

# Sponsorship Playbook



This playbook is a step-by-step guide to creating, selling, and executing sponsorships. It is intended to support a variety of sizes of tournaments, from smaller local charity events to APTA Tour and National events.

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### **Background: What is sponsorship and why does it exist?**

Sponsorship is an exchange of value between your tournament and a brand (or donating entity). The sponsor provides critical operational resources in the form of cash or in-kind contributions (product, balls, beverages, etc.). Your tournament provides benefits to the sponsor in the form of **brand exposure to a highly valuable platform tennis audience**.

Sponsors choose to support your tournament because it aligns with their target audience and brand values, and provides the opportunity to generate brand awareness and to create qualified leads. A well-executed sponsorship delivers a return on investment, while enhancing the tournament experience for players and fans alike.

In addition to these marketing-driven motivations, **some sponsors may support the tournament out of a personal connection to the event or its organizers**, or as a way to give back to their club or platform tennis community. Others may value the opportunity to show support for a cause they care about, or to participate in the tournament's VIP experiences and relationship building opportunities.

## Step 1: Determining Sellable Sponsor Benefits

For your tournament, you'll start with determining what benefits you can offer your sponsors, and accordingly create "packages" at different tiers, or price points. We've identified 3 categories of sellable sponsorship assets found at most events:

1. **Print Media.** Examples typically include:

- Welcome signage, on-site banners
- On court snowboard banners
- Posters or flyers distributed to local participating or association member clubs
- **For full specs and benefit break out, see [A - Print Media Specifications](#) ([LINK](#))**

2. **Digital Media.** Examples typically include:

- Logo placement on the APTA Registration page
- Commentator acknowledgement at the start of each streamed match
- 30 second commercial played a minimum of 1x per match
- Content on social media, websites, applications, and other online platforms. **For full specs and benefit break out, see [B - Digital Media Specifications](#) ([LINK](#))**

3. **Sponsor Experience Benefits.** Examples we've seen at past events include:

- Food & Beverage access or service for sponsors and their guests
- Tournament favors
- Reserved seating, reserved parking
- Hosting, or access to, a VIP or Pro/Am event
- **Creative ideas, specific to a site and event.**

Once you've determined what benefits are available to sponsors, you'll create sponsorship tiers that break out what benefits are included at what levels of financial support. This is covered at length in the following section.

## Step 2: Pricing Sponsorship Levels

After you've established what benefits are available, the next step is to price out your sponsorship product.

Generally speaking, a sponsorship is worth whatever a sponsor is willing to pay for it. The sky's the limit.

When pricing out the sponsorship product, it's critical to bear in mind the overall operational budget and funding: **How much do you need to raise in sponsorships, to fund your overall operation?** Be sure to build the cost of sponsor benefits, such as lunches, dinners, and favors into your budget.

This will drive the sponsorship tiers you establish, as well as your overall fundraising goals. Communicate your goals clearly to your committee, so there's ample opportunity to flag if operating budgets are misaligned with sponsorship (and otherwise fundraising) efforts.

Your audience size will play a role in how you price your sponsorships. The larger the audience, the easier it is to garner higher sponsorship \$ values.

The APTA has created a sponsor grid template **C - Sponsor Benefits Template** ([LINK](#)), along with two sample layouts demonstrating how the template can be used. Additionally, a modified "real life" sponsorship product, based on the template, is also provided for reference.

**Example 1** is completed for a large event (with live streaming)

**Example 2** is completed for a small event (without live streaming)

**Example 3** is derived from the Sponsor Benefits Template, and represents an actual, end sponsorship product. This is meant to show how the template can be built into a final sponsorship product, thoughtfully customized to your own tournament (full sales document for this example can be found **D - Example Sponsor Sales Deck - Large Tournament: Nationals 2025** ([LINK](#)))

Use these examples as guides to create your own sponsor levels, pricing, benefits, and tracking.

# Sponsorship Playbook

## Example 1: Larger event (with live streaming)

"TOURNAMENT NAME"						
		GREEN Sponsor	YELLOW Sponsor	RED Sponsor	BROWN Sponsor	BLACK Sponsor
<b>Sponsor Benefit Options By Level</b>	<b>Max # available to sell per tournament</b>	\$25,000	\$15,000	\$7,500	\$3,000	\$1,000
<b>Digital Media:</b>						
Logo displayed on Registration page for every draw	Unlimited	Priority placement	Priority placement	Priority placement	Tournament Sponsor area	Tournament Sponsor area
Logo displayed & Sponsor Name read by APTA Commentators at beginning of each Live Stream broadcast	Unlimited	X	X	X	X	X
Tag Line included with opening sponsor name at beginning of each Live Stream broadcast	Flexible, depending on overall # of sponsors	X	X	X	X	
15 second Live Read 1x per match	2	X				
30 second Commercial played at least 1x during each Live Stream Match	2		X			
In-Person Interview during Men's Final	1					
In-Person Interview during Women's Final	1					
THE FOLLOWING MUST BE APPROVED BY APTA PRIOR TO SALE CLOSE						
Live Stream Instant Replay Naming	1		X			
Live Stream Logo on Primary Court under National Sponsors	1-2	X				
Live Stream Logo on Secondary Court under National Sponsors	1-2					
APTA Play of the Week naming - social media post only	1-2					
<b>Print Media:</b>						
Sponsor Banner placement on Tournament Grounds	# determined by tournament	# banner, max 3'x5'	# banner, max 3'x5'	# banner(s), max 3'x5'	# banner(s), max 3'x5'	# banner(s), max 2'x4'
Logo featured on promotional Tournament Flyers	# determined by tournament	X	X	X	X	X
Snowboard banners behind baseline (per court)	6 spots, 3 boards per baseline	X	X	X		
Snowboard banners along sidelines (per court)	16 spots, 8 per sideline				X	X
Logo on Tournament Favor (+ cost of favor)	1-2					
<b>Custom Experiences:</b>						
Complimentary Saturday Lunch	# Guests	10	10	7	2	2
Complimentary Saturday Dinner	# Guests	10	10	2	0	0
Complimentary Beer & Wine	# Guests	10	10	2	0	0
Sponsor Favor	# Guests	0	0	0	0	0
Reserved Courtside Seating	Unlimited	0	0	0		
Access to VIP Tent	Unlimited	0	0	0	0	0
Option for Onsite Sponsor Tent	Limited by available area	X	X	X		
Trophy Presentation to Men's or Women's Winners	1					
Trophy Presentation to Men's or Women's Winners	1					
Option to host Private Pro/Am Evening of Paddle (event costs covered by sponsor)	1			12 - 16 people		
Access to Tournament Pro/Am Event	16-20			12 - 16 people		

# Sponsorship Playbook

## Example 2: Smaller event (without live streaming)

"Tournament Name"				
		BLUE Sponsor	YELLOW Sponsor	GREEN Sponsor
Sponsor Benefit Options By Level	Max # available to sell per tournament	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$500
Digital Media				
Logo displayed on Registration page for every draw	Unlimited	X	X	X
Print Media:				
Sponsor Banner placement on Tournament Grounds	# determined by tournament	# banner(s), max 3'x5'	# banner(s), max 3'x5'	# banner(s), max 2'x4'
Logo featured on promotional Tournament Flyers	# determined by tournament	X	X	X
Snowboard banners behind baseline (per court)	6 spots, 3 boards per baseline	X	X	
Snowboard banners along sidelines (per court)	16 spots, 8 per sideline	X	X	X
Logo on Tournament Favor (+ cost of favor)	1-2	X	X	
Custom Experiences:				
Complimentary Saturday Lunch	# Guests	5	2	2
Complimentary Saturday Dinner	# Guests	2	0	0
Complimentary Beer & Wine	# Guests	2	0	0
Sponsor Favor	# Guests	0	0	0
Reserved Courtside Seating	Unlimited	5		
Access to VIP Tent	Unlimited	YES	YES	YES
Option for Onsite Sponsor Tent	Limited by available area	X	X	X
Trophy Presentation to Men's or Women's Winners	1	WOMEN'S		
Trophy Presentation to Men's or Women's Winners	1		MEN'S	
Option to host Private Pro/Am Evening of Paddle (event costs covered by sponsor)	1			
Access to Tournament Pro/Am Event	16-20			

# Sponsorship Playbook



## Example 3: 2025 Nationals Actual “Go to Market” Sponsorship Grid ~5,000 attendees

MEDIA & BRANDING	SPONSORSHIP LEVELS			
	PRESENTING \$50K	GOLD \$25K	SILVER \$12.5K	CHAMPION \$5k
High Impact Logo Banner in High Traffic Area (Custom, Collaborative)	X			
Branded "(Sponsor) Shot of the Match" type message on Livestream	X			
Livestream Media Mentions "Thank you to..." plus quick 5-10 second ad plug (1x/set)	X			
Livestream Media Mentions "Thank you to..." (1x/match)	X	X		
Exclusive Banner/Logo Outside Court Signage - "Court 1 -*LOGO*"	X	X		
Logo on Event Webpage	X	X		
10 x 10 sponsor/activation tent in "Paddle Village"	X	X		
"Snowboard Banner" on a Livestream Court	X	X	X	
Logo on Paddle Village Welcome Banner	X	X	X	
Logo Placement in Clubhouse Entry/Tabletop Signage (TBD)	X	X	X	X
SPONSOR VIP BENEFITS				
# of VIP Passes	8	6	4	2
Pro-AM Play	X			
Participation in Trophy Presentation	X			
Player Party Participation	X	X	X	X
VIP Parking	X	X	X	X
VIP Food & Beverage	X	X	X	X
VIP Gift Bag	X	X	X	X
VIP Seating	X	X	X	X

## Step 3: Selling Your Sponsorships

In order of recommended priority, sources of leads include:

1. **Your Tournament Committee** – friends and acquaintances of committee members who are local business owners, or part of larger corporate entities and have the ability to allocate marketing or charity dollars.
2. **The Host Club** – host club members that are keen to showcase their brand to their friends and fellow members, support their home club (and Director of Racquets), and otherwise support the paddle community. Host club membership has a vested interest in their club executing a memorable event.
3. **The Local Paddle Community** – most often your local league. With your outreach, the local paddle community gains a sense of camaraderie and pride from being associated with a successful event in their league or area. Coordinating a “blast” email campaign with your local league is the most comprehensive way of reaching this audience.
4. **Cold Calling Specific Industries** – businesses or groups with customers aligned with the APTA audience. The APTA audience “indexes” very high for household income, education, and propensity to spend on high priced or professional items, compared to the general consumer base. As such, target industries include:
  - Wealth Management, Finance, Banking companies
  - Medical, including Orthopedics, Physical Therapy, Hospital Systems
  - High-end Auto Dealerships
  - Luxury Real Estate Agents, Rentals, or Sales Groups
  - Insurance, Accounting, Consulting, Business to Business Companies
  - Racquets, Golf, High-end Sporting Equipment and Apparel Companies

Next, you’ll need to prepare your **Sales Pitch Deck** for presenting sponsorship opportunities to prospects. This may also serve as a “leave behind” or emailable pricing document to prospects.

This document should live and breathe the excitement of your tournament, and inspire sponsor prospects to want to take part. It should lead with the “reasons to believe” including what makes the tournament so great, some facts and figures about the audience, the history, and what makes your tournament distinctive among a host of sponsorship opportunities that a professional marketer is evaluating.

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The creative “look and feel” of this deck should sync up with the overall branding of your event (and this may be the first instance of considering the creative look & feel for your overall tournament, even though months away).

The Sales Pitch Deck should be highly specific to your tournament, including branding (color scheme/logos), photography, and unique sponsorship offerings. The deck should close with the sponsorship product grid (previous section) that highlights what is available to sponsors and at what investment levels.

Decks, when used for pitches, should lean on imagery (minimal use of copy/words) to support the storytelling of the pitch, and why a sponsor prospect wouldn’t want to miss out.

The APTA has developed several resources to support these efforts:

2025 APTA National Championships @ Philadelphia Cricket:

**D - Example Sponship Sales Deck - Large Tournament: Nationals 2025** ([LINK](#))

Working Powerpoint files are available to you as a starting point:

**E - PowerPoint Starter Slides for Pitch Deck** ([LINK](#))

Reminder, for style guide and “working” layered Adobe art files from signage:

**F - Production Files & Style Guide Best Practices** ([LINK](#))

## Step 4: Executing a Sponsorship Agreement

It is highly recommended that each sponsorship agreement be executed in writing to avoid confusion and miscommunication. The APTA has prepared a document with boilerplate language, which should be amended to fit your event and reviewed by legal resources supporting your team. See **G - Sponsorship Contract** ([LINK](#))

Be prepared to answer the following questions:

### **How should sponsors make their sponsorship payment?**

Typically this would be a check made payable to the host club, local league, or other organization that is willing to act as the “bank” for your tournament.

Be advised, if your sponsor requires their funding be paid to a non-profit organization for tax purposes, know whether your organization meets this requirement.

### **When should sponsors make their payment?**

Tournaments are encouraged to receive sponsor funds as quickly as possible. The timing of payment is typically well before the tournament, to ensure funds are available to pay invoices as costs are incurred, and/or pay prize money at the conclusion of the event.

## Step 5: Tracking & Executing Sponsorships

Tracking sponsor entitlements and benefits is crucial to the executional phase of your tournament. **Being “buttoned up” with tracking your sponsorships, will help determine a number of steps to follow:**

- What brands will be included on welcome signage?
- What print signs need to be developed, and how many?
- What do we need to provide to the APTA, for digital sponsorship execution?
- How many VIPs will be attending, and how do we deliver?

To help effectively manage your sponsors, entitlements, and benefits, the APTA has created a sample sponsorship tracking spreadsheet: **See H - Sponsorship Tracking Spreadsheet** ([LINK](#))

You may find it most useful to have the digital media and print media resources handy when completing this sheet.

Refer closely to print media **A - Print Media Specifications** ([LINK](#)) and **B - Digital Media Specifications** ([LINK](#)), to help complete.

Reminder, digital media content is subject to the approval of the APTA and must be received by the APTA at least 2 weeks prior to your event.

## Step 6: Creative Execution of Signage & Tournament Assets

With sponsors locked in and signage and site plans set, creative execution will become a focus. Many of your signs, like snowboard banners and tournament homepage, may require only simple logos.

But for more art-intensive signage and sponsor assets, your tournament “branding” or overall look & feel, **should be centered around a logo as the key graphic**. Logos should be **ownable, simple, and repeatable**.

And in the context of a tournament, a logo should feature a memorable key attribute, like an iconic graphic of the host city, or a clever inclusion of the host club logo.



Your logo will serve as the visual asset upon which all “downstream” visual assets are based. After your logo is set and finalized, refer to our Resource Document that provides example production files as a starting point for graphic designers, as well as **simple best practices for committees to follow for a consistent look & feel** across all tournament signage and assets. **F - Production Files & Style Guide Best Practices** ([LINK](#))

## Step 7: Sponsor Engagement During & After Tournament

It's essential your sponsors feel valued and well-supported throughout the event. Several key actions during the tournament will help ensure sponsors choose to renew their support, year after year.

- **Facilitate Introductions:** Actively introduce sponsors to tournament leadership, APTA representatives, players, and other sponsors. Remember, tournaments are powerful networking opportunities - your role is to foster connections and help sponsors engage meaningfully with the community.
- **Capture Photos:** Take photos of all sponsor-related assets, including signage, snowboards, tents, table cards, and more. Documenting these visuals not only helps demonstrate value to sponsors, but also enhances your sales package and promotional materials for future sponsorship efforts.

For tournaments that are part of the annual APTA Tour, **sponsor renewal** efforts should begin the moment the event kicks off.

### Post-Event Follow-Up:

After the tournament, promptly send your sponsors:

- A thank-you email or handwritten note
  - Include a selection of event photos showcasing their brand presence, whether signage or otherwise.
  - If applicable, include a link to the live streamed YouTube video playlist, especially if they were a title sponsor with a commercial spot.

The goal is to reinforce the value of their participation, whether through brand exposure, quality leads, or meaningful conversations. While doing so, aim to spark ideas for how they can further engage or elevate their involvement in the coming year.