

Try This Fun Fundraiser for Your Players

It is that time again to start raising money for your program, and it is really hard sometimes to get the players motivated to really raise the funds needed. We only had five-and-a-half scholarships that were worth only part of the hours, and only at the in-district rates where I coached college softball. So, fundraising was something that we did continuously. One fundraiser that they really enjoyed was our annual Bowl-a-thon.

There are several ways for the team to make money on this event.

1. Per-Pin Pledges

Each player on the team asks friends, family, teachers, students—and anyone else they want to ask—for a pledge of \$0.01 on up, to whatever amount they wanted to pledge. This is paid on a per-pin basis for the number of pins that the player knocks down. We held the event in January so that the players could solicit the pledges during Thanksgiving and Christmas, when they would not only see their families but old friends also. We bowled three games, so someone pledging may not realize how the amount could add up and might give \$0.25 or more a pin. If the player only bowled a 100 each of the three games, the donator would pay \$.25 times 300, which is \$75. Some players would bowl a 450-600 series, and that could be more than a \$100 donation. That's great for the program, but I asked the players to please make sure that everyone was aware that we were bowling three games—especially if they gave over \$.10 a pin. Some people could not afford to pay that much.

We had a form for the person pledging to fill out, and each player would turn those sheets in to me to keep until the event.

After the bowl-a-thon, we had a day where we figured out what everyone owed and sent the pledge sheets, with the amount due, to the pledge donors.

Checks would be made out to the St. Louis CC/Meramec softball program and mailed in care of me at the school. I would then check them off and turn in the checks to the office.

It helps to have a goal for each player to achieve. Many times we would put the money each player raised, to their personal airfare to Arizona.

Forming the Teams:

Each player would form a team with two or three of their friends or family that did not play on our softball team. Those people would also send out pledge sheets to their families and friends. So, we actually had three or four people raising money for the airfare and program—our player and their two or three friends.

Each team had their own lane and kept score for their team (most bowling alleys now have automatic scoring machines, so I just had to get a print-out of each lane).

Each person paid a set amount which included the three games and shoes. With the set amount, you could add a couple of dollars per person to the amount each member of the team owed for bowling. If the team consisted of fifteen players and each player brought three friends for their team, four times 15 = 60 people. If the amount paid to play was \$2 over the cost that the bowling alley is charging, the program could have raised another \$120.

2. Raffle

We always included a raffle that goes on during the bowling. Throughout the year, I collected any kind of athletic clothing, equipment, etc., ranging from very inexpensive things like key rings to ball bags or gloves. I ask the players to then bring one small food item and one item for the raffle. Anyone at the bowl-a-thon, plus anyone just at the bowling alley, could purchase raffle tickets. The entire bowling alley would really get into the raffle, and we made twice as much money because of the people that we didn't

even know.

Periodically throughout the three games, I would pull a ticket, hold up an item and announce the number over the PA system. The food was also a prize to be won, and participants shared with their bowling team and those around them.

3. 50/50

We also would do a 50/50 for the parents and for people at the bowling alley who just happened to be there, bowling on their own. The players did not participate in this one.

Awards:

We had sweatshirts for the bowling awards, which were for

- The team with the highest pin total

- The individual with the highest single game score

- The individual with the highest series (all three games)

- Sometimes we would have an "I tried hard" award.

- Sometimes we would have a bowl-off. Those wanting to do it would put their names in a hat, and we would draw five names. Those players rolled for strikes. We would have each roll a ball; if one got a strike and the other four did not, the game was over. If we went three rounds without any strikes, on the fourth round, the winner was the one with the highest total for the round.

This was really a fun fundraiser for the players. They had friends and family there, along with their team friends, it was good for team unity, it was competitive and they had fun getting things from the raffle. It was also fun for the people at the bowling alley, which is good for community relations. You never know who is in the crowd that may want to support your efforts with the team.

Have fun with it.