



What does it take to break into a professional golf career? Isn't a great set of skills enough? Sadly, the answer is not.

I grew up in a golf family, my dad, my grandpa, my uncles and cousins are all amateur golfers, later on, golf gave me golfer friends and so now, I'm a degenerate golf lover, not saying I'm a good one, but for me, those 18 holes, among family, friends and even complete strangers, are the best time of the week. (Please don't tell my wife).

As some of you know, I am also a Venezuelan lawyer who has always been attracted by the world of Sports Law and the Sports Representation. I have been related to the world of soccer (please allow me to call it "fútbol") from the beginning, currently being the agent of some Spanish League players; but my mind has never been focused on being only a "fútbol" agent, I want to grow and be a sports agent, kind of like Jerry Maguire, to create a group to handle a wide number of disciplines, such as baseball, basketball and yes, I want to break into the golf industry and I've already started, or at least I am trying to.

Contrary to traditional sports, Golf is hard to get into as a professional, not only because of the high level of difficulty that the sport itself implies, but because you have to buy your way in. Don't get me wrong, money itself won't get you to the top, but to compete and earn your way to the top, you will need money. And in case you don't know, if you are a golf player and get yourself in a professional competition and you miss the cut, you don't get paid. Picture a 24-year-old player, just out of college, where he attended with a full price scholarship, and now he is out there thinking, "...how the heck am I going to play in the whatever tour, which will cost me 35 to 40k? What if someone borrows the money and I

don't win? How am I going to pay back? How am I suppose to be focused on the golf course thinking that if I don't play well, I won't be receiving a check on Sunday? "The answer is very simple: You need a sponsor, pal.

Now is the moment in which an agent needs to shine and boy, it is so hard to shine when facing this titanic task. Why is that? Because when you are a "fútbol" agent, you need to get your player a contract and that's it, I am not saying this is easy, but you have to convince a team that an x, y or z player will fit into their playing philosophy, negotiate a contract and BOOM! If you succeed, your guy will be flying with a paid ticket, to start making money every month and no financial burden will be associated with his performance. To find sponsorship for a golf player, you must sell the idea of a sports sponsorship to a company whose logo would be displayed in a *hat, a polo shirt and a bag* over a guy that will be playing every week in events that are not always being televised. And of course, remember I am not talking about players that are already in the PGA tour, I am talking about our "Just graduated" 24-year-old dude that will play the McKenzie Tour or the PGA in Latin America, looking to earn his PGA card.

I have been in this position before, and it is not easy, because the first barrier you will find will be the company saying: "You are asking me to put money on a guy that yes, will have my logo on his gear, but no one will watch it" Strike 1. Now it's time to adjust and comeback for the next pitch.

This is no ordinary sport, we are talking about golf, one of the most, if not the most elite sport on the planet. Being related to golf is being hand in hand with the top in the world, with the best brands, from the most popular brands like Puma, Nike, Adidas, Coca-Cola to luxury brands such as Rolex, Tiffany, etc. Also, the most important firms such as KPGM, PWC, Morgan Stanley are involved somehow in the world of golf, either as a sponsor for a particular golfer, or as partner in the PGA organization. What I am trying to say is that these sponsors are not simply an add during a TV broadcast, or a banner during a golf event, the

sponsor implies the actual presence of such companies' personnel in social events, the networking associated is sure there and you can be a part of it, while your company is supporting a young talent on his way to the top: "That's your punch line, that's your pitch in the cocktail party".

Once you have passed the first big obstacle, then you are in solid soil and you can bring up the tax-deductible argument, which can be very attractive to some companies and of course, should be analyzed in each jurisdiction according to the tax law applicable.

But is anybody considering how to sponsor a 24-year-old could refresh the image and make a huge impact to your company? I mean, we live in the Tik Tok, Instagram era, can anybody think outside the box and create a mixture between a sponsorship agreement and a possible strategy that uses a fresh young athlete to reach audiences that you wouldn't get even with the athlete being aired in National TV? I believe that this is an idea that must be sold by an agent while conveying that you are not only putting your logo in some dude's golf shirt, but you are also reaching EVERYWHERE this dude goes and even more powerful, every person that sees him throughout internet and social media. Let's create valuable content with our future golf superstar or let's be more aggressive, lets create our own superstar.

I get so excited every time I get to work with a young golfer trying to get a sponsor; it is such an exciting challenge. Although my results have not been as expected so far, I am convinced that each failure teaches me how to better address this task: Lets get that sponsorship. Any ideas? Bring them on, the more the better.

Pablo Roberto Garcia

