

Golf Tournament Event Logistics



Preliminary Planning

- Set a date about six months out (weekday vs. weekend?), avoiding holiday weekends and police special event days.
- Secure golf course. Make a presentation on the Torch Run and Special Olympics to try and receive a rate reduction or *ideally to get the course donated*. If you can't get course fees donated, you may want to reconsider the event and determine the revenue/expense ratio. Select a quality or new course that will attract corporate participation.
- Form a committee to help plan and implement the tournament. You don't need to be a golfer yourself to put on a successful tournament! Get golfers from your department to help or take on the project themselves. The committee can work to line up sponsors, secure donated prizes and develop or enhance a master mailing list. Provide specific assignments, such as volunteer recruitment and supervision, and communicate with committee members to ensure all tasks are being handled properly.
- Prepare a tournament brochure that includes information about the Torch Run, sponsorship opportunities, how to enter and all pertinent information about the tournament. Listing last year's sponsors is a wise move to keep them coming back! The state office can be of assistance when putting together promotional materials. (Example included)
- Develop a format for the tournament. Usually "best ball" or "captain's choice" works well, and this format won't discourage a high handicapper from entering. Decide if you will let participants develop their own team and enter as a team. This has pros and cons. It can increase participation because people are able to determine whom they will be playing with. However, this format can discourage an individual from signing up because they might not have others to play with to make a team. Also, by having the committee make up the teams with each team having an A, B, C and D player, the strength of the field can be more evenly distributed.

Tournament Funding and Sponsorships

- Attempt to obtain a premier sponsor for the tournament who will provide a substantial contribution to the tournament (such as underwriting the cost of the tournament.)
- The Special Olympics Minnesota state office is currently developing a sponsorship plan for the Torch Run and packages for potential sponsors. Please contact Chad Trench at Special Olympics Minnesota if you have a potential sponsor for an event you need to develop a sponsorship package for.
- Provide various levels of sponsorships. We suggest the possibility of having a reasonable rate for police officers so as not to price them out of the event. Corporate sponsorships for a twosome or a foursome needs to be reasonable for the type of course, but don't sell yourself short. This is where you will make the most profit! Law firms, department vendors, area businesses, regular contacts of officers...there are many sponsors out there waiting to be tapped!

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- Tee box or green sponsorships are the perfect way to include sponsors who have no interest in golf. For \$100-150, a company, law firm or individual can support your tournament without committing to play golf. You will realize a great amount of profit in this area as well, but the trick is to get your committee and officers to go out and solicit these sponsorships!

Tournament Expenses

- As already indicated, shop around, start early and try to secure a reduced rate for a quality course. If you are serving a meal, seek to find a corporate sponsor who will pay for the meal, or donate it in-kind.
- Try to get as many prizes donated as possible. Plaques or trophies are nice to give to the top three teams, and on-course contests for longest drive and shortest putt, etc. add to the tournament. These prizes can be restaurant gift certificates, golf equipment, free greens fees coupons or other donated merchandise.
- Snacks, drinks, tees and goodie bags also add to the quality of your tournament. These items can easily be obtained through donations. Sometimes all you have to do is ask. Once you have established sponsors or regular sources for donated items, your job next year will be much easier! One word of caution about serving beer - use tickets redeemable for only a certain number of beers (3-4) for liability purposes. Refer to the Forms/Resources folder on the Handbook CD for the Special Olympics Minnesota alcohol policy at special events.
- Brochure printing expenses can be eliminated if you can have this service donated or handled by your department, city or local printer.

Tournament Publicity and Advertising

- Have your department and/or Special Olympics office issue press releases for your event. Make personal contact with newspaper staff as well as radio and TV contacts to get publicity for your event with the hope of achieving increased participation.
- Place brochures or posters in golf stores, pro shop and sporting goods stores.
- Don't forget to heavily advertise within your own department! Officers will often invite their friends or relatives, people you would never know to ask!
- Mail out letters and entry forms about seven weeks before the tournament. About 2-3 weeks out, begin calling those you haven't heard from.

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Tournament Day

- Coordinate all activities and responsibilities with volunteers, committee members and golf course staff. Have scorecards, cart signs and the scoreboard completed and ready. The golf course staff will often take care of this for you. Put out all hole sponsor signs.
- Have a tournament check-in table staffed and ready for participants at least 1 ½ - 2 hours prior to the start of the tournament. Have drink carts and drivers ready to go 30 minutes before the scheduled start.
- Recognize sponsors, go over the rules and format and give general announcements before play begins.
- After play is completed, serve lunch or dinner and then have a short awards program. Recognize your sponsors again. Present a plaque to the golf course and to your premiere sponsor, if applicable. Make sure to have a Special Olympics athlete in attendance to give a speech and show off medals. This is important because this helps to educate your participants and reinforces the purpose of the tournament. Have the athlete assist in handing out awards.
- Save some prizes for door prizes to give away at the conclusion of the awards ceremony. This will help to keep participants around for the awards and athlete presentation. Otherwise, you will lose a lot of people right after the tournament or the meal.

Other Ideas to Raise Funds at the Tournament

- Sell Torch Run T-shirts.
- Auction off donated items—hotel and restaurant certificates, airline tickets, vacation packages, concert tickets, merchandise, etc.
- Sell one mulligan to each player for \$5 - this will bring in a surprising amount of extra cash.
- Have a putting and longest drive contest before the tournament. Charge \$5 for three drives and another \$5 to putt a six hole course. Award dining certificates or merchandise to the winners. This could bring in another \$500.
- A “shootout” can also bring in additional funds. Three shots to a green, closest to the hole wins or draw the prizewinner out of the names of the individuals who hit the green.

Tournament Wrap-Up

- Send a thank you letter to all sponsors, contributors and participants.
- Create mailing labels and a database for next year!

We hope you find this information useful in planning your golf event. For further information, contact Kean Corkery at 763-270-7141 or kean.corkery@somn.org.

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Example Letter to Participants

Month, date, Year

RE: Torch Run Golf Tournament for Special Olympics Minnesota

Dear (name of sheriff/police department):

Thank you very much for choosing to participate in our (number of years) Annual Torch Run Golf Tournament for Special Olympics Minnesota. We hope you have a wonderful day on the course. If you are a returning sponsor or player, thank you for your continued support. If you are with us for the first time, thanks for supporting our cause, and we hope to see all of you again next year for our big (number of years) Annual event! Please take the time to read all of the following information carefully so you will fully understand everything taking place today.

In (year), Minnesota Law Enforcement officers raised more than \$XXX,XXX for Special Olympics Minnesota. The (name of sheriff/police department) has long been a major supporter of the Torch Run for Special Olympics Minnesota, and we thank you for being a part of our continued success. The (name of sheriff/police department) raised more than (amount) last year to be the top fundraising agency in the state for the (number) straight year.

I would like to emphasize the importance of staying for the dinner, awards presentations and comments by several of our Special Olympics Minnesota athletes who are participating today. Following dinner, we will have many door prize drawings at the conclusion of the awards ceremony. You must be present to win!

We have many sponsors who have contributed to our success. Please take a look at the attached list of sponsors and thank their representatives. Special thanks to (name of sponsor), for their support of the Minnesota Law Enforcement Torch Run and co-host of this event for their continued support. Folks, due to your support, we will raise well more than (amount) today for Special Olympics Minnesota. Have a great day!

Sincerely,

(Your name, etc.)

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Example Letter of Invitation to Participate

Month, date, year

Dear Friends of the (Your city) Sheriff/Police Department and Special Olympics Minnesota:

Please accept this invitation to participate in the Annual (Your city) Sheriff/Police Department Torch Run Golf Tournament to benefit Special Olympics Minnesota. This tournament will be held at the (name of golf course) in (name of town) on (date of tournament) with a shotgun start at X:XX p.m. Please see the enclosed brochure for additional information.

The Minnesota Law Enforcement Torch Run to benefit Special Olympics Minnesota has raised more than \$XXX,XXX each of the past three years and the goal for (year) is \$XXX,XXX. The (name of sheriff/police department) has been the top fundraising agency in Minnesota for the past (number of years), contributing more than (dollar amount) (to Special Olympics Minnesota during the past (number of years)).

Our annual golf tournament has been a consistent part of our continued success which is due in large part to the community support we have received from so many individuals and businesses. If you have participated and supported our efforts in the past, thank you so much for supporting the (name of sheriff/police department) and Special Olympics Minnesota. I'd like to extend a special thanks to (name of sponsor) for once again stepping up to be the Sponsor of the Minnesota Torch Run and to XXX for sponsoring our annual golf tournament.

I look forward to seeing you on Month, Day. If you have any questions, please call or e-mail me at (give contact information).

Sincerely,

(Your name, etc.)