

BY GODFREY ROBERT

FINTECH COMPANY FOUNDER CHNG STAGES EVENT TO HELP LOCAL PLAYING PROS

The rust is settling in, the competitive spirit is losing some bite and frustration is setting in on Singapore's leading professional golfers.

And while the Republic's touring professionals keep themselves busy with mutual challenges and social rounds with sponsors, they miss the big rivalry and top-level atmosphere that prime them for international competitions.

After almost 10 months of competition inactivity, thanks to a "godfather", the professionals will see top-class action again when they compete in the FTAG Invitational on Dec 17 and 18 at a venue to be decided soon.

Kelvin Chng, founder and adviser of FTAG Fintech Alliance Global, a Singapore-based global venture capital, incubator and accelerator and a fully independent service provider, is coughing up money from his company to help the professionals gear themselves up for the upcoming tournaments – namely Asian Tour events – slated for next year.

Said Chng, 42, who with business partner James Koh co-owns watch company



Businessmen Kelvin Chng (left) and James Koh understand plight of local playing pros.

Chrono95, is also considering other projects to help the playing professionals, said: "I have heard of the plight of local pros from one among them, Peter Ang. The Covid-19 pandemic has hit them badly not only with zero competitions, but also consequently hurt their pockets.

"Many of them have families, and some have gone into part-time teaching to supplement their income. This invitational event is a start to help them with some pocket money to meet the expenses for foreign events slated for next year."

Ang, 32, has been a professional for 14 years and, until early this year, was teaching at Marina Bay Golf and Country Club. Now he is a director of a company dealing in diamonds and luxury goods.

The member of Tanah Merah, Laguna National and Warren plays regularly with the leading local professionals and he understands their plight. He also coaches Chng and has convinced him to look into ways to help the professionals.

He is helping Chng to organise the two-day event with a guaranteed appear-

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ance fee of \$1,000 for each professional. The winner and runner-up of the event will also receive prize-money, the sum has yet to be decided.

Added Chng, a keen football and basketball fan and a 21-handicapper who took up golf two years ago, "I know that it is a small start. But I believe it is a big incentive for the pros."

The ardent supporter of Liverpool and Los Angeles Lakers sports teams added that he believes that golf is one sport in which Singaporeans can excel. "But they need some monetary backing to help them pay for the travel and accommodation expenses whenever they compete abroad.

"I hope this gesture will encourage other sponsors to also step forward to help our pros, some of whom with no club membership cannot even play regularly on a course."

In a plea to other companies to step forward to help golf, and sport in general, Chng added: "We believe entrepreneurs bring on the positive, transformational change across every aspect of our society and economy. And it is no different in sport."

In March this year, Chrono95 came forward to help professionals Choo Tze Huang and Koh Dengshan with sponsorship to cover expenses for their travel to international events, also with a retainer.