

Hump Day Bowlers – 9-Pin Tournaments

TYPE - Determine the type of 9-Pin tournament – fundraiser? Charity? Just-for-fun? There are many types of bowling tournaments also. If this is charity/fundraiser – select a charity and solicit participation from that organization. They can/should contribute to the event in many ways. Maybe you can leverage a local group to help support your cause? Get some sports celebrities at your event?

EVENT – What type of event will you have and what extras will you be adding to the day? First, determine the type of bowling and the format. You're having a 9-pin Tourney. There are many other bowling extras that are typical around the country. 50-50 Strike-Pots – sell tickets for a dollar amount. 50% of the pot goes to the winning ticket for bowling a strike. Raffle Prizes – sell tickets for a dollar amount. Winning tickets get various prizes. Jell-O Shots – sell Jell-O Shots for a dollar amount – don't forget the whipped cream. Various other contests as Perfect 300 Pot, Bedroom Buddies, etc. – There's a plethora of random events you can sell an entry for a dollar amount to make it exciting and help increase the monies raised.

DATE - Lock-down a date – well in advance you need to contact bowling alley to lock the date. Watch out for conflicting dates with sports events or other things going on the date. Also negotiate the cost of bowling. That can depend on the number of participants and whether or not there is food and beverage available at the lanes they can make money on.

COST – What will we charge participants? Depends on what you are being charged from the alley – see above. Determine what you are trying to accomplish. Are you looking to make money? Do you have a prize fund? Are you trying to raise funds for some type of charity? Do you have any other costs you need to consider?

PROMOTION – Get the date out to everyone! Use Social Media avenues, flyers in the bowling alley, email blasts, flyers in local businesses, flyers/emails to participants' work locations, etc. As soon as possible, as early as possible – the more people that know about it, the more people will show up. Try to leverage other bowlers at the same alley – they love to bowl in local, inexpensive tournaments. If you're doing this within a league – remember to promote to them also. They need to participate and spread the word.

PROMOTION² – Did I mention letting everyone know about your event? You got the message out. Get the message out again. And again. And again. Constant reminders will keep the event in everyone's mind. Change up your flyers/advertisements. Make sure those involved have information they can send out at work/family/etc. Small adjustments will make your info look fresh.

FUNDRAISING – If you're running fundraising tournament, look to others to provide cash or prizes to help raise money. Use a letter to local businesses letting them know the event is going on, who is benefitting, and how many local people could be participating. It could be a win-win for them. And make sure that you promote any business that donates anything. Easy to do announcements/flyer info giving those companies credit that donate. Involve those league members to get funds/prizes for donations. Have them check with their own employers. Some companies may donate corporate items or funds, but may also have matching charity funds that they will match. Also the alley is a great place to get prizes – free bowling tickets don't cost them anything. Do they have a Pro Shop? Maybe they have something to donate.

HELP – Get your Help Flyer out to the participants/bowlers that will be involved. Again – reminders are important. Get a letter out to local businesses. They have a lot of potential and also can benefit – and don't forget to promise their business being promoted. Figure out how many “workers” you need to run your event. Recommendation – get twice as many volunteer helpers as you determine worker slots. You will usually have at least half not show up or cancel at the last minute. You'll need the following positions, at least: registration people, selling tickets for items (Raffle tickets, 50-50 tickets, etc.), Jell-O Shots, helping raffle prize table, helping with scoring if needed, helping announce/monitor. There are numerous areas that can benefit from additional helpers. Leverage those involved and their children (age appropriate), other family/friends that may not be bowlers but willing to help a good cause – they are the best because they won't bowl and you won't lose a potential bowler to just helping out. The number of helpers is dependent on the number of bowlers.

PRIZES – Are you going to award prizes or cash to top bowlers? Determine ahead of time. It can be based on the number of bowlers and available funds. This, although maybe not much, will help bring in league bowlers to participant. See the awards spreadsheet for help with prize funds based on number of bowlers.

LOGISTICS – Figure out what can be done ahead of time and what may have to happen the day of event. Put out registration flyers early. If you are able, have them register at your website. If not that, have them turn in their registration forms to the bowling alley. Collect them frequently. You can also let them know they don't need to pay in advance. As many people that have signed up in advance, the alley can get that info entered into the scoring system ahead of time. Advertising an event to start at 1PM but starts 45 minutes late, will kill you the next time you try to have an event.

APPRECIATION – Make every bowler and supporter feel like they were appreciated and the event would have been nothing without them. Welcome banners, thank-you banners, thank-you cards, informational notes about the event are all great ideas. Go buy some little candies and spread them around the lanes. You don't have to spend a lot of money. Remember if they didn't show – you wouldn't have an event.

CHARITIES – If you are holding a tournament that benefits a charity, you'll need a few things to help increase their donation. Have a separate direct charity donation bucket. If it's possible, have tax-deductible receipts that donators can take with them. Have info around for everyone telling them about the charity. It could be flyers, banners, charity information stands. Get the word out about your charity.

DAY OF EVENT – Arrive early. At this point, you should have everything contained in 2 shopping bags at most you need the day of event. Some bowlers are geeks. They arrive 2 hours before slotted time. If you need items from the alley, email or call them the day before to have those items ready. Set up your registration tables. Get your welcome banners posted. Get your raffle prize table set up. NOTE: Separate your registration table from your raffle/50-50 ticket sales from your raffle prize table. Having them all together at the front seems to create a bottleneck.

DURING EVENT – Keep the pace going. Have an emcee or spokesperson. Period announcements about the event, the charity, raffle prize and ticket sales can all help increase participation from everyone. Can you have some fun music during the event? You will have some bowlers faster than others. Determine if you have raffle prizes or bowling awards to hand out after the event. Make sure those done early have a reason to stick around – or at least buy another raffle ticket. If you have raffle prizes, sometimes

it might be worthwhile to raffle some of them off during the event instead of waiting until everyone's done.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU – As you wind down your event, please make sure to thank all those that participated, were involve, donated or just showed up and supported bowlers. Little thank-you cards spread around the alley, banners thanking everyone that participated, or just a little token of appreciation would be welcomed. If you are handing out raffle prizes and/or bowler awards after the event – be quick and speedy. At this point, most people want to get going home. Let everyone know that scores will be posted for everyone at???? And if you have prizes or monies coming, the alley front desk will be holding that.

Running a bowling tournament is actually easy. The hard parts are getting participation from those involved. I'll have a reference list of those files that I've used in the past. I actually now walk into the alley with 2 shopping bags (not even full) of everything I need to run a tournament. Good planning, Good promotion and Good participation will make your event a success.