
Golf Tournament Formats



This article provides an overview of some of the most popular types of charity golf tournament formats. These are the golf tournament formats we at GolfRegistrations typically see in the thousands of charity golf tournaments we help organizations manage and plan. Although it may seem inconsequential, choosing the golf tournament format can make or break your charity golf event. We suggest talking to people on your organizing committee and golf pros at the hosting course for further information and recommendations about popular formats in your area and at the particular hosting course. You will also want to consider who your audience is as some formats are fun and more laid back while others are more formal and serious. Your best bet will be to choose a format players are familiar with so they will thoroughly enjoy your charity golf tournament or fundraising golf event.

The Scramble

The most common golf tournament format used with fundraising events and business-related golf is called a "scramble". It's often called the "four-man scramble" or "Florida scramble". This popular tournament allows a team of four to select the best shot in each individual series of hits. Then the entire foursome will take their next shot from this location. This pattern continues to the end of each hole. Keep in mind that when playing a scramble, you can drop your ball within one club length from where the chosen ball lies, but no closer to the hole. The advantage of a scramble golf tournament format is that each team will get its best possible score while wasting no time trying to locate balls hit into trees, sand traps, creeks, etc. The Scramble is usually played with teams of four, but can be played with more team members or as little as two per team.

Best Ball

This popular golf tournament format is popular with more advanced golfers who like to play their own ball. This format is also called "Four Ball Format" as well as "1-2-3 Best Ball Format". Best Ball is usually played with four-person teams. Each player on the team plays his or her own ball for each hole, just as you would in a typical game of golf. However, at the end of each hole, the lowest score among the four players counts as the team score. There can be two best ball formats, where you must count two balls on each hole. The more balls that count helps keep all of the players involved in the fate of the team.

Alternate Shot

This golf tournament format (also called "Foursomes") involves two-person teams and is a competition where the team alternates who hits each shot while playing the same ball. The first player hits the drive, the second player hits the second shot, the first player hits the third shot, and so on until the ball is holed. The team also alternates who tees off on each hole, so the same player doesn't hit every drive. Other variations of this format are known as "Odds and Evens" and "Scotch Foursomes".

Golf Marathon (Golf-a-Thon)

A golf marathon (or golf-a-thon) has become a very popular idea for charity golf events. A golf marathon is organized so that the golfers play 100 holes of golf or a similar feat worthy of the marathon title. The key to a Golf-a-thon is getting each player to collect a certain amount of pledges or donations for your cause. Organizations ask golfers to contact friends, colleagues, and family members to solicit donations for their participation in the golf marathon. Usually, the golfer is not charged to play if they meet the minimum pledge standards.

Modified Stableford

A Modified Stableford golf competition can be played by individuals or as a team tournament. In this golf tournament format, the score on each hole is worth a certain amount of points. The idea is to have the highest score. Typical scores are outlined below. The International, played on the PGA Tour every year, is a Modified Stableford. Points are won or lost based on the following:

- Double eagle = 8 points
- Eagle = 5 points
- Birdie = 2 points
- Par = 0 points
- Bogey = Minus 1 point
- Double bogey or worse = Minus 3 points

Chapman (Pinehurst) Foursome

When the Chapman (or Pinehurst) System is chosen as the format for a charity golf tournament, it means that 2-person teams will be competing against one another. Chapman is really a melding of several formats into one. In a Chapman event, both golfers tee off and then switch balls for their second shot. Teammates then select the one best ball after their second shots, and continue to play alternate shots until the ball ends up in the hole.

Bingo-Bango-Bongo Golf Tournament Format

This golf tournament format is one of the most popular choices for golf associations and league tournaments. Bingo Bango Bongo rewards players for three things on each hole:

1. The first player in the group to get onto the green = 1 point
2. The closest player to the pin once all group members are on the green = 1 point
3. The first player to hit the ball in the cup (or hole out) = 1 point

All shots are taken in the order of who is away or furthest from the pin.

Source – Golfregistrations.com