



# TEE Tournament

TRAINING • EXPOSURE • EXPERIENCE

## NATIONAL VETERANS TEE TOURNAMENT

### History

The National Veterans TEE Tournament sprang to life as the brainchild of several employees of the Iowa City Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center and two visually impaired veterans from Iowa who were attending the 1993 National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. These visionaries consulted and the event was named “The TEE Tournament,” as an acronym that stands for Training, Exposure and Experience. The goal of the event is to appeal to visually impaired veterans, as well as those who are amputees or use wheelchairs for mobility. The range of golfing experience ranges from those who have never golfed to those who were active golfers.

The first TEE Tournament was held in June 1994 in Nauvoo, Illinois, at the Great River Bend Golf Course. At this inaugural event, there were 36 legally blind veterans from six Midwestern states. In 1995, the event was moved to the Iowa City area and has been held there ever since. The Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) and VA became co-sponsors of the TEE Tournament in 1996. In its early years, the family of Jerry Monroe, a former participant, made a significant donation to the BVA that helped fund the tournament. In his honor, the name of the overall winner of each year’s

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Hosted by the Iowa City VA Medical Center

Department of Veterans Affairs



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Tournament is inscribed on the trophy donated by the Monroe family, which sits at BVA Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Three awards have been established over the years and are presented annually. The Wayne Earle/Hampton Hill Award is presented to the participant who best exemplifies the spirit of the event. The award is named for two participants who attended the first five TEE Tournaments and who passed away after the 1998 event.

The Volunteer Award is presented to an outstanding volunteer for their significant support to the event. In memory of Vonnie Gould, a volunteer who helped in the early organization of the event, the award is presented at the Closing Ceremony. The Tom Heitzman Golf Buddy Award was created in 2003 as a memorial to this VA employee and long-time volunteer. It is presented to the person who performs an exceptional job as a golf buddy to a blinded golfer at the annual event.

The TEE Tournament has grown to include four teams at four courses – Lake McBride Golf Course in Solon; Elks Lodge and Golf Course in Iowa City; Blue Top Golf Course in Riverside; and Quail Creek Golf Course in North Liberty. Instructors from the National Amputee Golf Association provide golf clinics for the participants at the driving range at Quail Creek Golf Course. Other activities include an Opening Reception,



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horseshoes, bowling, casino night and an awards banquet to close out the Tournament. For veterans from coast to coast, this event continues to grow in popularity and involvement each year.

In 2006, the Tournament added a new activity, Midnight Shoers, a horseshoe event held in the wee hours of the morning. It was met with great enthusiasm and secured a spot on the Tournament agenda for succeeding years. Bowling had already been added as an adaptive sport.

Plans are currently underway for the 2008 Tournament, which will take place September 8 – 12 in the Iowa City area. The TEE Tournament will accept 120 participants for the 2008 event, with the expansion to include not only blind veterans but also amputees and wheelchair veterans. This expansion became a reality in keeping with the tenets of the GIVE (Golf for Injured Veterans Everywhere) program. The event's sponsors and contributors foster a partnership to ensure an exceptional, quality Tournament for those seeking to pursue the game of golf regardless of their disabilities and those seeking the camaraderie of fellow veterans.