

# “Anatomy of a Tournament”

Having just finished the Inaugural Joseph A. Coppola Sr. Memorial Sarasota Pro-Am Racquetball Championships I would like to say thank you to everyone involved and share my experience with all of you who also love the greatest sport on earth. The key ingredients for the event's success appear to be the following; a cohesive tournament committee, proper planning and execution, providing a quality product for the players, and some luck!! I was blessed with four people who worked very hard to keep the event on time, the players needs met, and who never forgot what the tournament was really about, that being raising funds for Florida's homeless population and honoring my Father's memory. My sincerest thanks to my Mother, Teresa Coppola, Randy Forrest, Jeff Eckhouse, Joe Dorner and Eric Foecking!! I began working on this event in February of this year, and thanks to many wonderful people and sponsors, especially Marty Hogan, Scott Hirsch, Brian Pointelin, and Scott Olson, we were able to plan and execute a quality and fun event. Many people and businesses donated their time, energy, goods, services and funds to our worthy cause and made it possible for us to promote racquetball in Southwest Florida in a fashion that we can all be proud of, to all of you I'm extremely grateful.

There appears to be four key elements to obtaining the needed support and sponsorship for a successful event, and lets call them the four P's 1) Patience, 2) Persistence, 3) A Passion for what you are doing and 4) And finally Proficiency with the tasks at hand. Patience is an absolute requirement as you have to rely on the many participants and sponsors to complete their piece of the puzzle in a time that works for them, which is often in conflict with what you are trying to accomplish. Keeping a diary of events this year will help me to better coordinate the events and the sponsors needs next season. Persistence is also necessary as in my experience for every one sponsor I obtained 20+ more said no, and the one sponsor that did commit did so only after several well prepared efforts. It was a learning process initially to develop the right approach to sell the idea and your passion for it. Speaking of passion it is my belief that without a passion for what you are doing the chances of success are limited. I had two passions for this event, the first is to honor my

Father's memory in a dignified and positive way, the second is to promote the mission of The Salvation Army who tirelessly serves the needs of the less fortunate in our communities. These two passions are what motivated me to overcome all the obstacles I encountered, and to put on a successful event. They were also very instrumental in bringing many sponsors on board as I was able to share my passion with them. Finally I had to become quite proficient at multitasking to be able to pull this event off. It has been and will continue to be a learning process that continues to evolve and grow. Trial and error were the norm in the beginning. Like anything else after you perform the task a few times you get more proficient at it. Before I forget I was also very lucky and the event was blessed with many kindhearted volunteers !!

I would also like to take a minute and discuss some areas of concern for any Tournament Director. There are many challenges to hosting a successful event all of which can be overcome with the four P's. Some concerns you can expect despite your best efforts to minimize them are late entries, difficult start time requests, scheduling conflicts, slow play, players arriving late for their matches, a shortage of referees, poor sportsmanship, players that don't want to pay their entry fees or join the USRA, and poor communication. Along with the four P's I frequently put myself in their shoes, which was easy to do as a fellow player, and I found that all challenges can be and are resolved in a manner that all parties can accept and be comfortable with. Knowing that these things will take place makes it easier to plan your event with allowances for them built in, again the event diary was very helpful. Having reasonable expectations for your event is also very important. Lastly having clearly defined goals for your event makes the planning and execution process of your event much easier to manage.

To all the players who attended, you have my utmost respect and sincerest thanks for making it possible for us to promote the sport, to showcase top notch competition and to help those less fortunate than us in the community. It was my pleasure being your host for the weekend !! Thanks to all of you, my Mother and I were able to honor my Father's memory in a way that he would have loved !! We were blessed with an event that exceeded our expectations at the Salvation Army and we look forward to having you all back next year. We will

work very hard to ensure that the 2005 Joseph A. Coppola Sr. Memorial Sarasota Pro-Am Racquetball Championships are thoroughly enjoyed by all! God bless.

Sincerely,  
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