



Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

GIVING

Fundraising Tool Kit

Your guide to creating a successful
golf fundraiser



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Thank you for organizing a golf fundraiser to support life-changing cancer research and world-class care at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK).

Common Golf Events and Considerations

Your first step is selecting what type of golf tournament you wish to host. Be sure to select the format that best matches the caliber of your players. There are several golf tournament formats to choose from:

Shotgun start

Teams begin and end their rounds at the same time but at different holes.

The scramble

Teams of up to four people play this fast-moving format. Each team member tees off, and the team decides who had the best shot. Once the best shot is decided, all team members play their next shot from that spot. The team repeats this process until all players finish the hole. Teams play all holes throughout the tournament using this method.

Best ball

This format allows each player to play a full round of golf and gives less experienced golfers the opportunity to be part of a winning team. Golfers hit their own balls at each hole. The lowest score out of all team members becomes the team's official score for that hole.

Odd and even

Two players alternate shots using one ball. The first player tees off at the first hole, followed by the second player taking the next shot. Players continue to alternate until the hole is completed.

Golf marathon

Golfers play as many holes as they can during a designated time frame. Each player creates an MSK fundraising page with a minimum fundraising threshold that must be met to participate.

Miniature golf

Mini-golf tournaments can get golfers of all ages and skill levels involved.

Raising Money Through Your Golf Fundraiser

While event logistics may feel overwhelming, your MSK contact is here to support you. To help prioritize your plans, **we recommend spending the majority of your time strategizing how your event will raise funds.** The fundraising aspect of your event matters most because it directly impacts your cause! Here are some effective ways to fundraise for MSK through your golf tournament.

Sponsorships

Sponsorships are a meaningful way to create partnerships and allow companies and individuals to receive special benefits, such as logo usage on banners and in program books, in exchange for a higher level of support. Sponsorships are usually tiered—higher priced sponsorships result in more perks. Here are a few sponsorship levels to consider.

- **Presenting or title sponsor:** Your event should have only one presenting or title sponsor. This exclusive opportunity is reserved for the company or individual who makes the largest donation to your event.
- **Event sponsor:** Offer two or three sponsorship levels below your presenting sponsor, such as bronze, silver, and gold. Each level up should be more expensive and include more benefits than the level beneath it.
- **Table sponsor:** These sponsors pay a premium for an exclusive and private table at your golf outing's lunch or dinner.
- **Hole sponsor:** Sponsoring a hole can maximize visibility. Determine the value of each hole on the course and set a price. From there, have the company's name and logo printed on flags or signs, and place additional signage at their purchased hole for all participants to see.
- **Matching sponsor:** A matching sponsor will match all donations up to the amount they are comfortable giving. Set this number in advance and advertise the match. Some ideas include the first \$5,000 raised will be matched or all event day gifts will be matched up to \$10,000.
- **In-kind sponsors:** An in-kind sponsor donates goods or services to your event, like water bottles, hats, or golf balls. These donations help keep your cost of fundraising low. In return, in-kind sponsors receive special recognition.

Be sure to note the appropriate tax deductibility when offering sponsorship packages. Click [here](#) to learn more from the IRS website.

Registration Fees

Golfer registration fees vary based on geographic area and event format. We recommend that your registration fees cover the green fees and carts for each golfer. Contact your venue to determine the base cost per participant and ask if they offer group or nonprofit discounts. Here are a few things to consider when setting registration fees:

- **Resist the temptation to undercharge your attendees in an effort to increase attendance.** If it costs \$100 to golf, don't charge \$75; charge at least \$100. This ensures that you can cover your costs. If your target audience can bear a higher price point, consider charging above the break-even point for admission to increase your fundraising amount.
- **Implement a tiered registration fee.** If you need to charge \$85 per person to cover your costs, offer an optional VIP experience for \$125 or \$150. The VIP experience should include additional benefits, such as special parking, an extra drink, or the attendee's name listed in the program.
- **Secure an underwriter.** Underwriters absorb some or all of the event expenses, so the maximum funds raised will benefit MSK.

Additional Fundraising Ideas

Mulligans: A mulligan is a do-over stroke. Sell mulligans before golfers hit the course to raise extra money. Price each mulligan for \$5 to \$20 and set a limit on how many each golfer or team can buy.

Helicopter golf ball drop: To make a big impact, rent a helicopter to drop golf balls above a target on the course. Golf balls are sold prior to the ball drop. The ball closest to the target wins. Here's how it works.

- Each ball is numbered and sold for \$10 (either online or in person on event day).
- A helicopter drops all of the balls above the 1st or 18th hole on event day. The ball that is closest to the target wins!
- The winner receives 10% of the money raised from the drop.
- Raise \$20,000 by selling 2,000 golf balls.
- If you are in the New York City area, we recommend using the company Fly FOXTROT.

Contests: Players pay a fee to participate in contests that show off their golf skills. Winners of each contest receive a prize. Here is a list of common golf contests.

- Longest drive
- Longest successful putt
- Hole-in-one on a designated hole
- Fewest putts throughout the day
- Hitting the ball closest to the pin
- Finders keepers contest in which a foursome receives a special golf ball that they must play throughout the game to enter a drawing for a prize
- Competing against a golf pro in chosen categories, such as longest drive or closest to the hole

Post-Outing Reception

Many golf events include a luncheon or dinner reception following the tournament. While this addition may increase the cost per person, it will also significantly increase the value of the event ticket. Here are a few ways you can increase your fundraising at a reception.

Auctions: Create partnerships with local businesses and solicit them for donated items or experiences to be auctioned off to the highest bidder at the event.

Decide whether the auction will be a live or silent one.

- If your guests like public recognition, a live auction is a great fit. An auctioneer solicits the crowd, encouraging bidders to increase their donations to win an item. To create even more excitement, consider hiring a professional auctioneer or asking a gregarious volunteer to lead a live auction.
- In a silent auction, guests discreetly write their bids on a bid sheet. Items are typically displayed in a bustling area at the event. To maximize revenue, consider grouping items into premium packages.

Here are a few tips to secure auction items:

- Organize an auction committee so members can leverage their networks to secure donated items and experiences.
- Create a list of local businesses that have the capacity to donate.
- When seeking in-kind donations, write a letter that explains what you are asking for, what the event supports, why it's important, and donation instructions. [Click here to read a sample solicitation letter.](#)

In an online silent auction, guests bid through a mobile phone, computer, or tablet. Online platforms increase participation by allowing those who could not attend your golf event to join in.

An open appeal: As part of the speaking program at the reception, ask a board member, honoree, or volunteer to share how donations from the audience make an impact and to commit to giving a certain amount.

- Before your event, contact the individuals most likely to support this effort and ask them to commit to raising their hands. Their interest will encourage other guests to participate.
- Ask the speaker to share their personal connection to the cause.
- Update the crowd on the fundraising total and how close you are to your fundraising goal.
- Start at a high donation amount and work down, asking for donations at all levels.
- Place QR codes directly on tables or programs for easy donating.

Ticket sales: Consider offering a reception-only ticket. This may interest people who do not like golf or could not commit to a full day at the tournament.

- Determine how much each ticket will need to cost to cover your expenses and allow for significant funds to be donated to charity. Typically, at least 50% of a ticket should be toward the donation.
- Provide ticketing packages that add on to a foursome, so spouses or colleagues can join the golfers at the reception.

General Donations and Online Fundraising

In addition to collecting online donations yourself, invite golfers to ask their networks to support the event. MSK's event fundraising pages make collecting donations quick and easy. Golfers can create personal fundraising pages through which all funds raised will count toward your fundraising total. You can present a prize to the top fundraiser during the reception. Click [here](#) to learn more about JMSK fundraising pages.



Event Logistics

Venue

Finding a venue that works for your event and budget is an important step in the planning process. Start early to give yourself plenty of time and options. The most common venues are golf or country clubs, public golf courses, local resorts or hotels, and mini-golf courses. Here are a few things to consider when looking for a venue:

- **Start with your network.** Lean on your personal network to find a great site that they have a connection with. You may be able to get a site donated or at a reduced cost.
- **Research similar events that take place in your area.** Are those events using venues that you might be able to use too? Are there especially desirable venues that will help drive attendance for your event?
- **Avoid locations that are hard to find or out of the way.** No matter how inexpensive hard to find venues may be, it will be more difficult to attract guests to attend.
- **Ask about all fees associated with the venue up front.** Get all fees in writing — you do not want any unexpected surprises.
- **Ask about restrictions.** Policies on bringing in outside food or drink, local noise ordinances, and occupancy limits are a few areas to consider.
- **Speak with the person who will be your main point of contact on the day of the event.** Have a meeting before you decide to use a particular venue, so you can discuss what kind of support they will offer and if they have hosted similar events in the past.
- **Tour the venue in person.** Visit yourself before you sign on the dotted line.

Event Prep

To prepare for a successful event:

- Formulate a plan in case of inclement weather. The golf course should be able to help.
- Address any dietary restrictions with the caterers.
- Make sure you are close to hitting your goal for number of golfers.
- Calculate your expenses and how much revenue you will need to generate on event day.
- Send your participants a “Know Before You Go” communication to answer frequently asked questions, including arrival time, parking information, and warm-up location.
- Make a volunteer plan with specific jobs for all volunteers and event day schedule.
- Build pre-event excitement through social media and exclusive guest communications.

Event Day

- Set up a check-in table with registration lists and for ticket sales, so you know who is in attendance. A VIP check-in table will make your top sponsors feel extra special.
- Stick to your schedule.
- If you have speakers or presenters, create and follow a day of schedule.
- Have a system in place for day-of ticket sales and registrations.
- Ensure that the auction table is in an accessible, highly trafficked area. Have the table at golfer check-in and during the reception to maximize visibility.
- Take photos and post on social media throughout the day.
- Livestream the event to supporters around the world.

Event Follow-Up

Fundraising does not end when your golf tournament does! Long-term stewardship is key to keeping your guests engaged until your next event.

- Thank your guests, golfers, sponsors, and volunteers.
- Share your fundraising total and inspire last-minute donations through a targeted email and social media push. Include photos from your event.
- Solicit feedback! Find out what participants enjoyed and how you can improve next year.



Host a Virtual Golf Event

Consider taking your golf event virtual to raise additional money across your network all over the world. Virtual events can expand your outreach and expose your fundraiser to a larger audience. Here are some tips to reimagine your golf event in the virtual space:

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Ready to create a golf fundraiser? Click [here](#) to get started!



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To learn more about fundraising for MSK please contact us at communityfundraising@mskcc.org