

Hosting tournaments can be a great way to raise funds for your program while adding exciting home games to your schedule. Here are some key points to consider when planning and running a successful tournament:

1. **Entry Fees:** Charging entry fees is the primary way to generate revenue for the tournament. Your entry fee should be strategically set to cover referees' fees, facility maintenance, awards, and other operational costs. The suggested entry fee amounts you mentioned (\$450 for non-Christmas and \$600 for Christmas tournaments) sound reasonable, but assessing your local market and adjusting the fees accordingly is essential.
2. **Admission Pricing:** Set reasonable admission fees for spectators. The ranges you mentioned (\$5-\$10 per adult and \$3-\$5 per kid, five and up) sound appropriate and can help cover additional costs and contribute to your fundraising efforts.
3. **Referee Costs:** Referees are a crucial part of any tournament. Make sure to budget for their fees, considering the number of games they will officiate. The hourly rate and game duration you mentioned for referees in California (\$82 per game, 1.5 hours per game) provide a good baseline for your budgeting.
4. **Tournament Structure:** Clearly define the tournament structure, including the number of participating teams, game format (round-robin double split, bracket, etc.), and the schedule. Your suggested format of teams playing in brackets and advancing to finals is a standard and engaging setup.
5. **Scheduling:** Plan the tournament dates well in advance, taking into account holidays and local school breaks. Ensure that you allocate sufficient time for games to be played without rushing, especially during the longer Christmas tournaments from morning to night.
6. **Promotion and Marketing:** Promote your tournament extensively to attract participating teams. Utilize social media, local sports organizations, schools, and community centers to spread the word. Explicit and attractive promotional materials, including registration details and tournament benefits, can help draw teams in.
7. **Facilities:** Secure appropriate venues for the tournament ie School Gym. Consider the number of courts needed, seating capacity, parking availability, and any amenities participants and spectators might require.
8. **Awards and Prizes:** Offer appealing awards or prizes for winners and outstanding players. If acceptable, I suggest 1st and 2nd place Trophies, medals, or even small cash prizes, which can excite the tournament.
9. **Concession stand:** A concession stand can bring extra money to your program. Offering drinks, snacks, and other things will provide you with a certain amount of revenue for your team. Just make sure that you set prices to make a profit on the goods you sell.
10. **Volunteer Support:** Recruit volunteers like players, parents, and friends to help with various aspects of the tournament, such as registration, scorekeeping, concessions, and crowd management. Having a dedicated team of volunteers can significantly enhance the overall experience.

11. **Partnerships and Sponsors:** You can explore potential partnerships or sponsorships with local businesses or sports-related companies. They might be interested in supporting your tournament in exchange for exposure and recognition.
12. **Feedback and Improvement:** After each tournament, gather feedback from participants, coaches, and spectators to identify areas for improvement. Continuous enhancement of the tournament experience will contribute to its long-term success.

Remember that organizing a tournament involves careful planning, effective communication, and attention to detail. By providing an enjoyable and well-organized event, you can create a positive reputation for your program and establish a sustainable source of fundraising.