



www.infamousgolfprints.com is home to Minnetonka artist Bud Chapman's fantasy work, including his original 18 golf holes imagining layouts in California's Redwood forests, Florida's swamps and elsewhere. There's also his Mount Rushmore, on which Chapman replaced presidents with more "reputable" characters: Nicklaus, Palmer, Hogan and Snead.

www.3mchampionship.com has course, ticket and other information for next week's 3M Championship, the annual Champions Tour event that will draw sensational seniors and "Greats of Golf" to the TPC of the Twin Cities in Blaine.



Star Tribune photos by Tom Wallace

Bud Chapman regularly shoots lower than his age — 81 — at the Minneapolis Golf Club, where he plays three or four times per week.

A picture of dedication

Chapman's love for golf led to memorable works of art

By Jerry Zgoda
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Ambitious golfers dream of the day — only one — when they finally shoot an 18-hole score that equals their age.

Bud Chapman has done it 751 times. Unless, of course, he has finished his customary round already this morning.

Golfers worldwide might know his name because it is signed on paintings depicting fantasy golf holes in the world's most dramatic locations. Minneapolis Golf Club members know the face because he has been there, walking and carrying his own bag, most every week for more than 50 years, since when the St. Louis Park private club now surrounded by freeways and homes was framed by farms and a narrow dirt road.

"My handicap is 81," he said, referring to his age and not the U.S. Golf Association-recognized number (2.4) that measures his ability, "but I usually shoot under that."

That self-professed handicap isn't much of one, not to anyone who watches him drive the ball 250 yards off the tee or reach most greens in regulation with consistency and precision. From a simple introduction long ago, he has fashioned a romance with the game that has produced a garage full of senior trophies won and famous paintings inspired, realistic enough that Chapman was awakened one night by a telephone caller from Africa seeking directions to a golf course that doesn't exist except for inside the artist's head and on poster paper.



There is often plenty of trouble facing wayward shots in the unbelievable pictures Chapman paints of imaginary golf holes at famous tourist spots. The art, with the help of Golf Digest, has earned worldwide popularity.

A fellow who briefly led the 1983 U.S. Senior Open at Hazeltine National Club — another private club to which he belongs — and last winter won a world over-80 championship, Chapman shares the same fickle relationship with the game as any other golfer, even if he routinely shoots in the 70s.

He once wrote daily swing thoughts underneath the brim of his golf cap — "until my wife [Mitzi] washed my hats and took all my secrets off" — that he now routinely scribbles on paper plates and scorecards. "I find something that works so good that I think I've found the Holy Grail," he said. "And the next day, it's gone."

Introduced to golf as a caddie at Edina's Interlachen Country Club not long after Bobby Jones

won the 1931 U.S. Open there, Chapman shot 162 — "not including whiffs" — the first time they let him play the course. He got "hooked" because his buddies shot in the 180s that day and because the next two times out, he shot 144 and 126.

His improvement continued exponentially and, when he returned from World War II after navigating B-29 bombers, Chapman contemplated becoming a pro golfer until he watched Ben Hogan swing one day. He became a commercial artist instead, using his painting skills to deftly retouch advertising photographs that "made a \$3 product look like a \$100 product, so I was in great demand until the computer came along."

By 1972, his work had dwindled and his investments

soured. Broke and unsuccessfully searching for buried treasure in the New Mexico mountains, Chapman reckoned he'd better find another line of work and in a fit of inspiration and desperation asked himself this question: "I'm an artist. Why not paint 18 great golf holes — unbelievable, demanding holes — set in the best scenery in the world?"

Golf Digest brought his creations to the world. Offices and dens worldwide display posters depicting golfers on cliff-top tee boxes from Africa's Victoria Falls to the Grand Canyon.

He still paints at his Minnetonka condo, recently completing a moonscape that captured astronaut Alan Shepard's swings there during the Apollo 14 mission 34 years ago. Currently on his easel: A golfer's heaven and hell, where club throwers presumably pass from one realm to the other.

He plays three or four times a week at any time other than dawn, in any weather. "If the weather is crummy, he might be the only guy out there," Minneapolis Golf Club head pro Dan Simpson said. "In the fall, when it's 45 and windy, there won't be one player on the course, but he'll be out there practicing."

Chapman plays golf all summer in Minnesota and all winter in Florida. When he's not playing golf, he's painting it, as much as he can imagine.

"How lucky can you get?" he said. "You play golf and you draw pictures."

Jerry Zgoda is at jzgoda@startribune.com.



About Bud Chapman

- **Given name:** Loyal Har- graves Chapman
- **Resides:** Minnetonka.
- **Age:** 81.
- **Wife:** Mitzi.
- **USGA Handicap:** 2.4.
- **Golf memberships:** Minneapolis Golf Club, Hazeltine National Golf Club.
- **The quote:** On discovering his golf-art career in his 50s after his commercial-artist career and investments went bust: "If I hadn't lost my money, I never would have found that. Good comes out of bad. So if something bad happens, don't worry about it."

SHAG BAG

A weekly dose of news and notes

The List

Minnetonka artist and avid golfer Bud Chapman credits a healthy lifestyle — he doesn't smoke and moderately drinks — and his love of the game for allowing him to play golf, often walking and carrying his own bag, three or four times a week into his 80s. Here are three reasons golf is best as a walking game, rather than riding around all afternoon in a motorized cart:

➤ **Tradition:** Golf was popularized centuries ago by Scotsmen wandering seaside dunes. Walking and carrying your own clubs is the spirit of the game. Ask for a cart at courses where the locals play in Scotland and Ireland and they might snicker at you.

➤ **It's good for you:** Walking is among the best exercise anyone can do. A golfer can amble more than four miles during an 18-hole round. Researchers have calculated that a four-hour walking round of golf is equivalent to a 45-minute fitness class. Others research suggests walking golfers lower their bad cholesterol while maintaining their good cholesterol; riding golfers studied did not show those changes.

➤ **It's good for golf:** Pro-shop workers might argue that walking slows down pace of play; they also work for bosses who make money with every cart rental. Fit, committed walkers keep pace — or much better — with riding golfers, particularly if courses have a 90-degree cart rule. Golf is a walking game in Scotland, Ireland and England and games there, when not encumbered by Americans, rarely require four hours to complete. Walking also doesn't damage courses the way motorized carts can, provided you don't yank pull-carts across greens and tees if you use one.

Openings

Mulligan Masters 9-Hole Course

Saturday, Lake Elmo

Lake Elmo's new, vast practice facility reaches its next stage of development with the opening of a nine-hole course routed around its practice areas. The par-3 course is designed for players of all skill levels. Holes range from 85 to 169 yards; better players can challenge water hazards, trees and bunkers from the back tees, beginners can avoid them altogether from the forward tees.

The facility, north of Interstate Hwy. 94 on Hwy. 19, has four practice areas fashioned to look like a course fairway as well as putting and chipping areas. A nine-hole putting course is scheduled to open later this summer. There's a grand opening for the par-3 course Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m., including golf clinics and prize giveaways. Course fees are \$15 for adults, \$12 for juniors; practice time is \$15 an hour. See www.mulliganmasters.com and call 651-777-4653.

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