

Supplier Evaluation Guide

Tournament Management Systems



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Introduction

Tournament management is a core operation for most golf facilities, and it is no exaggeration to characterize a Tournament Management System (TMS) as a “mission critical” technology platform. A reliable, fully featured, and high-performance TMS delivers major benefits to the golf operation. On the other hand, TMS failure or serious underperformance can trigger disruptions that have negative financial, reputational, or even legal consequences. It’s no surprise that procuring and deploying a TMS is a major undertaking for a golf facility, where the purchase decision carries both substantial risks as well as the anticipated rewards.

This guide is for use by private golf clubs, daily fee and municipal courses, resorts, indoor golf facilities and other golf operators. The guide is made available to prospective TMS Customers (hereinafter “Customers”) with the goal of helping them understand costs, benefits and risks, evaluate options, and ultimately assist them in selecting the “right” partner as a key supplier.

The availability of this guide is particularly timely because the market for TMS’ is strong, growing and has recently attracted several new entrants in addition to established suppliers such as Golf Genius and BlueGolf. TMS solutions are also offered by Unknown Golf, Live Tourney, Par Four, Squabbit, Kismet, Golf Status and others. Some suppliers, such as Kismet and Golf Status, focus on corporate/charity outings, and some, such as Squabbit, focus on “social golfers” who participate in self-organized leagues and golf trips. Golf Genius is the industry’s largest supplier of comprehensive tournament management solutions with nearly 11,000 customers in 63 countries. It is also the largest supplier in terms of annual revenues.

Today, all TMS suppliers (hereinafter “Suppliers”) provide Software as a Service (“SaaS”), also described as “cloud based”. Furthermore, most Suppliers offer a mobile app for live scoring and other functions. While some Suppliers make exaggerated claims about the number of customers they serve and degree of usage, one way to evaluate a company’s market success and forward momentum is to look at independent data illustrating a company’s actual number of mobile app downloads (which would be an upper bound for the number of true customers – not everyone who downloads a mobile app actually uses it). Data for 2025 and early 2026 are presented in Appendix B of this report.

Please note this guide is focused mainly on Suppliers of TMS. A second companion guide focuses on software and customer support.

The Three Components of a Solution

When selecting a TMS, Customers are seeking a complete solution. The complete solution has three important components:

Solution = Software + Support + Supplier

Customers need to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of all three of these components in order to find the solution that best meets their needs. At a high level, some important considerations include:

Software:

- A complete range of features and functions that fully satisfy current operational needs
- A history of regular product updates that demonstrates the capability to meet future Customer requirements in a timely way
- A high and sustained standard of quality
- A proven track record of reliability and scalability
- A history of rapidly adopting innovative technologies that drive more value for users
- Technical integrations with other software products used in golf operations
- Product development that is directly influenced by customer requirements and needs
- Customer case studies (references) that evidence successful adoption and effective usage

Support:

- Rapid response and knowledgeable customer support that supports a fast paced, high pressure work environment
- Trained experts that have deep experience solving customer issues in real time
- Customer support personnel that know golf, including PGA Professionals
- Support available across all relevant time zones 24/7/365
- Multi-channel support: text, phone, email
- Option for on-site event support and execution
- Robust online Knowledge Base for fast, complete answers, including video “how to’s”
- A large, trained labor pool making it easier for a Customer to hire experienced personnel
- A product certification program ensuring an ongoing flow of trained experts entering the workforce
- Stellar customer reviews of their experiences using customer support

This guide is focused on the third component of a total solution, the Supplier. Before diving into the important details, here are some high level considerations for this component:

Supplier:

- Financial performance, stability, capitalization, investors, possible “going concern” issues
- “Putting the customer first” Terms of Service — Data Ownership
- Data Protection and Security
- Security and Privacy Policy explaining what data is collected and how it is used while ensuring strict compliance with privacy laws
- System reliability, resilience and availability
- Scalability — handling growth
- Pricing transparency
- Term, cancellation, auto-renewal and refund policies

- Major golf industry partnerships and relationships
- Executive team experience

Choosing A Supplier

When selecting a mission-critical system, the Supplier's long-term business performance and evidence of strong customer satisfaction are key purchase factors. Choosing a TMS is a "bet your business" decision. Like product and support factors, Supplier risk should always be investigated and considered.

Financial Strength

When evaluating Suppliers, financial stability and performance is an obvious and important place to start. The number of years a supplier has been in business is significant because a new supplier in any industry usually carries the risk of heightened financial instability compared to established providers. Key financial considerations include a Supplier's capital structure, revenues and profitability, cash position, debt, customer churn, and dependency on a single or small number of large clients. Is recurring subscription revenue growing, flat, or shrinking? Healthy gross margins are important for funding Supplier reinvestment in product R&D and support. Sources of funding for present and current operations should at least satisfy the accounting principle of a "going concern", which assumes a business will continue operating for the foreseeable future. Red flags include recurring operating losses, negative cash flows from operations, or working capital deficiencies (current liabilities exceeding current assets), which may signal an inability to sustain operations.

Golf Genius, founded in 2009, is a fast growing, profitable golf business and the largest supplier of TMS in the world with nearly 11,000 installations. The company has a strong capital structure, balance sheet and cash flow. Golf Genius has 300 employees and reinvests aggressively in research and development, customer support, and new business development.

Data Ownership

Customer data is one of a businesses' most valuable and sensitive assets, and giving up ownership or control of customer data exposes a Customer to legal, financial and strategic risks. However, in the course of everyday operations, a TMS necessarily relies on the use of Customer data, including what is legally referred to as "Personally Identifiable Information ("PII"). Examples include email addresses, phone numbers, billing information, usernames, analytics, location data based on IP addresses, and user-generated content such as messages and notes tied to a particular individual.

One of the most important subjects in a Supplier's Terms of Service Agreement is the language regarding ownership of Customer data. Look for contractual language such as: "Customer retains all rights, title and interest in Customer Data", and "The Supplier has only a limited license to use Customer Data to provide the service." Many Suppliers vaguely or ambiguously address the issue of

data ownership. Some Suppliers even have broad licenses to use, aggregate and profit from your data.

Since its founding in 2009, Golf Genius has consistently disclaimed all ownership of Customer data.

This commitment is clearly stated in the Golf Genius Terms of Service:

“Ownership of Customer Intellectual Property: As between the parties, Customer retains all right, title and interest in and to the data supplied by Customer or Users or Golf Genius, and Golf Genius shall not use Customer Intellectual Property for any purpose other than providing the Service to the Customer.”

This language is very clear and unambiguous. To our knowledge, no other Supplier has a similar policy with respect to the ownership and potential uses of Customer data. In fact, some Suppliers are very aggressive in claiming supplier rights to Customer data. Refer to Appendix A for specific policy statements from other suppliers (as of March 2026).

Data Protection

Suppliers handling customer data — and PII in particular — assume two distinct obligations. The first is transparency: being explicit about what rights they claim over Customer data. The second is security: 1) ensuring that unauthorized parties cannot access, alter, or copy data, and, 2) ensuring that if Customer data is illicitly accessed by unauthorized parties, that data are fully encrypted. The following sections explain what Customers should demand from any Supplier they entrust with their data.

Penetration Testing

Cybersecurity evolves constantly as threat actors develop increasingly sophisticated tools, requiring Suppliers to continually bolster their defenses. A proven way to evaluate these defenses is through third-party penetration testing, where an independent security firm simulates real-world attacks to probe a Supplier's systems.

A reputable penetration testing firm will produce a detailed report documenting the scope of testing, the methodology used, and any vulnerabilities discovered. A Customer evaluating a new Supplier should determine whether or not regular penetration testing is performed, by whom, and should request evidence of the most recent test.

Golf Genius engages independent third-party security firms to conduct annual penetration testing in accordance with OWASP and PCI DSS guidelines and will provide a summary of findings, test dates, and scopes to Customers upon request.

Even with robust cyber defenses, breaches can occur. Encryption is therefore essential: all Customer data should be encrypted both at rest and in transit (i.e., encrypted when transmitted over the Internet and encrypted when stored on external servers in the cloud), so that any data an attacker manages to reach is unreadable and unusable.

Golf Genius encrypts all customer data at rest and in transit.

Customers should confirm this “best practice” with any prospective Tournament Management Supplier.

PCI Compliance

Many Suppliers offer payment processing, typically through third-party providers such as Stripe or Worldpay, as part of their TMS offering. Every business is well aware that a credit card data breach can be a catastrophic event triggering mass card reissuance, potential for fraudulent transactions, legal exposure and a loss of trust among Supplier’s customers. Therefore, it’s critical that Suppliers handling credit card transactions be required to comply with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) — a set of security requirements governing how cardholder data is processed, stored, and transmitted.

PCI compliance is assessed across four levels based on transaction volume. Suppliers should be prepared to share their PCI certificate of attestation with prospective Customers, and Customers should ask for it.

Golf Genius maintains Level 1 PCI DSS compliance, the most rigorous standard, validated annually by an independent Qualified Security Assessor, and will provide an Attestation of Compliance to Customers evaluating Golf Genius Tournament Management.

Additional Security Requirements

PCI DSS compliance encompasses several distinct and mandatory testing requirements. Penetration testing, as described above, is not only a security best practice — it is explicitly required under PCI DSS. Suppliers offering payment processing must conduct penetration tests at least annually (and following any significant changes to their infrastructure) using qualified internal or external testers. The results are submitted as evidence during PCI DSS assessments.

Vulnerability scanning is a separate and complementary requirement. Where penetration testing actively attempts to exploit weaknesses, vulnerability scanning uses Approved Scanning Vendors (ASVs) to systematically identify known security gaps across all in-scope networks and systems. This auditing must also be performed on a regular basis.

For Level 1 suppliers, the highest and most stringent of the four compliance levels, a complete assessment must be conducted by a PCI Qualified Security Assessor (QSA) — an independent, PCI-certified firm that evaluates all security controls across the cardholder data environment. This

assessment produces both a Report of Compliance (ROC) documenting the detailed findings, and the Attestation of Compliance (AOC) that Customers may request.

Finally, Suppliers that use network segmentation controls such as firewalls or isolated network segments to limit the scope of their cardholder data environment are required to conduct segmentation testing every six months, verifying that no unauthorized pathways exist between environments.

While external testing services represent a substantial expense, Golf Genius believes it is a necessary cost of doing business in order to protect Customer data.

Privacy Policy and Data Security

Most Suppliers offer TMS that are cloud based, meaning they store the application and data on hyperscaler infrastructure such as AWS, Azure, Google Cloud, Oracle or others. As noted above, this data is both valuable and often sensitive. It is incumbent on the Supplier to protect Customer data no matter where it resides. **If a Customer does not exercise appropriate due diligence to insure that the Supplier is obligated to protect data from theft by third parties or improper use by the Supplier, then the Customer has potential legal liability in the case of a data leak or illicit use by the Supplier.** A Supplier's Terms of Service should ensure transparency (specifying the personal data collected and shared), and legal compliance (GDPR in the EU, CCPA/ CPRA in California, PIPEDA in Canada), with other relevant privacy laws.

A Supplier's Terms of Service (sometimes called Terms of Use) and Privacy Policy, control the Supplier obligations. It is important to carefully review these terms. Customers should also review and understand a Supplier's mitigation strategies to reduce the risks of relying on external servers.

Product Reliability and Resilience

Software that is unavailable to the Customer, or the Customer's golfers, has zero value. Therefore, a mission critical TMS must be designed to prevent catastrophic failure and prioritize availability. In software architecture terms, the system should employ a highly available database model with multiple copies of the database residing in different locations. These database copies are kept in sync within a few milliseconds by the database software.

At the scale of Golf Genius Tournament Management, the database is divided into "shards" – whereby one very large database is divided into a set of smaller databases. This approach (which is considered a best practice for mission critical software architecture) both increases performance (many disks from which to simultaneously retrieve data) and minimizes the time required to restore data from backups (in the event of a catastrophic failure where both a shard and its high availability copy are corrupted).

In addition to maintaining high availability databases, data backups should be taken on a regular basis so that Customer data can be recovered in a defined amount of time in the event of a complete

loss of data. The more database shards there are, the smaller each database, which results in faster backup and restore times. There are several factors that determine maximum recovery time, and the system must be architected carefully to minimize recovery time.

These mission critical databases should be proactively monitored 7 x 24 x 365 and trigger immediate corrective action when any potential issues arise. Golf Genius employs a third-party service provider to maintain this level of monitoring and any required emergency response.

The combination of high availability databases, sharding and an external monitoring service significantly increases the cost of supplying the Golf Genius Tournament Management solution to Customers. However, we believe this is a necessary approach to provide a highly reliable, resilient and always available product. One of the reasons that Golf Genius Tournament Management earns consistently world class Net Promoter Scores (the third party “gold standard” for quantitative measurement of customer satisfaction) is that our Customers experience almost zero downtime. **In the most recent calendar year, Golf Genius Tournament Management achieved 100% uptime, or system availability, in every geography it does business.**

All of these investments to minimize disruptions and maximize system availability are part of the Golf Genius commitment to being a highly reliable mission critical partner for all our Customers.

Scalability

Scalability is another crucial performance characteristic for a TMS. The system must readily handle seamless growth in number of events, users and data without any performance degradation. If a system cannot scale, it risks becoming overloaded and may slow down or fail.

Golf Genius Tournament Management is engineered from the ground up to handle peak loads (e.g., seasonal spikes) and future growth. The system has proven its ability to handle highly demanding transaction loads that occur seasonally. For example, on a peak season day last year, Golf Genius Tournament Management managed 5,542 events and 289,985 rounds of golf.. Thousands of Golf Genius Tournament Management Customers successfully ran events that day and the system performed flawlessly.

To ensure high performance at all times, the system architecture of the Golf Genius Tournament Management System automatically scales servers up and down as needed based on load, and application servers are initiated and taken down in a way that is completely transparent to Customers and their golfers.

As noted above, Golf Genius contracts with third-party service providers to achieve 7 x 24 x 365 monitoring (including advanced tools and automatic alerts), consistent response time at any level of load, and emergency response to ensure high availability and exceptional uptime. Although taking place “behind the scenes”, seamless scalability and robust server performance is extremely important for Customers who rely on a TMS to effectively manage their tournament and event operations under any and all conditions.

Pricing

Besides being a “fair exchange of value”, software pricing must be fully transparent to the Customer. Determine whether total TMS cost is determined by predictable and fixed subscription costs alone.

Be alert for additional (and unpredictable) charges from some Suppliers — for example, a per transaction cost. If TMS usage generates transaction charges, carefully understand just what events trigger this additional cost to the Customer.

Another way some Suppliers generate revenue is to charge for their golfers’ usage of the mobile application that is in fact part of their overall solution. This pricing model transfers a financial obligation to their end-customers for functionality that is necessary for a comprehensive TMS. These Suppliers often compare their price to competing Suppliers without being clear about mobile charges.

Are there other ways in which the TMS Supplier generates revenue from the customer? Besides subscription fees, suppliers can receive transaction fees, end-customer charges for mobile usage, advertising revenue, or an upcharge on credit card processing fee.

Golf Genius Tournament Management System pricing is completely predictable as per the annual subscription agreement. Golf Genius imposes no other charges, does not derive revenue from selling customer data and generates no advertising revenue.

Term, Cancellation, Refunds

Customers pay a subscription fee to a Supplier, typically for unlimited use during a defined term (for example, monthly, quarterly or annually). What happens when the term ends? Many suppliers employ an “auto renewal” policy. Unless the Customer notifies the supplier before the term ends, the Customer subscription is automatically renewed and the Customer’s credit card is charged. This policy can be frustrating and costly for a Customer who forgets to inform a Supplier (or misses a deadline to inform a Supplier) to cancel their subscription contract. This scenario often occurs because the subscription term end date was never properly tracked by the Customer.

Golf Genius does not place a subscription term tracking burden on the Customer. Our terms of service state clearly that a renewal subscription can be cancelled by the Customer at any time and for any reason, and a pro rata refund will be issued:

“During any Order Renewal Term, Customer may terminate Subscription by giving Golf Genius thirty (30) days prior written notice (sent via e-mail to billing@golfgenius.com). If the Customer terminates Subscription during an Order Renewal Term, any Subscription Fees for such Order Renewal Term shall be prorated.”

For customers that are invoiced (i.e., do not pay using credit card information), a Customer can cancel by simply not paying their renewal invoice.

Other Suppliers

How do other TM Suppliers handle auto renewal? One Supplier states “no contract; cancel anytime”. But many Customers likely will not carefully review “the fine print”: “Annual plans are billed in advance for a twelve month term and are nonrefundable to the fullest extent permitted by law.” As is the case with other suppliers, “cancel” does not necessarily mean “refund”.

Another Supplier permits cancellation, but without refund:

“ON THE RENEWAL DATE, YOUR DESIGNATED PAYMENT METHOD WILL BE CHARGED THE SUBSCRIPTION FEE. YOUR PERIODIC SUBSCRIPTION FEE WILL BE THE SAME AS YOUR INITIAL CHARGES UNLESS YOU ARE OTHERWISE NOTIFIED AT LEAST THIRTY (30) DAYS IN ADVANCE OF ANY RENEWAL DATE.

YOU MAY TERMINATE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION AT ANY TIME, FOR ANY REASON, BY FOLLOWING THE TERMINATION PROCEDURES SET FORTH ON OUR SITE OR IN THE APP. ONCE YOUR ACCOUNT IS TERMINATED, YOU ACKNOWLEDGE AND AGREE THAT WE MAY WITHOUT NOTICE TO YOU PERMANENTLY DELETE YOUR ACCOUNT AND ALL DATA ASSOCIATED WITH IT.

Payments are nonrefundable and there are no refunds or credits for partially used subscription periods. Following any cancellation, however, you will continue to have access to the Services through the end of your current billing period.”

Some competitors have no published Terms of Service and therefore are silent on the terms of auto-renewal, cancellations and refunds.

Availability of TMS-Trained PGA Professionals

In most cases, the users of a TMS at a private club or public facility are PGA Professionals. Typically, the actual “hands on” users of the TMS are Assistant PGA Professionals rather than the Head Professional or Director of Golf. As you know, many Assistant PGA professionals move through different clubs over their careers using their accumulated training and experience to pursue a Head Professional position. Every year, many clubs need to recruit new PGA professionals.

Given the importance of the TMS to the golf operation, many golf facilities seek to hire new staff that can be “TMS proficient” on their first day of work. Because Golf Genius is a long established and industry leading TMS Supplier, the labor pool of Assistant PGA Professional’s with operating knowledge of the Golf Genius Tournament Management System is large and geographically dispersed. It is very common to see PGA job postings that require Golf Genius Tournament Management experience.

To further support and grow the pool of trained Golf Genius Tournament Management operators, Golf Genius offers an ongoing product certification program. This program is designed to help PGA

professionals, or professionals in training, acquire advanced skills in operating the platform. PGA professionals certified in the use of Golf Genius Tournament Management are highly sought after by golf facilities. Golf Genius certification is part of many PGM (Professional Golf Management) programs in the U.S. and Canada.

Supplier Partnerships

Customers invariably rely on a small constellation of software products to manage their golf operations. TMS Suppliers who offer a range of technical integrations with the providers of complementary products add significant value to managing operations. It is important for a Customer to investigate the number and nature of a Supplier's technical integrations.

Golf Genius Tournament Management features robust technical integrations with all major club system suppliers, tee time system providers, and cart and GPS suppliers.

Executive Team

Experienced managers bring deep industry expertise and a range of honed management skills to a business. An executive team's prior track record is a good indicator of future success, and a team that demonstrably invests resources, both capital and human, in customer success is likely to be a great supplier partner. Above all, supplier executives that articulate a strategy and vision that aligns with your future goals and expectations is a strong basis for a long term, mutually successful business relationship.

Golf Genius is led by a strong, highly experienced executive team. Mike Zisman, Founder and Executive Chairman, is a pioneering technology entrepreneur and former IBM Vice President of corporate strategy. Mike has a Ph.D. in decision sciences from the University of Pennsylvania and has served on the faculty of the MIT Sloan School of Management. Chris Kallmeyer, Golf Genius CEO, has over 25 years of success in building and managing finance and technology companies. Chris has had particular success building major strategic business partnerships as evidenced by the strong, long term relationship Golf Genius today has with the USGA and Allied Golf Associations. Chris is a Villanova BSEE alum with a passion for golf.

Appendix A: Who owns your data?

Golf Genius makes it clear that the Customer owns their data.

This Appendix reviews the data ownership positions of other TM suppliers.

Unknown Golf states: “User content such as text, photos or graphics provided by you as a result of use of the Services (“**User Content**”) shall remain the property of the User. However, we need limited rights from you to operate the Services with your activity. By loading an activity or other User Content, you grant Unknown Golf, its Affiliates a non-exclusive, royalty-free, nontransferable right to use, display, perform, reproduce, distribute, publish, modify, adapt, translate, and create derivative works from your User Content submitted by you to the Services to the extent necessary to operate the Services, and provide the services, now and in the future.”

Note that User Content as defined by Unknown Golf does not include PII about golfers, tee sheets, leaderboards, etc.

Live Tourney has no Terms of Service or Privacy Policy posted on livetourney.com. Therefore, there are no obligations of any sort to their customers.

Par Four states in their Terms of Service: “You retain ownership of your User Content. You grant ParFour a worldwide, perpetual, royalty free license to host, store, use, display, modify, and distribute User Content as necessary to operate, improve, and **promote the Services, including marketing and promotional use.**”

Note that “User Content” is not defined (is it all data like Golf Genius or “Content” like Unknown Golf?) but Par Four does claim the right to use a customer’s data for marketing and promotional use.

Their Privacy Policy states: “User content may be stored, processed, and reused by ParFour as necessary to operate, improve, and promote the Services. You retain ownership of your content. **You grant ParFour a broad license to host, store, display, modify, and distribute content consistent with the Terms of Service.**”

Squabbit is free to use, so there is no formal contractual relationship between the customer and Squabbit (no “quid pro quo” in legal terms); there are no published Terms of Service but there is a published privacy policy. As a result, Squabbit is very popular among individuals managing events, but probably not used by private clubs, daily fee facilities or resorts. Based on download data, Squabbit is far more widely adopted than Unknown Golf, Live Tourney or Par Four.

Kismet has Terms & Conditions but is silent on data ownership.

Golf Status states: "You hereby grant GolfStatus a perpetual and irrevocable (other than as provided below), worldwide, fully paid-up and royalty free, non-exclusive, unlimited license, including the right to sublicense and assign to third parties, and **right to copy, reproduce, fix, adapt, modify, improve, translate, reformat, create derivative works from, manufacture, introduce into circulation, commercialize, publish, distribute, sell, license, sublicense, transfer, rent, lease, transmit, publicly display, publicly perform, or provide access to electronically, broadcast, communicate to the public by telecommunication, display, perform, enter into computer memory, and use and practice, in any way now known or in the future discovered, your User Content as well as all modified and derivative works thereof. To the extent permitted by applicable laws, you hereby waive any moral rights you may have in any User Content.**"

This provides Golf Status with a broad license to use customer data for any purpose whatsoever.

Appendix B: Download Statistics for TM Suppliers
Accurate as of March 2026

[Appfigures.com](https://appfigures.com) is widely used to track downloads of apps from the Apple and Android app stores. These are estimates but generally deemed to be very accurate, and used by almost all app suppliers for competitive intelligence. Suppliers can make claims about their number of users, but one common tool for verification is to use a tool like Appfigures.

Below is download estimates for the 2025 calendar year and early 2026. Not all users who download an app go on to use the app, so these figures present an “upper bound” on number of actual users.

The order below is the USGA GHIN app, Golf Genius, Squabbit, Unknown Golf, BlueGolf and Par Four.

Download Estimates	
All of 2025	January 1, 2026 through March 11, 2026

