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**Is Golf Tournament Sponsorship an Effective Form of Advertising?**

**By Ron Strand**

Golf tournaments have become a very popular way for charity to raise money. Probably the number one reason why most companies support a tournament is an affinity for the cause. But in addition to supporting a worthy cause, golf tournament sponsorship represents an opportunity for effective advertising. This article contains some anecdotal evidence to support this theory.

At a golf tournament a while ago, I happened to be on the same foursome and share a cart with one of that tournament's major sponsors. This fellow was a marketing manager for a car dealership. His rather enviable job description included playing in tournaments that the company sponsored, which through the summer months amounted to about two or three a week. Of course, he had some other responsibilities like making sure the cars from the dealership were displayed properly and the gift bags his company sponsored got to every golfer. So it was a long day for him, showing up well before the tournament started and leaving long after the last after dinner speech was made. But even so, he still got to golf as major part of his job. He had a hard time garnering any sympathy from our group.

As we talked throughout the day, I learned that his job of playing golf had not come about by accident. A few years earlier, he had done some extensive research and analysis of the company's advertising budgets, their media exposure and the cost effectiveness of the various types of promotion they were undertaking at the time. This analysis resulted in the very conscious and deliberate decision to drop their media advertising and focus their budget on event sponsorship.

In other words, they found that the caps and shirts they gave away at each golf tournament, the cars they had on display at hole-in-one and other contest holes, their logo on the program and on signs located around the golf tournament, and their name on the sponsor list in the paper and on the tournament website, and so on, resulted in more exposure and more people showing up at the dealership when shopping for a car, than the ads they used to run in the paper and on radio and television.

He would not divulge any numbers, but I can imagine what a major car dealership in a city of over a million would spend on advertising in a year. It would be millions of dollars. To divert this budget to sponsorships was a major decision. Given the money involved, I believe him when he talked about the

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homework they did before making the decision and the research they did on an ongoing basis to monitor the effectiveness of their expenditure.

He believed the strategy of sponsoring golf tournaments and other events was effective for a number of reasons. They appeared to be more a part of the community if they were associated with local causes and organizations. This elevated the perception of trust in the minds of consumers. The prizes and gifts they gave away, like caps and shirts, displayed their company logo to far more people for far longer, with that positive association, than any form of media advertising. And they could target their audience very carefully and specifically.

So when a charity calls asking your company for sponsorship of its golf tournament, think about supporting the cause, but also think about the win-win that can be accomplished by strategic placement of some of your promotion budget into golf tournament sponsorship.

Ron Strand is a college instructor and consultant with an interest in  
golf tournament planning

## **Golf Handicap Systems Help Even Out Scorecards For Competitive Golf Play**

**By George Gabriel**

The golf handicap system is implemented at golf courses, for golf tournament play. Trophies and prizes are awarded at the end of golf tournaments, based on golf scores. In order to make the golf game fair play, the handicap system is based on the ten lowest differentials of the last twenty games on an eighteen-hole course in one season. Some golf associations will accept fewer golf games. It can also be used for fair play outside of golf tournaments. The following is a short guide on how the golf handicap system works.

Handicap numbers are recorded for golf players numbered one through thirty-six, the number one being the lowest handicap, and the number thirty-six being the highest handicap. A scratch golfer has no handicap, better known as a scratch player.

Now lets take a look at how these numbers come into affect. If a player's handicap is ten, and another player's handicap are twenty. The difference between the two players is ten golf strokes. Therefore, to even up the match, the player with the lower handicap, which this case is the ten-handicap golf player, has to give out ten golf strokes to his opponent on eighteen holes, to make the golf game fair play. How do you identify on which golf holes they are going to be given out?

Typically on most, if not all golf scorecards, you will find numbers 1 through 18 near the bottom of the scorecard beside Men's HCP and Ladies HCP. The numbers 1 through 18, you will also find out of order. The reason for the disorder of numbers is, the number 1 being the hardest golf hole, and the

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number 18 being the easiest golf hole. The golf course, or architect of the golf course, determines the order of numbers on any given golf hole, by the yardage and slope rating, and or other difficulty of the golf hole.

Now that we have determined how many golf strokes are to be given out, and where they are to be taken. The higher handicap in this case, which is the twenty handicap golf player, gets ten golf strokes for eighteen holes, on holes numbered 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9, and 10. This should make the match a lot closer, if both players are playing within their game. It typically works out to one golf stroke on every other golf hole in this example, depending on how the golf course is laid out. Another example would be a scratch player and a thirty–six–handicap player, the scratch player having to give out two golf strokes on every hole.

Keeping track of your handicap, and using a handicap system, will help make the game fair play in a lot of golf matches, when playing against other opponents.

Check with your local golf pro, or golf association, on an official guide for the golf handicap system, and for maintaining a legitimate handicap. If you belong to a golf course, they should have a system in place to use for tournament play, which is recognized by most golf courses and golf associations. You can also find golf handicap software on keeping track of a golf handicap.

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site at

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