



## How to Plan For a USFGT Event

Running a tournament can be challenging but enjoyable. All it takes is planning, advanced preparation, and a dose of common sense during the actual event. Most USFGT members know how to play. Show them a good time at your well-run event.

Here's an outline of the items you'll need to consider:

- Type of Event
- Divisions
- Select a Date
- Courses & Prep
- Finances & Fees
- Staffing
- Lodging
- Schedule & Capacity
- Sponsorship
- Players Packages & Trophies
- Food & Amenities
- Event Promotion & PR
- Pre-Registration
- TD Equipment

### Type of Event

USFGT sanctioned events can have a variety of competition formats ranging from singles to match play to team play and doubles. How big of an event you plan to host is up to you. Including a Pro level typically depends on the amount of cash being added to the prize pool. Usually, higher tier events are upgrades from successful lower tier events hosted the previous year.

### Divisions

Decide which divisions you will host. You are not required to host all divisions if you wish to specifically exclude some divisions. Be sure to advertise this in advance on your flyer/ website, social media channels, etc. If you do not restrict the divisions offered, then your basic rule of thumb should be to host any division for which there are at least four competitors, and, where possible, to allow for smaller divisions.

### Select a Date

Many clubs have scheduled tournaments. One should check with knowledgeable players in the area if there are any other events already planned for a nearby course. Be sure to clear your date with the USFGT once you have submitted the sanctioning form and get approval of the date. Reserve applicable registration and check-in space. Know where the water stations and bathrooms are on a course. Keep constant contact with the host course between the time you schedule your event and the actual tournament date.

### Courses & Prep

Though you may have several good courses in your area, it is probably best to pick your top course and simply play that one. It's easier to run a successful event if you only have a good active course. It also encourages new local players to enter your event because it's a course they play all the time.



If you plan to use a temporary course, add temporary holes to an existing course or use temporary tee or pin positions, please refer to FIGF rules document for assistance with these issues. Generally speaking, it's not a good practice to create temporary holes at the last minute. You should never dig holes or move tee markers without the involvement of the course superintendent. You don't want to be responsible for cutting a sprinkler line! Poor hole design can reduce the quality of the experience for those who registered to play the course they expected. It's OK to plan for adding extra well-designed holes if needed and let players know this may happen, just avoid making last minute additions. Don't do anything without first clearing it with the golf course or FootGolf course operator.

If you have multiple tees and pin placements, pick the best combinations on each hole and use them. The tourney will be much easier to run if you don't have to worry about moving tees between rounds. It is also better to pick one set of tees for a specific division to play for the whole event. If the same division will play different sets of tees in different rounds, it increases the chances that someone will tee from the wrong pads. Then we have a sticky rules situation and potentially angry competitors.

If the course has multiple sets of tees, decide which divisions should play from each set. The USFGT has suggested guidelines to help with this decision as long as you know what skill level each set of tees was designed for. All tees should be well marked and labeled so all divisions know which tees to play.

There is nothing worse than traveling to someone's course, practicing all day Friday, only to find out the tees were not in their tourney positions. It is also a nightmare to arrive for practice and discover that the TD has not even decided which layout to play yet! This is particularly unfair to the visiting players.

Also, find out how long it will take to play a complete round in a tournament. Sometimes this can be tested in advance at an informal event or league night. Long, grueling rounds can make it tough for the event to run smoothly and even cause problems completing rounds before dark with weather delays. Remember that a golf course will make you keep the pace of play and may have golfers in front of you or behind you.

Spruce up the course in the weeks before your event. See if the Host can have the grass mowed no more than a day before the tournament. Green areas should be cut and cups trimmed the day before to prevent the grass from growing back into the cup. If tee signs are damaged or missing, be sure to make temporary replacements or replace them. Can new players find their way from hole to hole? Out of bounds need to be clearly marked and relayed to the players. Scorecards need to be printed, if using BlueGolf all information needs to be in the system so scorecards can be produced and players can use the mobile AFGL APP which is available in the Apple Store and the Google Apps.

### **Finances & Fees**

Plan to keep expenses to a minimum. Set your entry fees. Be sure to add the appropriate USFGT fee to the entry fees plus decide whether to include a buck or two for the prize fund. Build in any other fees – i.e. greens fees or any other cost you expect to incur such as food or drinks if you include them in the tournament.

### **Staffing**

Plan your tournament staffing needs in advance. Identify responsibilities early on. All USFGT TDs must be certified officials and current USFGT members. Start with a few key individuals whom you can trust and depend on. Be certain to include your local club members. Solicit the help of your area footgolfers who do not play



events. Build a volunteer force. Assign specific tasks to people who have the appropriate skills, because one person can't do it all. Follow up with staff members all the way up to the event. If you plan to play, it would be better to find another individual who is a certified official to serve as TD during the event. You can remain as Co-TD. A Certified Official cannot be a player during the tournament..

### **Lodging**

Determine if you will have out of town players and try to work out a discount with a local hotel. Ask them to be a sponsor. Steer disc golfers to the hotel. Tell them to mention that they're with the tournament. Some of your local players might be happy to host long-range travelers. Determine all of the options so you can help attendees.

### **Schedule & Capacity**

Schedule your tournament with a course and give realistic numbers of tee times to hold. Most courses will not want to allow a shot-gun start if the tournament is under 72 players. Decide on how many footgolfers you can handle based on the number of holes to be played during the event. Foursomes are preferred, which would mean an 18 hole course can fit 72 players. Schedule your tee times 6 minutes apart as FootGolf moves faster than golf does.

This year most events will not be more than 18 holes and one round. As tournaments grow and regional tournament form, longer tournaments with more rounds will develop. A 9-hole course can be used but it is preferred that it is then played twice to make an 18 hole tournament. Determine all of the event details well in advance. Select a tee time for the first round of competition.

You may be able to select a tee time that is late enough in the day so that it enables the course to let golfers out in the morning, thereby giving you a less expensive tee time. A late start will also allow out-of-towners, who have never played your course, to learn it the morning before the first round. Remember our footgolfers will be tired. The quicker we can get them on the road, the safer their trip home will be.

### **Sponsorship**

Try to solicit local sponsorship for your League or Tournament. Here are a few "sponsor hunt" tips:

Create a standardized letter explaining who you are (club, businessman, etc.), your organization and who to expect at the tournaments (i.e. 30 men and 10 women from the local area, ages from 21 to 45. Of these, 10 may be from out of town.)

Distribute the USFGT "What is FootGolf" brochure. You may even want to develop a brochure for your club! Having them watch a short, well-made video might also help. There are several videos available on the AFGL YouTube Channel.

If you do not succeed in your sponsorship quest, do not despair. Most businesses you go to will not sponsor you. Always remain polite and upbeat. Tell them that you will be back next year. Also, always go back from year to year to the major sponsors (beer and soda, etc), changes in ownership and operation of these distributors are always going on as are changes in their marketing strategies. By coming back each year, they will be more aware of your event and the chances of securing a sponsorship will increase.

Some sponsors will donate merchandise which might work well for players' packages. Mail "Thank you" letters to sponsors after the event. Tell them how many people attended and where they were from. Mention that it was a USFGT event. If you have "cool things" made with a sponsor's name on it (like banners or posters) be



prepared for some attending the event to think that they would make a cool souvenir also (these items might "walk away"). Secure them well if you need to give them back to the sponsor after the event. Keep a list of the names and addresses of your sponsors so that you can contact them next year (and mail those "Thank you" notes).

### **Players Packages & Trophies**

Items for player packages should mostly be donated, not purchased. In addition, consider awarding at least three trophies or medals in each of the divisions. In smaller divisions one medal or trophy will be enough.

### **Food & Amenities**

Most golf courses will not allow you to bring outside food or drink onto the property. You might be able to purchase a box lunch or a food package from the course but it is not necessary to provide food. You could also offer a reception or dinner off property but you should do this only if you have a food sponsor. Do you know of a local bar or restaurant that might like to host a get-together after the event? Would they like to sponsor? Steering players to various local restaurants is a great way to promote camaraderie and spend money with (or recruit new) sponsors.

### **Event Promotion & PR**

Get flyers made, you can use the templates in the event collateral package. Use social media to your advantage. Your event will be listed on the USFGT schedule in BlueGolf and on the website once your Sanctioning Agreement has been submitted and appropriate fees have been paid. You might also want to solicit at local soccer venues and put a flyer at the course you are going to use for the tournament. When you hold the event, stick to what you said on the flyer! If you promise a prize pool, then you need to deliver. Avoid promising money you haven't got in the bank.

### **Pre-Registration**

Consider checking into some of the online services for handling your pre registration or use the BlueGolf system provided by the AFGL/USFGT. There will be credit card and BlueGolf fees involved, but the streamline system might be worth it. You will also have the Player App for scoring and pairings. You'll have to decide whether to pass these on or build them into your package. If you don't use the BlueGolf system you will need to fill out a spreadsheet with all player information and score. Turn this information into the USFGT directly after the tournament so players can receive their points.

Continue posting your current registration list to the USFGT website for your event. Once you have sanctioned your event, you'll receive an event password that allows you to do this and to later report the scores for your event while it's happening.

Generally, it is not a good idea to "verbally" (includes email) hold a registration slot for a player. For example, it's Thursday night and you have 87 pre-registrants for Saturday's event. You get a phone call from a player who has waited until the last minute. He asks you to hold him a spot. (He's good for it, you know he'll pay you for it when he arrives.) You agree and the player starts his 12-hour drive to your event. The next day you receive 3 more checks in the mail for pre-registration. Now you are in a fix. You have four people vying for three spots and you guaranteed a spot to the one person of the four who did not think enough of you or your event to pre-register. Avoid controversy, count people as being registered after you have gotten their money.



What if someone who pre-registered doesn't play? Do they get a refund? Yes, if you are able to fill their spot with another golfer or they tell you they are withdrawing sufficiently (at least a week) in advance. No, if you held them a spot and you can't fill it with another golfer. And the answer is especially 'no' if the player doesn't even call to let you know they are not going to get there.

### **TD Equipment**

You will need some items, a "tournament director kit" of sorts in order to run a smooth event. A TD Package list can be found in the Planning & Management section of the USFGT website.

One critical item is a scoreboard to display the players and their scores prior to, during and after your event. You can dress it up by getting them printed in different colors for the different divisions. But make sure you have more than enough blanks printed (to cover mistakes, getting wet, other damage), so your color coding system doesn't break down if you run out of a color you need. Decide whether to use one scorecard per player which will have all of their scores recorded on it for the whole event, or to do the more common approach of preparing one scorecard per group each round with all group members' names on them. There are tradeoffs with each approach. The downside of having all of a person's scores on one card is the risk of it getting lost or damaged from several rounds of use, especially when rain is involved.

To save work at player check-in, have as many of these cards prepared beforehand as possible, based on pre-registration entries. Quality scorecards list the hole lengths for each course layout to be played, have enough room for 5 players, feature tournament name, host club and sponsor logos across the top, course rules especially OB, TD contact information, and even have a course map on the back.