

NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

THE BIG IDEA

Because playing golf for charity shouldn't be a hassle

BY E.J. BOYER

eboyer@bizjournals.com | 615-846-4258

The business world devotes a lot of time and energy into chasing innovation, but sometimes it lies in your biggest frustration.

At least, that's what Chris Patterson learned. The Nashville-based entrepreneur is the founder of GolfTournaments.com, an online hub that connects golfers to charity golf tournaments, removing the hassle for both parties. For golfers, it enables online registration and payment, and for tournament organizers, it removes the administrative burden.

The website, which Patterson spent two years developing with his father, Phillip Patterson, was borne out of his own frustrations.

"I have a couple of nonprofits I've supported over the years, and I would always play in their golf tournaments," he said. "It would drive me nuts that I always had to send them a check, and I thought, 'Wouldn't it be great if I could register online and not deal with a paper check?'"

The site went live last April, and with one year under its belt, Patterson is looking to expand the site's operations and reach heading into the golf season. The site has more than 100 registered golfers and 11 active tournaments on its site right now, mostly in Middle Tennessee.

GolfTournaments.com is free for the charity organizations and nonprofits hosting a golf tournament, but not for the golfers, which is how the website makes money. The site charges golfers \$5 each time they register for a tournament through the site.

Patterson plans to grow the site region-



NATHAN MORGAN | NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

Chris Patterson founded GolfTournaments.com to more easily connect golfers with charitable golf tournaments.

ally through next year and then focus on expanding nationally. To do that, he's targeting neither golfers nor golf courses, but charity organizations and nonprofits.

"Every [charity] we talk to tells us, 'We don't want to have to deal with that [administrative] burden,'" he said. "And they all have their own following. If we get in front of an organization, we've got about an 80 percent chance of closing."

Each contract is set up differently between the site and charities, in terms of how often money is transferred from one to the other.

In addition to individual golfers, the site also can accept large corporate sponsors for the tournaments and handle sending out updates to all registered players. It also allows the organizers to upload photos and results after the tournaments.

"Golfers love to see ... how they did last year," Patterson said. "I can go in and

look up how I did, what I shot and see photos. That also helps tournament organizers keep people engaged."

"I can go [to GolfTournaments.com] and look up how I did, what I shot and see photos. That also helps tournament organizers keep people engaged."

CHRIS PATTERSON,
Entrepreneur and founder of GolfTournaments.com

The Pattersons aren't strangers to building and maintaining a Web-based business. Chris Patterson serves as vice president of operations at Goodlettsville-based Vision Software Technologies Inc., which provides client software for food service, nutrition management and diet needs. Phillip Patterson is the company's president.