



A GUIDE TO RUNNING A PRO-AM

Professional Golfers' Association of New Zealand (Inc)

INTRODUCTION

Pro-Ams, as the name suggests, are golf tournaments in which Professionals and Amateurs are grouped together. This can be in almost any configuration.

The most common is one Professional with a team of three amateurs, although sometimes it is two on two. **Some NZ events** are played with two Professionals and the team of three amateurs.

Pro-Ams:

Are great for the Golf Clubs profile and standing in the community.

The members get a rare opportunity to play alongside Professionals.

Sponsors can get excellent exposure for their services or product.

Financially they can be successful for the Club or a chosen charity.

Create competitive playing opportunities for New Zealand's Professional golfers.

This document is designed to explain some of the proven successful ways in which to structure a Pro-Am event at your course.

They are ideas that have worked elsewhere, but for every new event that is staged some new ideas emerge.

Further information and support can be obtained from

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SPONSORSHIP

Prize money and trophies normally need to be funded through the financial structure of the event. Dependent on the scale of the event, you might also want to include some food and on course refreshments. If you are running an event over more than one day you might consider a dinner on the first evening with a guest speaker and or a charity auction

Prize Money

“Naming Rights” Sponsor. The simplest structure is to firstly find a “Naming Rights” Sponsor. For a one-day event of \$11,000 plus GST prize money this would involve a sum of probably half of the total, preferably \$6000 plus GST. You now need a package that gives this Sponsor value for his involvement. All tournament material will feature his name and logo. This includes the schedule on the NZPGA website www.pga.org.nz and would include all advertising and event reporting prior, during and after the event. They will have the right to place a number of sponsor teams (let’s say 2-3) in the event, and will normally have the right to select their teams’ Professionals. The Clubhouse could be reserved for their on-course signage. This person is your “Platinum” Sponsor.

Individual Hole Sponsors. The eighteen holes can then be “sold” to other sponsors in your community, the benefit to them being the right to advertise on that hole and to put one team each into the event. This gives them the opportunity to entertain specific clients, golfers obviously, on an enjoyable day out.

It should also include any extras, such as the dinner or a cocktail party the day before the event. For a one day event these sponsorships should sell for a minimum of \$650 plus GST. A total excl of GST of \$11700. These people are your “Gold”Sponsors.

Individual Team Sponsors. You will see later in this document that the maximum number of teams for a shotgun start event should be about 30 Along with your Naming Rights Sponsor having 2-3teams, and your Hole Sponsors having 18, you have room for 9 more teams. These can be made up of members or visitors not connected to any sponsorship putting together their own teams. They should sell for \$345 each, netting you \$300 exclusive of any GST. This is for the golf only, no extras. A net total of \$2,700. These three sources have now given you a total of \$20,400 Enough to run a successful one day pro-am, and show a profit.

Remember that you have other considerations, such as extra time and work from the greens staff in preparing the course, and it is reasonable to assume that your club would not only want the exposure but would also like to show a small profit for whatever purpose or use that they may chose.

Prizes need to be purchased from this fund, or sourced by way of further sponsorship arrangements. Further funds can be raised by way of raffles and competition on a par three hole.

TOURNAMENT FORMAT

The tournament format is usually a shotgun start, with one or two fields in the day.

Advantages of a shotgun start are that all players start and finish together, so all are in the clubhouse for prize giving. The PGA regulations state that players in a shotgun start must be present at prizegiving

If the Pro-Am is run for the benefit of a charity, you can charge more to sponsors, raise more funds, and pass a significant sum to charity, with a resulting benefit in publicity both for the tournament and for your club. Note that corporate sponsorship can be tax deductible.

START TIMES & SIZE OF FIELD

SHOTGUN Restricted to a maximum of 30 teams on course (18-hole), which means maximum 30 Professional and 90 amateurs for one start.

With larger Professional fields we can have two shotgun starts or play two Pros with the amateurs.

Play is likely to take up to 5 hours, so two fields' means starts at 7.30 am and around 1.00 pm, but only during Daylight Saving.

DRAW Normally 8 to 10-minute intervals, so first tee time dependent on size of field. Can play in fives, with an increase in start intervals to 15 mins perhaps 2 Pros and 3 Amateurs, but must be team event only for amateurs. Can be a two-tee start morning and afternoon, which would give max field size of around 60 groups. However it is unlikely that you will have this many Professionals. The PGA recommends a shotgun start format for Pro Ams in most instances.

COMPETITION FORMAT

The recommended format for the competition is a Teams event. A Teams event creates a more coherent atmosphere within the playing group, and ensures that all players enjoy their game without feeling under pressure to perform. It speeds up play by enabling a player who can't score to pick up his or her ball, and avoid delaying groups behind. Whether this is scored as Best Ball Nett or Stableford does not really matter, but Stableford is preferred as most amateurs in New Zealand play this form of competition on a regular basis. and are more familiar with the scoring requirements. It is vital for all concerned that the pace of play is monitored and that players are encouraged to maintain their position in the field. The most common format is the best two Stableford scores per hole.

The PGA normally provides an official who will assist with this, and running the tournament as a Teams event rather than individual will help to avoid slow play

COURSE PREPARATION

The green-keeping staff will naturally wish to prepare the course to be at its best for the Pro-Am. While this will involve a degree of manicuring they should be encouraged not to allow rough to grow excessively long.

And although tee placements should follow the pattern recommended by New Zealand Golf in their Golf Club Manual, pin placements should not be severe.

A Pro-Am is supposed to be fun, not a tough test for everyone

The amateurs want to see the Professionals shoot good scores, not be constantly getting into difficulty. Difficult pin placements are also a cause of slow play, and for that reason alone should be avoided.

The reality is that if you try to make your course difficult for the Professionals, you will make it impossible for the Amateurs. Below are the three major guidelines to follow when setting pin positions

- Pin positions must be at least 5 metres from the front edge of the green
- Pin position must be at least 3 metres from any one edge (back, left or right)
- Pin positions must be at least 2 metres from any major slope or green tier

You want them all to have a good time and come back again.

Pin Sheets

Providing pin sheets is an option for your event and the NZPGA National Events Manager can provide a template for you to use.

LOCAL RULES SHEET

Closer to the event, prepare a local rules sheet for the players including; competitions of the day, placing or not, all pertinent local rules, info re drink or food stations, rules officials contact numbers and any other relevant information.

PRIZE MONEY & PRIZES

Prize money for the Professionals is handled by the PGA. When it is passed over to the PGA, Goods and Services Tax must be added, and the PGA will take care of GST payments, and the deduction of Resident Withholding Tax, and account for these to Inland Revenue. In order to qualify for Order of Merit Status the minimum Professional prize money is set at \$11,000 for a one round event (excluding GST).

Prize purses for multiple day and round events are increased by \$11,000 per round. Amateur prizes can often be obtained from sponsors or suppliers. Their value must of course conform to the Rules of Amateur Status, and the current limits applicable in New Zealand can be verified by approaching New Zealand Golf.

HANDICAPS

It is a PGA requirement that all amateurs in an Order of Merit Pro-Am have an official NZG handicap. While exceptional circumstances may sometimes dictate otherwise, the maximum handicap

used should be 24 for men and 30 for women. This means either not accepting entries from higher handicap players, or that a player on a higher handicap must play off the relevant maximum in the tournament. No player will have an actual handicap higher than the limit.

Please discuss the addition of these players with the National Events Manager.

REFEREES & SCORING

Pro-Ams, being essentially fun events, do not normally need much in the way of Rules Referees, although the Professionals, playing for money, will sometimes seek rulings if a Referee is available.

If using referees please print their mobile phone numbers on the local rules sheet for the use of players.

The PGA provides an official to manage the professional aspects of the event. He is also available to assist the club, and will usually monitor play. When there are local members who are qualified referees the PGA encourages their involvement.

AFTER MATCH FUNCTION & PRIZE GIVING

It is important for the spirit of the tournament that the after-match function be held as soon as possible after the last players come off the course. The PGA representative will handle the Professional cards, and is happy to help with the amateur cards, but it is preferable if the club ensures that one or two members are nominated to undertake this role. He will produce a list of the results, and prize money won by each player, shortly after completion of scoring. Normal dress code for the prize-giving is smart casual. If the club has a rule about jacket or tie it is essential that the PGA (and amateur players) be advised of this in the conditions of the tournament, to avoid embarrassment.

NZPGA Professionals will always spend time with their playing partners after the round, and the top three are required to be present for prize-giving.

SPEECH NOTES

The order of play for speakers should be agreed, and an MC - often the Club Captain, or General Manager - be appointed.

It is normal for the PGA official to be asked to speak early on, usually after the Club President or Captain. He will speak on behalf of the Professionals, and ask the representative of the major sponsor if present, or the President or Captain, to present the cheques to the top three Professionals.

The winning Professional will then speak briefly before handing back to the Club for the presentation of amateur prizes.

Prize-giving should ideally be kept as short as possible, and players will tend to lose interest if too many prizes are presented.

This is where Team events are an advantage.

ON COURSE REFRESHMENTS

On course drinks can not only add to the enjoyment of the players, they are often a necessity for health reasons, particularly in warm weather. Golfers tend to dehydrate during the four or five hours they are on the course, and a drinks cart can prevent that. Often the Club or Professional's drink supplier can be persuaded to provide the drinks at little or no cost as a sponsorship. Sausage sizzles are a popular feature at many Pro-Ams. Again, with the appropriate sponsorship these need not be a financial cost to the event. **If you have drinking fountains please mention their location on local rules sheet.**

PUBLICITY/ADVERTISING

Sponsors will only get involved in a tournament if they can see that they will derive benefit. And it is vital that the organiser understands what it is that a potential sponsor does expect from his investment in the tournament. One benefit which most sponsors will want to gain is publicity, and it is important that every effort is made to keep the local media informed, both before and after the tournament. And if the Pro-Am is a multi-round event then daily scores should be provided to the press.

Always make sure that the sponsors' names are used, particularly where you have sold the naming rights. The PGA will publicise a tournament on its website, according appropriate recognition to the sponsors, and results are also posted after the event. Indeed, you may be able to gain additional entries or even sponsorship for your tournament if suitable information is placed on this website, which attracts visits from interested golfers around the country.

AGREEMENT WITH THE PGA

A Pro-Am must be planned in conjunction with the NZPGA. It is the NZPGA which advertises the event to its members, obtains and collates entries, and generally manages the Professional aspects of the event on behalf of the organisers. The NZPGA also ensures that the Professionals conform to the PGA's standards of behaviour, dress etc. Except in exceptional circumstances the NZPGA will only approve one event on any day, and it is important when a Pro-Am is being planned that the date selected is agreed with the NZPGA. This ensures that the event will attract the best Professional field available. The PGA will issue a simple agreement, which covers allocation of the date, and 30 days prior to the event the PGA will send a Tax Invoice for the prize-money to the club/promoter. Payment to the PGA of the prize money plus GST is to be received by electronic transfer 16 days prior to the tournament.

The PGA also takes responsibility for the payment of prize money to the Professionals, and proper accounting of Resident Withholding Tax and GST to Inland Revenue.

CLINICS

The presence of a number of Professionals gives a club the opportunity of offering the amateur players/ juniors a clinic, if time allows, prior to the tournament. The PGA will be happy to discuss the most appropriate form of clinic for your tournament.

TIMETABLE

It is important to allow as much time as possible for the planning and execution of a Pro-Am.

Although these tournaments **can** be arranged in a shorter time frame a minimum of three months should normally be allowed. A twelve month window is more ideal for a first time event.

Having agreed the date with the Club scheduling committee, the first month should be devoted to attracting appropriate sponsors. Two months ahead is the time to advertise the event and to attract the amateurs. One month out all monies and trophies should be collected, and the prize money should be paid to the PGA 16 days before the tournament.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Multiple round events are becoming more popular. They of course do require greater funding but they also keep all of the Professionals in your community for more than one day.

The PGA is continually looking at ways its Professionals can add value at your events, we are looking at such things as involvement with school coaching and nine hole practice ambrose rounds with Gold Sponsors. As you add more to your events, we in turn learn more. We hope that this document has given you a comprehensive understanding of the points to look for when organising a Pro-Am.

If you have any further questions, or would like to discuss any particular aspect of running a tournament, please call the PGA National Events Manager, Geoff Smart on Mobile;0274824920, or e-mail geoff.smart@pga.org.nz

THE NEXT STEP

1. Confirm your wish to host a Pro Am with the National Events Manager.
2. Consider the date options offered. It may take some time to confirm date availability if Legends event, as it must fit with Australia's schedule also.
3. Request an agreement with the PGA of New Zealand. A copy will be sent to you outlining the prize money required and conditions for payment. Please return as soon as possible so that your event can be added to the schedule.
4. Planning will continue with the support and guidance of the PGA's National Events Manager.
5. The PGA will request the conditions of the event form to load on the PGA website. This needs to be ready for when players enter the event, which is 6 weeks prior to the event.