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WORLD'S BEST GOLFERS TEMPTED BY BIG BUCKS

Big money is causing big rumblings in the world of professional golf.

Two rival entities, the Super Golf League and the Premier Golf League, both backed by millions of Saudi Arabian loot, are trying to lure some of the world's best golfers into their folds, and challenge the PGA Tour and European Tour for supremacy. Both have similar concepts — a number of team events, with guaranteed money, and reports of \$20 million and \$30 million offers for certain individuals to merely sign up.

Some of the world's best, such as Rory McIlroy and Justin Thomas, have already poo-pooed the concept and pledged allegiance to the PGA Tour. Others, such as Dustin Johnson, Justin Rose, Phil Mickelson and Brooks Koepka, have admitted to being approached, and still haven't said no.

The gusher of big Saudi money is reportedly behind the recent decision by the PGA Tour to establish the Player Impact Program (PIP), a \$40 million pot of dough to be distributed to the 10 PGA Tour players deemed to be most responsible for bringing attention to the tour via TV and online exposure. Active or not, Tiger Woods will likely finish first (for a cool \$8 million) among the PIP recipients for the foreseeable future, and other obvious recipients would be Koepka, Thomas, Dustin Johnson, McIlroy, Bryson DeChambeau, Jon Rahm and Rickie Fowler.

PGA Tour commissioner Jay Monahan, meanwhile, has said that any golfer who signs up with one of the rival entities would be banned from the PGA Tour, but since the Tour doesn't run any of the majors — Masters, U.S. Open, PGA or British Open — any renegade golfer would be banned from Quad Cities or Phoenix, but still be eligible for the major championships. That might be enough for some of them.

Ultimate success for the proposed upstarts remains a long shot. Because the game's very best are the only players being courted by the renegade leagues, and they are already multi millionaires, a few extra million likely won't mean much to them. McIlroy told Golf Digest it was a "money grab ... which is fine if that's what you're playing golf for ... to make as much money as possible."

But if enough stars sign up with the PGL or SGL, the PGA Tour would suffer in a multitude of ways. Weekly fields would consist of a lot of Adam Schenks, Matt Joneses and Akshay Bhatias, while the big stars were frolicking for huge dollars in a Middle East tournament. As well, big-name stars who spurned the upstart leagues, like McIlroy or Colin Morikawa, would find their victories tainted, and carrying an asterisk, because of the weaker-field events.

Is there validity to the old phrase 'money talks'? The golf world will soon find out

- **RJ Currie** of sportsdeke.com: "A Wall Street Journal report said psychologists can consistently pick the loser of a fight by seeing who has the biggest, toothiest smile before they square off. Good luck trying this predictor on NHL players."
- Comedian and Mets fan **Jerry Seinfeld**, to Newsday, on why he didn't bid to buy the team when it was recently sold: "I don't need more people yelling at me on 79th Street when the Mets are on a losing streak."
- **Patti Dawn Swansson** aka the River City Renegade, skeptical of the proposed Aug. 5 start date for the CFL season: "Circle (the date) in pencil rather than a Sharpie, and make sure there's an eraser handy."
- **Ryan French**, who runs the Monday Q Info twitter feed, on Monday qualifying for a PGA Tour event: "It's like going in a free-throw contest to play for the Lakers."
- New York Post headline after the Jets drafted QB **Zach Wilson** with the No. 2 pick in the draft: "ZACHPOT!"
- One more from Swansson: "You've heard of the **Gordie Howe** hat trick, we now have the **Phil Kessel** hat trick: 900 points, 900 consecutive games, 900 hot dogs."
- Headline at fark.com: "In light of the success of football's Super League, golfers want to create one for themselves."
- **Dwight Perry** of the Seattle Times: "Two words for the Astros' complaints that fans are mercilessly taunting them for their cheating ways en route to winning the 2017 World Series: Can it."
- Comedy writer **Brad Dickson** of Omaha, on why Nebraska scheduled a football game against Fordham: "Very simple: (AD **Bill**) **Moos** and (coach **Scott**) **Frost** desperately need wins to keep their jobs, and their first choice — a driving school in Denison, Iowa — doesn't field a team."
- Warriors forward **Juan Toscano-Anderson**, to ESPN.com, on what it's like playing alongside teammate **Steph Curry** during his torrid shooting streak: "If you get into a street fight and you've got **Mike Tyson** standing on the side of you, how you gonna feel?"
- **Phil Mushnick** of the New York Post, on the Nets' **Kyrie Irving** adding his own twist to the "DNP" designation: "

DFLP — didn't feel like playing.”
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