

SCTimes

Pair pushes [Web.com](#) PGA Tour event in Brainerd

Sartell's Ron Sanders' vision of landing a [Web.com](#) golf tournament in Brainerd in 2020 got off to a promising start last month.

At its inaugural Pro-Am held on Aug. 22 at Cragun's Legacy Course (Dutch), 24 professionals and 118 amateurs competed under azure skies on a Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed championship course. In a recent breakfast meeting with Sanders, I posed the following question, "What's your next course of action to secure that a [Web.com](#) tournament will become a reality in two years?" His response was twofold. 'First, we (meaning his co-founder, 1986 Apollo High School graduate Greg Rueter) must get a positive commitment by the end of the year from the PGA Tour to proceed (it happened last Monday), and secondly, we must secure a title or national corporate sponsor to prove financial viability. "In the meantime, we must show the tour and a potential corporate sponsor that we can host a huge a four-day extravaganza. With a budget of \$500,000, here are our tentative plans for 2019: On Monday, there would be practice rounds for professionals, and an optional morning and afternoon pro-am fishing outing. At night, a combined pairings gala along with live musical entertainment is planned.

"On Tuesday, there would be a double pro-am session in the morning and afternoon. Wednesday and Thursday, we would have Rounds 1 & 2 for the professionals with a player purse of \$100,000."

Sanders concluded, "Today we have all the pieces in place, with 45 local and committed sponsors this year, many committed volunteers, and the strong backing of resort and golf course owner Dutch Cragun to make this tournament reach fruition."

For the next four months, Sanders and Rueter will be working the pipelines to make their dream tournament a reality for the Brainerd Lakes area and bring topflight PGA Tour golf to Central Minnesota.

With their tireless energy as risk takers and a firm commitment from the PGA Tour, the year 2020 could bring with perfect vision, the Golf Channel and thousands of spectators to Central Minnesota to experience what this pristine part of the Gopher state has to offer. Now the Brainerd Lakes area community must step to the plate and with enthusiasm back this worthwhile event. Time will tell.

Golf Notes:

On Aug. 21, I had the pleasure of playing nine holes at The Classic golf course in Brainerd with Minnesota legend and state treasure, Bud Chapman. At age 95,

Chapman plays golf five days a week at Minneapolis Golf Club, sports a 5.2 handicap, has recorded 17 aces and has shot his age 3,695 times.

He is most famous as a prolific commercial artist, who in 1972 started painting 18 infamous golf holes. His first golf painting was of Victoria Falls Golf Club, depicting a fantastic imaginary golf hole featuring the famous waterfall in southern Africa on the Zambezi River, considered by many to be one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World.