

Charity Golf Tournaments Are Not About You

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If you can afford to play golf, you can afford to help others. I get it. Why should you care about strangers? It's not about strangers; it's about doing what's right. If the PGA Tour can give back tens of millions of dollars annually to local charities, why can't we do the same? I do. You can too.

There are so many good causes around our community and many have golf tournaments where you

can participate and give back to those who need assistance. Audi sponsors a Best Buddies tournament every year in which I participate. This is an organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Other great causes include Shepherd's Hope which provides

healthcare for those with no insurance, the Florida Hospital Foundation has multiple tournaments that support so many causes for people in need that I can't list them all. How do I know all this? Because I am involved.

I chair the Cancer Board for Florida Hospital and raise money for numerous causes that help people with cancer. From free mammograms to children's bone marrow transplants, research, and children's cancer palliative care. Probably 30% of my professional time is dedicated to helping fight cancer. If I can do that, you can spend six hours at a charity golf tournament where you can sandbag your handicap, play

golf, eat, maybe win an award, contribute to a silent auction and do something worthwhile. Take a day off from playing golf at your own club, replaying every shot with your buddies and downing a bunch of alcohol. If you can afford a golf membership, you can afford participating in a charity golf tournament. It's not about you this time. It's about doing for others.

I was at Heathrow Country Club last year playing golf with three others in an effort to gain some cancer pledges for the Florida Hospital Cancer Institute. The foursome was made up of me, a Florida Hospital Foundation Executive, a retired doctor (whose wife had cancer) and a college golf coach who had a friend with throat cancer that lived in Hilton Head, SC. The friend in Hilton Head had no insurance and no hospital in Hilton Head would treat her because of that. After some conversations with my Florida Hospital Foundation friends (and they are dear), the Florida Hospital Cancer Institute treated her with chemotherapy and radiation and six doctors donated their time for free. Today she is in remission. A life saved through giving back. By the way, this cancer patient's daughter is an aspiring professional golfer and has pledged her first tournament winnings back to the Florida Hospital Foundation for saving her mother's life. FYI; the retired doctor did not put his hand in his pocket for a cancer pledge. Unbelievable cheap ass.

If this brings a tear to your eyes, it should. It does mine every time I think about being at the right place at the right time. I never met this woman; a stranger in need. This woman is living today because of the generosity of others more fortunate than her.

There are so many worthwhile causes out there. Pick one that you relate to and play in their tournament. It's not about you winning; it's about doing something you like to do and helping others along the way. Remember, all donations are tax deductible if you need it. 🏌️

Ed Gilbert & playing partner Ron Thompson at the Audi-Best Buddies golf tournament

