



PLANNING A MAJOR COMPETITION

Secretary At Work: May 1998 (reviewed August 2011)

Most clubs these days have at least one major pro-am, am-am or suchlike competition during the year. Often the Captain is responsible for the running of them during his year and consequently he may well rely on you as the secretary to help him and in many cases, take over the major part of organising and running the competition. If it is an annual event then you should have built up a file on what is required and hopefully this file is updated each year and any new ideas from the previous year are carried forward. Even if the previous years were an outstanding success it is a good idea to have de-briefing after the event to see which areas, if any, can be improved. You should always draw up a clear list of rules for the competition and publish them with entry forms and posters.

The major items that should be covered are as follows:

- ✎ Date of competition and details of the format (such as 4 ball better ball etc).
- ✎ Handicap restrictions or limits should be clearly set out and it is advisable to ask for handicap certificates on the day.
- ✎ Cost of entry, which may be an individual or team cost. This should not include any sweepstakes, which must be voluntary and collected on the day.
- ✎ Often the value of prizes is mentioned, these must be within the rules of amateur status and must not be cash prizes for amateurs.
- ✎ It is usual to include the rules concerning how any ties are decided ie last 9 holes etc. This should be clearly stated, especially if you use two starting points, say the first and tenth tees. Regardless of which tee a competitor starts from there is only one last nine holes on a golf course, that is from holes ten to eighteen.
- ✎ You should cover late starters and a note that if it is a team event and a player is out of the hole they should pick up to avoid slow play.
- ✎ You should state that the lowest handicap player will be the marker and that all the other players should sign the card in the space reserved for the player. If the competition is either an individual or pairs event then of course, the card is marked and signed as stated in the Rules of Golf.
- ✎ It is usual to confirm that the competition will be played according to the Rules of Golf but in some cases this will not be the case, ie Texas scrambles, shotgun starts etc, so these types of competitions are best left for fun golf and certainly not the championship type.
- ✎ In major events it is usual to state that all golf balls used must be on the “List of Conforming Golf Balls” as issued by The Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews. If

you state this, make sure you have a copy of the list available in your office for any disputes.

On the day of the competition you should ensure that all Local Rules are clearly on the scorecard plus any additional ones that may be in place. It is best to copy out a list of any additions and give one to each competitor as they sign in. On the course make sure that out of bounds posts are clearly in place and that any items of ground under repair are clearly marked usually with a white line around them. All water hazards should be clearly marked with yellow posts and lateral water hazards with red posts. You must make sure that the tees in use are clearly marked and remember if the competition includes Ladies, then the LGU tees must be in place. For major competitions it is a good idea to bring in the other tee markers for the duration of the competition to avoid any mistakes.

You should have a competition office conveniently placed near the first tee that all competitors report to and make sure you have sufficient staff to man this throughout the day. A 36-hole competition can mean a 12 to 15 hour day, so be forewarned. Starters will be needed and again, if you use two starting tees make sure you have reserves. Ball spotters at known trouble spots can be extremely helpful and it is a good idea to get the committee involved and around the course in an attempt to keep play moving. If they are out there to answer any disputes on the rules make sure that they are sufficiently knowledgeable to do this and that they have a copy of the latest *“Decisions on the Rules of Golf”* with them. It is probably also important for them having means of communication back to your office if they have any major problems. Again, remember it is a long day so have reliefs available, and beware of too much alcohol as committee members have been known to succumb to this at times.

It is also important in an all-day event to have food and beverages easily available to competitors, helpers and spectators. On these sorts of days a locker room attendant can be useful to keep an eye on things and see that plenty of fresh towels, soap etc, are on hand.

Finally, make sure you have a good scoreboard and that you have sufficient helpers to keep it manned and make sure that everybody knows the time of the prize-giving. Usually the Club Captain will present the prizes so he/she will need to be fully briefed on what the procedure is.