

# Alumni Clubs Tailgate/Watch Party Planning

## Benefits of throwing a tailgate for your Alumni Club:

- Tailgates are a wonderful way to bring together alumni (and even prospective students) in a more informal environment than a traditional networking or informational event. Because football games take place on Saturdays, there is also a greater opportunity for alumni to bring partners, children, or friends with them to enjoy the event.

## Tailgate Structures:

### Large game watch events:

- Appropriate for: More competitive games, a prime-time kick-off (6:00 PM - 7:30 PM EST start time), or depending on size of club or interest.
- Hosted at a bar, restaurant, or event space. May require a rental fee or food minimum; factor this in to registration fees.
- Many University of Michigan Alumni Association [domestic](#) and [international](#) clubs already host large game watch events -- check in with your local AA-UM club to explore piggybacking off their activity.

### Smaller game watch events:

- Appropriate for: Smaller club size or interest, or an earlier game kick-off with less interest (noon game).
- Hosted at a bar, restaurant, or event space. May rely on RSVP at the space instead of formal rental if group is small enough. Decide if there is enough interest from local alumni before choosing a space that requires a rental fee or food minimum.
- When identifying a venue, be sure to consider family-friendly options for football watch parties especially.

### Away Game Tailgates:

- If a Michigan away game is happening in or near your club's city, it is a great opportunity to host a more traditional tailgate in a tailgating parking lot or at a tailgating venue.
- A traditional tailgate is held in parking lots or designated restaurant venues, usually within close proximity to the stadium. When identifying a venue, be sure to consider family-friendly options for football watch parties especially.
- Traditional tailgates can assume a potluck style, where attendees bring items to contribute to the tailgate, or bring cash to contribute to drinks/appetizers if it is going to be held in a restaurant/bar.
- You can also require pre-registration and a fee if you want to provide all the food.

**\* The asterisk denotes Away Game Tailgate-specific item in planning timeline\***

## Tailgate Planning Timeline:

### Summer: Identify Venues

- Determine a space, bar, or restaurant that has the ability to show the game and is in a central location for club members. Communicate with the space and determine if they have the ability to reserve space for you for the dates/times of the games.
- \*Find a tailgate location for an away game tailgate. Think about distance to the stadium, if there is cheap or easy parking for attendees nearby, and if a shuttle or bus to the stadium is available for attendees if the location is further away.\***



- ❑ If event is very small (a few people), you may inquire about RSVPs, or just plan to show up early enough to secure some space at the venue before the game.
- ❑ If the venue requires a food minimum, factor this into budgeting and determine if members are willing to pay a small registration fee beforehand using the alumni club portal, or a walk-up fee. Past alumni club tailgate registration fees have typically ranged from \$5 - \$20 dollars.
- ❑ If the venue requires a contract, it must be sent to the University of Michigan Procurement Office to sign as soon as possible. **Neither alumni club presidents nor Alumni Relations staff can sign contracts on behalf of the club.**

#### **At least one month before event:**

- ❑ [Post event details to club website and social media forums.](#)
- ❑ Using the "Add Event" feature on the club portal ensures club events will be pulled into [the Michigan Ross public calendar](#) and will also be visible on the events section on the right hand side of [the School's alumni website](#).
  - *This is a great way to advertise your event to a larger audience, potentially reaching non-local/non-Ross U of M alumni who may be traveling through the area during the time of the event and are looking for a way to connect with local Ross alums.*
- ❑ [Create a registration page through the club portal if you plan to collect RSVPs or charge an attendance fee.](#)
- ❑ [Market the event through the club portal and any other club e-mail lists/social media accounts.](#)
  - ❑ In your event advertisements, note if food will be provided and what kind, if food/drinks will be available for purchase, any cost of attendance, and any drink specials the space will be featuring during the game.

#### **Two weeks before event:**

- ❑ Re-Confirm space arrangement with venue and menu details if providing food. Venue may also want an estimated attendance number at this time.
- ❑ **\***If hosting an away game tailgate potluck, ask for potluck sign-ups for food and beverages, or arrange catering.\*
- ❑ If you haven't already, contact Michigan Ross via [MiRossAlumniClubs@umich.edu](mailto:MiRossAlumniClubs@umich.edu) to leverage the Alumni Relations Office's corporate card to handle event expense payments.

#### **One week before event:**

- ❑ Print one or several guest sign-in sheets if you will not be checking in attendees from a registration list. [Please use this Michigan Ross alumni club sign-in sheet if possible.](#)
- ❑ Verify details with venue, confirm any AV needs, and, if applicable, send venue your preferred room layout and set-up instructions. If desired, gather materials for decorations, such as Michigan Ross flags, banners, or maize and blue streamers (and tape).
- ❑ If the space requires it, assign event shifts for club volunteers (set-up, during, take down).
- ❑ Send an event reminder to those who have RSVP'd, and, optionally, to the full alumni club as well.

#### **Day Before Event:**

- ❑ Ensure any materials for distribution or decoration are prepared, printed, and ready to transport.
- ❑ Print guest list from portal registration page, if applicable.

**Day of Event:**

- Arrive early and check that location is set up correctly; if applicable, confirm A/V materials are present.**
- Ensure decorations and food arrangements are in place.
- Check all microphones, projectors, audio equipment, and computer connections (if needed).
- Check registration area. Set out sign-in sheets, and make sure name tags and other supplies are plentiful.
- If you are signing receipts for event food, beverages, or the venue space, be sure to keep an [itemized copy and a signed copy](#), to be sent to the Office of Alumni Relations post-event.
- During the event, don't forget to snap some photos (clear shots of faces are always good!), and be sure to recognize any and all supporting volunteers who helped pull the tailgate/game watch together. Go Blue, and congratulations on a job well done!

**After Event (One to five days after):**

- Make sure all payments to vendors and venues have been fully handled. If applicable, reconcile event financials with Ross Alumni Relations representative -- send itemized and signed receipts and the event attendance sheet to [MiRossAlumniClubs@umich.edu](mailto:MiRossAlumniClubs@umich.edu).
  - If your attendance sheet is in electronic spreadsheet form, please send as an excel document rather than as a pdf, if possible.
  - If seeking expense reimbursement, [please use this form to submit your documentation](#).
- Send thank you notes to volunteers and others who helped with the event. If you need any/more thank you notes with the Michigan Ross logo, please let the Alumni Relations Office know.