

A golf shot heard around the universe?

March 9 2006

Perhaps the most controversial chip shot in history -- but definitely the longest -- will take place this summer outside the International Space Station.

Plans call for a Russian cosmonaut to hit a gold-plated golf ball, using a gold-plated club, The Los Angeles Times reported Thursday. The ball would travel 2.1 billion miles before coming to a fiery end in the Earth's atmosphere.

Opponents fear the publicity stunt might cause damage to the \$53 billion space station that's under construction and they also question the event's propriety.

The event is the inspiration of University of Windsor Engineering Professor Nataliya Hearn, who is also president and chief executive of the Toronto-based Element 21 Golf Co.

The company is developing a line of clubs made of a very lightweight and strong alloy of scandium, the 21st element in the periodic table.

Hearn declined to say how much the company is paying the Russians, but sometime this summer, Cosmonaut Pavel Vinogradov will hit the shot during a spacewalk.

It's estimated the golf ball will remain in orbit for two to four years before falling into Earth's atmosphere and burn.

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