at [golfstatus.org/demo](https://golfstatus.org/demo) or email [events@golfstatus.org](mailto:events@golfstatus.org).



## STEP 5:

# Choose a Date & Golf Facility

When it comes to selecting the facility, consider your member, constituent, and donor demographics and make sure your selection aligns with those demographics and your goals for the tournament. It's a good idea to check in with your committee and organization board members to see if there are any personal or professional connections to golf facilities in your area.

Facility staff can help you determine a date, taking into account course conditions during different times of year, holidays, local events, and other factors that affect player turnout. The day of the week is also important to consider.

### PRO TIP:

You'll likely get the best possible rates if you choose a weekday for your tournament. Weekend rates tend to be higher, so consider Monday through Thursday instead.

Mondays are a common option for charity outings. In fact, many private golf facilities are closed to their membership on Mondays and may be available to host public golf events, though you'll likely need a referral from an existing member to hold your tournament there so check with your planning team.

The golf facility can also help you determine the tournament's format; while the vast majority of charity golf tournaments are scrambles, there are other options to consider. Other things the golf facility might





be able to provide or help with (be sure to ask) include discounts on pro shop items for tournament participants, staging and set up for registration and awards, placing signage, determining pairings and hole assignments, and donations for prizes.

Now is also a good time to determine other event details, such as if you'll have shotgun start or tee times, registration and sponsorship package costs, and the event's schedule so you can fill in those details on your event website and start marketing the event.

**Important questions to ask:**

- *What type of golfers and sponsors do I want to attract to the golf tournament?*
- *What other local events do I need to be aware of around the time of my golf tournament?*
- *What time of year is best for my supporters?*
- *Does the golf course offer a space for a dinner, awards ceremony, or other post-golf gathering?*
- *What days of the week provide the best value for a golf event?*
- *Does the price of the course make sense with the tournament's registration fee?*



## STEP 6:

# Promote the Tournament

Now it's time to get the word out! Any and all promotion should direct people to your event website where they can purchase team or sponsorship packages with a few simple clicks. Take advantage of digital marketing channels to get people to your website—promote it on your social media channels, through email blasts, in strategic emails to contacts, add it to your email signature and events calendars, and put a link on your organization's main website. If you mail invitations (which can be a nice way to make folks feel valued and more likely to return or renew their sponsorships) be sure to include a link or QR code to your event website where they can register.

It's also a good idea to reach out to local media outlets like newspapers, local television and radio stations, bloggers, and even influencers to let them know that your event is in the works.

Your planning team, board members, staff members, and other committed volunteers can also spread the word through their personal networks and social media pages. Check to see if any of them have contacts in local media or other ways to help share the word about your event.

### PRO TIP:

An easy way to activate your planning team is to ask each member to create a list of five to ten potential golfers and/or sponsors that they will personally reach out to. Then be sure you make time in planning meetings to report on this action item.



## STEP 7:

# Sell Registration & Sponsorship Packages

This step can start as soon as you set your package prices and add them to your event website. To price your registration packages, consider your costs, your donor demographic, and how many teams you hope to attract.

When thinking about who to ask to sponsor your event, consider businesses that want to be associated with your cause while getting exposure and lift for their brand. Generally speaking, golfers tend to be affluent and influential, making them the ideal potential client for a number of sponsoring businesses. Start with existing relationships, activating your board and planning committee to tap into their personal and professional networks. Consider targeting local businesses, but don't be afraid to go after regional or national companies—especially those that may have headquarters or offices in your area.

**Types of businesses to target as sponsors for your event might include:**

- *Restaurants, wineries/vineyards, beverage distributors, sports and cocktail bars*
- *Primary care providers, dentists/orthodontists, chiropractors, sports medicine, physical therapists, surgical practices, dermatologists*





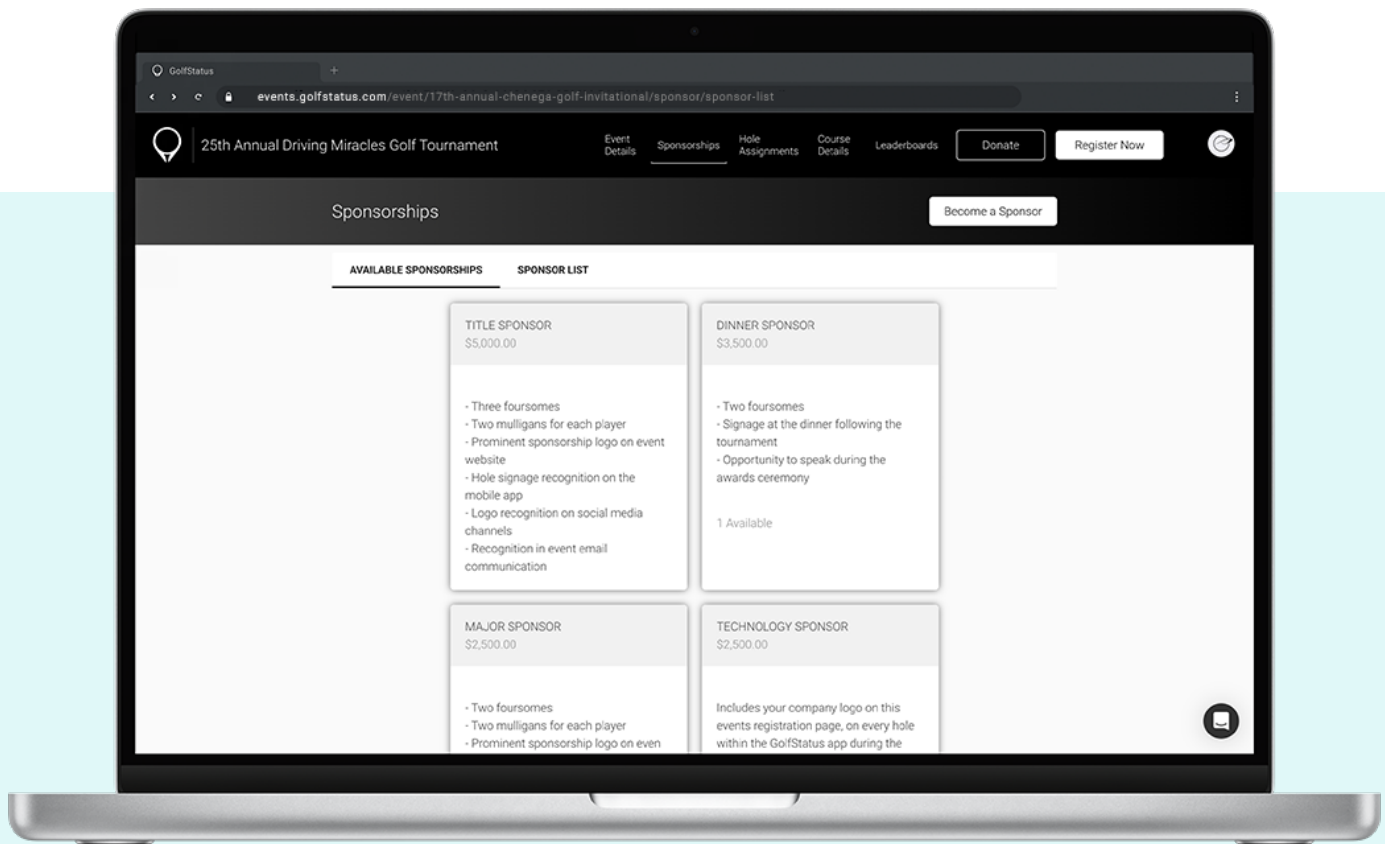
- *Gyms/fitness centers, personal trainers, sporting good stores, golf equipment stores*
- *Financial advisors, wealth management services, insurance companies/agents, CPAs/accounting firms, banks and credit unions, advertising agencies, PR companies, technology companies, consultants*
- *Home builders, architects, real estate companies/agents, home remodeling companies/contractors*
- *Jewelers, high-end clothing brands and boutiques*
- *Car dealerships, car services, rental car companies, travel agencies*

You'll want to think through how you'll recognize sponsors so that they see the value in investing in your event. Sponsorship exposure can include everything from their logo on the event website to on-course signage. Of course, you'll also want to give them a shout out in any communications ahead of the event, like promotional emails or those to registrants. Recognizing them on your website and social media is also a great way to add value.



**PRO TIP:**

Once a sponsorship is sold and processed via your event website, you'll need to manage sponsor logos, assets, and messaging. A web-based platform like GolfStatus keeps everything organized in one place, with a sponsorship management interface that your planning team can access.



*Direct potential sponsors to your event website where they can learn more about your tournament and organization, see available sponsorships, and purchase packages with a few clicks.*



## STEP 8:

# Finalize the Details

Being organized goes a long way toward a successful golf event. You'll want to track and manage costs in your budget spreadsheet as you call on and finalize vendor orders. You may only have a few vendors to work with depending on the size and scope of your event, but be sure to touch base with each in the days and weeks leading up to the event.

You'll also need to coordinate some details with the golf facility, including final numbers of teams and players, vendor deliveries, and setup times. Golf staff will work with you to finalize team pairings and hole assignments, and print the materials they'll need, including cart signs, tee sheets, and alpha lists. A tournament management platform like GolfStatus makes coordinating with the golf facility easy and seamless. Not only does this automate several time-consuming tasks, but it frees golf staff up to assist you and participants instead of being tied up dealing with printouts and clerical work.

Take advantage of the event website and any messaging features available in your management platform to touch base with golfers and sponsors on any last minute details, changes, or updates. Because you have the ability to instantly make updates, your event website is the perfect place to share this information, providing more exposure for your sponsors and even driving direct donations to your organization. The event website can also be used to keep golfers, sponsors, and supporters engaged with your event and organization before, during, and after the tournament.



## STEP 9: Hold the Event

Making sure everything is prepped and everyone is organized and on the same page prior to the tournament makes for less stress and a more enjoyable and successful event.

Volunteers—whether it’s just the planning team, staff or board members, or additional folks who want to help—are necessary, but it’s a good idea to make sure you communicate duties and expectations with them ahead of time to keep things running smoothly.

**Some important tasks and things to be ready for on event day include:**

- *Set up signage (golf facility staff will likely assist here) and any contest holes. You’ll want spotters to monitor any hole-in-one contests.*
- *Set up for any awards ceremony or post-tournament gathering. Check that any A/V equipment is ready to go.*
- *Set up and staff registration and check in. Registration should be well organized and inviting. Since golfers should have already paid online, check in should be quick and easy.*
- *Have screens set up in the clubhouse to display live leaderboards. This is another exposure opportunity for a top-level sponsor.*
- *Take photos throughout the day to share on social media, your organization’s website, in follow up communications, and in next year’s promotional materials.*
- *Have a plan for inclement weather and a way to quickly get in touch with registrants about any changes, updates, or delays.*



## STEP 10:

# Get Ready For Next Year

As soon as your event is over, it's time to start planning for next year. Get your committee or planning team together shortly after the tournament to talk about what worked well, what didn't work, and start brainstorming ways to improve and grow for next year while it's still fresh in your mind.

The donor data collected from your golf event is a gold mine when it comes to donor stewardship. Be sure to choose an event management platform that makes it easy to export this information for inclusion in your organization's CRM. You'll want to follow up with golfers and sponsors shortly after the event to thank them for participating and continue to steward those relationships.

### PRO TIP:

Send a thank you to golfers and sponsors for their support a week or two after the event. Utilize your planning team, board of directors, or other volunteers to help write notes or make phone calls.

Even though next year may seem far away, it's a good idea to get a tentative date, location, and website launched sooner rather than later to start getting on player and sponsor's radars. Particularly with sponsors, you want to make sure you're included when they do their budgeting process for the following year and the golf sponsorship is a line item. A simple save the date email should do the trick.



One advantage of using a platform like GolfStatus is the ability to easily copy a previous event so you don't have to start from scratch. This means next year's event is essentially set up and ready to go. You simply log into the software when the date gets closer, work with your dedicated customer success rep, update details, and start spreading the word.





## Golf for Good

GolfStatus helps nonprofits leverage the giving power of golf to raise more dollars, engage supporters, and do more good. Its robust golf event management platform streamlines golf tournaments from start to finish to save time and enhance the overall event experience for golfers, sponsors, and golf facilities. GolfStatus combines powerful technology with practical golf fundraising resources and industry-leading support to make charity golf tournaments easy, approachable, and efficient for organizations of all types and sizes. Nonprofits and those planning events to benefit a charity can qualify to use GolfStatus at no cost through the Golf for Good program.

Visit [golfstatus.com](https://golfstatus.com) to find out more and get qualified.