

## Pro golfers battle steep, steep odds

Written by Bob Brooks

Thursday, 07 July 2011 17:24 - Last Updated Thursday, 07 July 2011 22:14

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How tough is it to make a spot on the PGA Tour? With the John Deere tournament this week, I thought I'd give you a little background as to how tough it is through a personal experience.

There was a golf pro in Cedar Rapids by the name of Kurt Kretchman who was an excellent player, scratch handicapper, and he moved from his job in C.R. to the pro job at the Oakwood Country Club in Coal Valley, Ill., which was then the home of the Quad Cities golf tournament.

Kurt was there for some 10 years and as the head pro, he knew every inch of the golf course. He played it several times a week for a 10-year period. And the members who were on the Quad Cities committee thought that he certainly deserved a chance at one of the spots in the tournament field through a sponsor's exemption.

And so it was that Kurt got into the PGA Tour field on his golf course for at least eight tries at getting a payday from the tour. With all of that practice, all of that playing, all of that knowledge, he never made the cut and never cashed a check, and still was a scratch player and several times was honored as the Iowa golfer of the year in the 1980s and '90s.

And that's how tough it is to make it for even one PGA event.

Another interesting thing about the tournament being held this week is that it's a great cooperative effort among the Quad Cities, and to my knowledge it's really the only event that has been held in that area that gets the full cooperation of all of those cities. Otherwise, it is tending to your own territory.

Case in point, very few fans from the east side of the Mississippi will cross the bridge and go to the Modern Woodman Park, home of the Quad City River Bandits. It's kind of like the iron curtain. It just doesn't happen.

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But in the case of the John Deere Classic, it is a prideful thing for the whole area. And through the trials and tribulations of staging this event, when John Deere signed on it became a full-scale PGA Tour stop. And congratulations to those who have teamed together to make it a total community effort.