

# Kids Charity Junior Golf Tournament Model

by  
Stephen and Connor Brown



The Tiger Woods Foundation created a Junior Golf Team composed of student athletes selected on the basis of four main criteria; academic success, community service, personal references and golf experience. Applications for the team are accepted each spring and members selected are given exemptions to play in the Callaway Junior World Junior Golf Tournament held in San Diego each July.

Stephen and Connor decided they wanted to try for the Tiger Team but soon found out that many charities will not allow kids under age 13 to for community service so they decided to run their own golf tournaments in order to meet the Tiger Team community service requirement.

Stephen and Connor organized and ran their first tournament on January 9, 2010. The original date in December 2009 was rained out so it had to be rescheduled. Twenty kids played in the tournament and \$400 was raised for donation to the Tiger Woods Learning Center.

They had so much fun with the first tournament that they organized a second one held on February 13, 2010. Thirty two kids played in the second tournament and \$800 was raised for the Red Cross Haiti earthquake relief effort.

Their third tournament was May 30, 2010. They couldn't do one sooner because every weekend was dedicated to competing in Southern California PGA junior golf tournaments. The third tournament was even more successful with 39 kids playing and \$935 raised for donation to the Southern California Golf Foundation Youth on Course program.

So far three tournaments with nearly 100 players and over \$2,100 raised for charity by two boys not yet 12 years old. Stephen and Connor have received recognition for their efforts from all three organizations that benefitted. Their success prompted Stephen and Connor to start thinking of other charities they could help by running more tournaments.

Their next tournament on August 28, 2010 will benefit Canine Castaways in Arcadia Florida. Canine Castaways is where Dennis Walters found his rescue dog Bucky. Bucky is the hit of The Dennis Walters golf show. You can find out more about Dennis on the web and learn more about Bucky too.

Here are the easy steps you need to follow to run your own tournament and raise money for your favorite charity.

## **Before the Tournament**

- **Tell your Mom and Dad what you want to do.** The support of your Mom and Dad is essential for you to be successful. Your Mom and Dad will probably have to spend some of their money to make the tournament successful depending on how much outside support you can attain. And no matter what Mom and Dad will have to do a lot of work for the tournament to be successful.
- **Find a partner or two.** Running a tournament is a lot of fun but it is also a lot of work! You will need some help. Find one or two friends that are just as enthusiastic as you are. You can share the work, the fun and the recognition that will come with being successful.
- **Find a golf course.** The best course option is a 3 par course that is easy enough for beginner kids but challenging enough for more experienced kids. Hopefully it will be close to your house. Arrange a meeting with the golf course manager and explain to him what you are doing. Getting the support of the course manager is essential to the success of your tournament.
- **Caddies.** The Rancho 3 Par golf course Stephen and Connor use allows caddies. We think caddies are really fantastic for tournaments because it offers a chance for the kid to be the boss over their parent. Also the parents can help on the course to make sure scores are kept correctly and things move along at a reasonable pace. Check with the course manager to see if he will let caddies go out. If they don't allow caddies then ask if an adult 'Chaperone' can go with each group. Explain that the main purpose of caddies or chaperones is to keep pace of play moving.
- **Green fees.** When you meet with the manager of the golf course, try to negotiate a discounted green fee. The golf course Stephen and Connor use is a City of Los Angeles course that doesn't charge very much, \$4.50. The manager of the course might be willing to lower the fee or he might know of someone that would help sponsor the cost. In our case Mom and Dad pay for the green fees which even at \$4.50 per kid can be a lot of money. Our third tournament had 39 kids playing which cost \$175.50. Another idea is to have the charity pay for the green fees out of the money they receive. Talk to them about this if you can't find another way to cover the cost.
- **Select a date.** Find a date to run the tournament that works with the golf course and your family obligations. You should plan about 60 days from the day you start planning.
- **Set a starting time.** Most golf courses are the busiest on weekend mornings. The best time to pick is the time that the golf course manager will let you hold the tournament. Most managers will want you to start in the late afternoon so they don't lose money from other paying customers.
- **Make sure players can finish.** When setting a start time you have to make sure you have enough daylight for everyone to finish. You can assume tee times are usually 8 minutes apart. For reference 20 players make 5 groups which means the first tee will be busy for 40 minutes. Play on an average Par 3 course usually takes about 90 minutes. For a group of 20 players, the last group will finish about 2 1/2 hours after the first group tees off.

- **Decide on a charity.** Contact the charity and ask their permission to run the tournament on their behalf and get permission to use their logo in your communications and flyer. Make sure you get an email contact and copy them on any updates you send out about the tournament. Invite them to send a representative to the tournament.
- **Decide on entry fee.** Stephen and Connor charge \$20 for their tournaments. \$20 is low enough that most families can afford yet high enough that you can raise a significant amount for the charity. Mention on the flyer that additional donations are accepted and will be acknowledged on the final email. If you know of a kid that wants to play but their family can't afford the entry fee consider letting them play anyway or ask someone you know to sponsor them. The most important thing is to have kids participate and have fun.
- **Entry Deadline.** Stephen and Connor don't set a deadline for entry but you might want to. The reason they don't set a deadline is because we want as many kids to play and often parents wait till the very last minute. We found that setting a deadline just discourages entries and doesn't help get people signed up early.
- **Decide what divisions are competing.** There are many ways to set up divisions. You can have just one division with boys and girls of all ages together. Or you can have a boys and girls division. Or you can have age based divisions or various combinations. If you have 20 players or less it is best to limit the divisions. The more players you have the more divisions you can create. For Stephen and Connor's tournament with 39 players, they used a boys and girls division where scores were adjusted by the age of the player. The youngest players were 5 years old and had 18 shots deducted from their gross score to determine their competing score. The golf course manager can be of great help here. The main thing is to collect lots of prizes so that many kids have chance to win a prize.
- **Create a flyer.** Make up a colorful flyer with some pictures to advertise your tournament. Make some blank lines for the entry that include name, birthday, phone and email address. Keep it simple. State on the flyer that all checks should be made out in the name of the charity you are supporting.
- **Advertise.** Start telling all your friends at school, church and other places. Take the flyers to the local driving range and hand them out to parents of kids you see. Ask the manager of the golf course if you can post a flyer at the golf course. Get email addresses for people and create a distribution list for your next tournament. Find out if there are any junior golf programs that will tell their kids.
- **Start soliciting prizes.** You want prizes to hand out to the kids at your tournament. Just about any business has potential interest in your tournament. Golf retailers are usually very supportive of tournaments. Restaurants, ice cream stores, car washes etc will often be very willing to back your tournament with items you can use for prizes. The golf course manager might be willing to donate a free foursome or golf lessons. The more prizes you can gather the better. Make sure you get the email address of any business that contributes so you can keep them updated on the tournament. Ask the business if you can post a flyer there to advertise your tournament.
- **Ask a local golf association to donate scoreboards.** Stephen and Connor play tournaments in the Southern California PGA Junior Tour. The SCPGA uses scoreboards for all of their tournaments and has generously donated some for them to use. If you can't find a group to donate you can always make your own scoreboards. Make it a fun family project. In our case Stephen and Connor's sister likes to decorate the scoreboards with flowers and other 'art'. If someone does donate scoreboards make sure you mention them in all the emails you send out. Scoreboards are very important! Kids love seeing their name on the scoreboard even if they didn't shoot a low score.

- **Refreshments.** The course that Stephen and Connor use does not have any sort of food service on site. We bring along some water or fruit juice and maybe some muffins or bagels. Ask the course manager if it is okay to bring some refreshments for the people coming to the tournament.
- **Borrow a big coffee pot.** Assuming the course doesn't sell coffee there is one thing for sure, parents like to drink coffee in the morning! If your parents coffee pot isn't big enough see if you can borrow a big pot from somewhere. Stephen and Connor borrow a pot from their church that makes 50 cups.
- **Confirm as entries received.** As entry forms and checks arrive make sure you send them an email thanking them for entering and telling them that you will keep them updated as the day of the tournament arrives. This can be a form email that you send over and over again. It is a good idea to attach a PDF copy of the flyer to the email because that person might think of someone else that would be interested and they can just forward the email. Add the email addresses to a group so you can communicate efficiently in the future.
- **Tee times.** If you have 20 players or less you don't need to set tee times. Just have everyone arrive at a set time and tee off in the order they check in. If you have more than 20 you should think about setting tee times so that parents don't have to spend a lot of time waiting for their son or daughter to tee off. Work with the golf course manager on this and keep him updated on how many kids are signed up.
- **Fill in scoreboards.** On the evening before the tournament fill in the scoreboards with the player's names and whatever other information you want. This takes too much time to do the day of the tournament. If you have some kids that show up on the day of you can always add them to the bottom. Is it important to print the players names neatly and spell correctly!
- **Check in sheet.** Print out a list of all the entered players on the night before the tournament so you have something to check them in against.
- **Make a checklist of everything you need.** Here is Stephen and Connor's checklist:
  - Camera
  - Sharpie pens
  - Prizes
  - Scoreboards with names printed neatly
  - Check in sheet
  - Scorecards with names printed
  - Extra entry forms for late registrations
  - Umbrella, stand
  - Table, chairs
  - Refreshments and snacks
  - Coffee pot, cream, sugar, spoons
  - Extension cord (for the coffee pot)
- **Rules officials.** Golf has lots of rules and almost nobody knows all the rules. There might have a mens or ladies golf club at the course and some of the members might be willing to act as rules officials for your tournament. The main rule is to be very forgiving on the rules and use the opportunity to teach kids. Most players will not have much experience and you don't want them to have a negative memory because of some crazy rules problem. There are plenty of competitions later on where players will be strictly held to the rules.

- **Scorecards.** Scorecards are different from scoreboards. Scorecards are what the players use to record their score on each hole. Get some scorecards from the golf course and designate one for each player by writing his or her name on the card. Below the player's name write 'Marker' so the person that is keeping score for the person named on the scorecard can also keep their own score. Before the players tee off on the first tee they will exchange scorecards so that each person is holding someone else's scorecard. The marker should write their own name on the card and keep the other player's score and their own score.

## On the Day of the Tournament

- **Get everything in the car.** Use your checklist to make sure you have everything so you don't have to make an extra trip. It is helpful to pack things in the car the night before so you don't forget anything at the last minute.
- **Get to the golf course early.** Arrive at the course about an hour before the start to make sure you have time to set everything up. It takes about 45 minutes for coffee to brew! Stephen and Connor arrive at the golf course an hour before the tournament to set things up.
- **Set up.** Usually there will be a few tables at the course so pick one in a convenient and shady spot for the 'Check In Table' where kids check in as they arrive and 'Scoring Table' where the kids go after playing to report their scores. If you have a refreshment table you can use umbrella to shade or otherwise find shady spot approved by the course manager. If you have a coffee pot you will need a place to plug it in. If you use an extension cord for the pot make sure that the cord is not where people will trip over it.
- **Take lots of pictures.** Ever hear the expression "*a picture is worth a thousand words*"? It is very true and you can make people really remember your tournament by taking lots of pictures and including them in the email you send out after the tournament. Mom and Dad are great picture takers.
- **Hang up the scoreboards.** Find a wall acceptable to the golf course manager where you can hang the scoreboards. Best to do this with some rolled up duct tape stuck to the back of the corners of each board. Make sure it is in a very visible area so people can stand and see them clearly.
- **Check in players.** As the players arrive check them off your list. If you did not set tee times ahead it is a good idea to set up your groups in the order that people arrive. That way you can keep things moving on the tee box without delay. If you have set tee times then you will have to decide whether to let players compete if they are late. We never penalize if a player is late because we consider our tournaments to be 'Fun' and not that serious. If you have set tee times and somebody is late you can always just move another player up.
- **Late registrations.** Stephen and Connor don't have a signup deadline so often people will show up that morning to play. When this happens have extra entry forms for the player to fill out. Since they haven't paid yet make sure you collect their entry fee. Often times they will pay in cash which makes it more difficult to remember later who paid so make sure you make a note. You will also have to make a scorecard for each late entry.
- **Players to the first tee.** When the players are ready to start, make sure they exchange scorecards with another person. That way each person is keeping someone else's score. You should have scorecards ready with each player's name and 'Marker' written on it. The Marker writes the other player's score and their own score on the scorecard. It is helpful if an adult will volunteer to keep a separate

scorecard for all the players. This is also a great time to gather the group and take a photo for your email after the tournament.

- **Maximum strokes.** It is a really good idea to have a maximum stroke rule. Double par usually works well. That way if a player has taken 5 shots on a par 3 hole and they are not yet in the hole, they can pick up their ball and record a six for their score. Many players at your tournament will be nearly beginners and double par keeps the course moving and keeps a beginner from becoming too discouraged.
- **Announce the players on the first tee.** Stephen and Connor split duties at the tournament. Stephen always goes in the first group so he can get back to run the scoring table. Connor always goes in the last group so he can announce each player on the first tee. Believe us that kids love to hear their name announced and have people clapping for them!
- **Record the scores.** One of the organizers should go in the first group so that they can run the scoring table. After players finish they should proceed directly to the scoring table and check and sign their scorecards. After the scores are turned in the scoring official writes the scores on the scoreboards.
- **Decide the final results.** After all of the scores are recorded you have to figure out the final results. The final results depend on the formula you established before the tournament.
- **Hand out prizes.** Now is the really fun part. Seeing the smiles of the kids that won prizes for playing. You have to determine in advance how to allocate prizes but try to get as many as possible so most or all of the kids win a prize. If a kid wins a prize he is almost surely going to come to your next tournament.
- **Cleanup.** The one sure way to not be invited back to the golf course by the manager is to leave a mess. Spend a few minutes checking the area to pick up any trash. Try to leave the course in better shape than you found it. Take the scoreboards down and either keep them or dispose of them. Stephen and Connor keep all their boards.

## After the Tournament

- **Your work is not over quite yet.** After the tournament it is a great idea to send a final email thanking everyone that helped you and all the people that entered. You can paste in the score results and add a link to the pictures you took after you upload them to a photo site. Thank the sponsors that supported you and ask people to support their businesses. And write a personal note of thanks to the manager of the golf course thanking him for hosting your tournament. This note should be mailed, not emailed! Try to do this right away!
- **Donation presentation.** This part is really fun. You get to take all the money you collected to the charity and make a presentation. You should set an appointment with the charity to do this so they are prepared to meet you. Upon your arrival most likely you will be treated like a VIP. Stephen and Connor have had amazing things happen. The Red Cross gave them an award and took pictures. The SCGA gave them a tour of their whole facility and put a story about them on their website. It is important that you donate all of the money received. Give the charity an accounting of the money spent and received.
- **Start planning your next tournament.** If you are like Stephen and Connor you will be having so much fun you'll want to start planning another tournament before you finish your first one. Do a good job on your first one and lots of people will want to come to your future events. Work hard and you will make a positive impact on your community, make lots of new friends and learn a tremendous amount.

**Note to Mom and Dad.** Almost certainly you will have to spend some money to help your son or daughter create a golf tournament. How much you have to spend can be reduced by diligent soliciting by the kids running the tournament. Look at whatever you spend as charitable giving that directly benefits your own kids. Your son or daughter will get an amazing education about how to organize and run a small business. All of the components are there. The recognition and learning experience they receive will far outweigh any out of pocket costs you incur.

We have been amazed by how generous people and businesses have been even starting with the first tournament. The first tournament is the hardest because of the learning curve involved and because the concept will be untested. With each tournament things get easier and you can make small improvements. This guide is just that, a guide. The concept can be changed however your kids and you want. The important thing is to HAVE FUN!!! If you ever need help or have a question you can email [StephenBrownGolf@yahoo.com](mailto:StephenBrownGolf@yahoo.com) or [TortugaGolf@yahoo.com](mailto:TortugaGolf@yahoo.com) and Stephen and Connor will be glad to help you out.



**Stephen and Connor Brown May 30, 2010**

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that was easy: