



## Developed Just for You

Operated by PGA Professionals Erick Arbe and Nick Ondrako, Golf Web Design creates websites and mobile apps built specifically for the golf industry

By Tony L. Starks

Neither Erick Arbe or Nick Ondrako spent much time in the computer lab during their stint at Methodist University in Fayetteville, N.C. In fact, if you mentioned hard drives to the then-PGA Golf Management University students they may have been more inclined to think you were talking about pelting a golf ball 300 yards down the fairway.

But times have changed for Arbe and Ondrako, who both played for the golf team at Methodist. Currently, this duo of PGA Professionals owns and operates Golf Web Design – a golf industry website and mobile app development company.

“When we were in college, web development was one of the furthest things from our minds,” says Ondrako, 28. “It was something we dabbled in while working in the golf shop, and we familiarized ourselves with it because we recognized it was becoming essential to succeed in the golf industry.”

After graduating with business and marketing degrees, both Arbe and Ondrako tried their hand at playing tournament golf for a living. Ondrako bounced around the mini tours for a couple of years, while Arbe was able to spend an entire season on the Korean Tour in 2007.

“We both had our own websites when we were playing professionally. A lot of guys do that so they can market themselves to advertisers and sponsors,” says Arbe, 29. “After that, I think our interest grew. We realized how critical it is for golf professionals and golf facilities alike to market themselves

using the web.”

The foresight of Arbe and Ondrako proved to be spot on. Over the last several years we’ve seen a drastic increase in the number of tee times made online, the number of golf facilities appearing on social networking sites, and the number of courses offering comprehensive user-friendly websites.

But in order for the two young PGA Professionals to get in on the ground floor, they knew it would be necessary to expand their web development knowledge. Over the past several years, Arbe and Ondrako have expanded on the degrees they earned from Methodist University by taking additional web development classes, attending a multitude of web training seminars and even visiting conferences on the subject.

In 2008, Golf Web Design was born. Based in Greenville, S.C., they started by designing websites for individual teaching professionals. That sparked interest from the golf courses and country clubs where they gave lessons. And the rest, as they say, is history.

“It was really word of mouth that helped our company grow,” says Ondrako. “We began with singular golf professionals and teaching websites, then their head professionals or general managers would see those sites and recruited us to do the web page for their facility and everything just snowballed.”

Currently, Golf Web Design has more than 100 clients, including exclusive production of the branded V1 Golf Academy website. In addition, Golf Web Design has leveraged a partnership with *PGA Magazine*, helping to design, develop and implement the newly launched re-design of *PGAmagazine.com*.

Other well-known clients of Golf Web Design include Chip Beck and Bobby Clampett. However, Arbe and Ondrako remain loyal to what they believe is the core of the company: their fellow PGA Professionals.

“The PGA Professional relationship is essential to our success,” says Ondrako. “Having gone through the PGA education process and spent time working as green grass professionals, we understand what PGA Professionals and their facilities need from a website.”

Arbe adds: “We’ve had PGA Professionals come to us after having bad experiences with other web developers. One thing we’ve noticed in the web industry is that customer service isn’t always the best. But, as you know, in the golf industry customer service means everything.”

As for the future of Golf Web Design, they now offer mobile apps for individual golf courses on the iPhone and Android platforms, a service they began offering in November of 2010.

“Having a mobile app for your course now is similar to what having a website for your course meant 15 years ago. It won’t be long before it stops being a luxury, and turns into a need,” explains Ondrako. “With the emergence of smart phones, you have to have a mobile app. It’s a supplement to your website just like Facebook or Twitter.” ■

PGA Professionals Nick Ondrako (left) and Erick Arbe launched Golf Web Design in 2008.