

# **CAPTAINS FOR CHARITY**

## **Increasing your committee:**

George Kelley had a problem. When hosting charity events at Stevinson Ranch, he and his staff were slowly being siphoned from their core responsibilities at the course to help with mundane task of working phones to round out the tournament's playing field.

Considering the southern California course does close to 40 charity events each year, the headaches were stacking up. Fast. "The biggest challenge any charity golf tournament has is filling the field," Kelley says. "Having been on both sides of this issue, you end up spending a lot of time that could be used to solicit raffle prizes, auction items and other things that bring the course money trying to get people to fill spaces—which is all very time-consuming."

Time, as the saying goes, is money, so Kelley developed the "Captains for Charity" program to distribute the responsibility of filling the tournament. The concept is simple: get other people to do the legwork. For example, if a group is planning a 120-person event, Kelley asks the tournament coordinator to find 30 people who'll serve as "captains." The captains, in turn, are asked to commit to fielding a foursome, selling a \$100 tee sign and obtaining an auction item or raffle prize. "Right out of the box, you've got the tournament sold out, 30 tee signs at \$100, which brings \$3,000 to the charity, and you've got 30 raffle items," Kelley notes. In exchange for their help, captains are recognized the day of the tournament, and receive \$20 worth of raffle tickets and a two-for-one chip for golf at Stevinson Ranch. The course also hosts a "captains' luncheon" three to six months prior to the tournament, where captains meet, have lunch and play a round of golf. Meanwhile, either the tournament chairman or a course representative takes time to outline their responsibilities as captains. Rates are reduced by 50 percent for each player, and the charity picks up the tab when presented the final bill for the tournament.

Ironically, Kelley got the captains idea from the most unlikely of sources: a customer. "I was in the golf shop one day, and struck up a conversation with a guy. He said he was out here for a captains' event. It was an idea he just came up with himself as a way to get more people involved and help sell out his tournament." Kelley tweaked the concept by developing a flyer that details the captains' responsibilities, and creating a letter the tournament chairperson can customize and use to solicit captains. Cost, from the course's standpoint, is virtually non-existent.