



## Buzz Aldrin planning a space contest

### 'SpaceStakes' would offer out-of-this-world rides as top prizes



Apollo 11 moonwalker Buzz Aldrin — shown here in Mojave, Calif., during the SpaceShipOne flights — says he is working on a contest that will offer spaceflights as top prizes.

MSNBC staff and news service reports  
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NEW YORK - Moonwalker Buzz Aldrin announced plans on Tuesday for a prize contest that would send the winner into space in a bid to spread the dream of extraterrestrial travel beyond the super-wealthy.

Aldrin, who followed Apollo 11 crewmate Neil Armstrong onto the moon after the first manned lunar landing in July 1969, said the venture would be run through his ShareSpace Foundation, which he set up to promote interest in science and space travel in schools.

Details of the competition are still sketchy, with the legal status of selling tickets still to be resolved, Aldrin said at a space investment conference on Wall Street on Tuesday.

He said the idea was to offer the top prize of a flight into Earth's orbit, but it was not yet decided on what spacecraft.

Aldrin added that the winner would have to be over 18 years old and in good physical condition. The prize would not be transferable or salable on eBay.

Lisa Cannon, Aldrin's stepdaughter and president of StarBuzz Enterprises,

confirmed that the ShareSpace Foundation was working on a "SpaceStakes," but she said the concept was not yet ready for a public rollout.

"We are not yet sure exactly what form it will take (whether a sweepstakes, raffle, lottery, etc.) but we hope to launch it this year and offer winners actual spaceflight experiences — starting with zero-gravity flights, and then suborbital and orbital flights as they become available," she told MSNBC.com in an e-mail.

Others have looked into similar schemes for spreading the cost of spaceflight among a large number of players:

- Virginia-based Space Adventures, which has arranged space station trips for five millionaires so far, discussed a potential lottery with Florida state officials more than three years ago — but Florida nixed the idea after focus groups indicated that players would rather take the cash.
- Virgin Galactic, the space travel venture backed by British billionaire Richard Branson, talked about offering a suborbital space ride as the grand prize in an online skill game — but it's not clear whether the company will follow through on the idea.
- Texas-based Space Shot set up its own pay-for-play skill game last year, with a seat on Rocketplane Kistler's yet-to-be-built suborbital spaceship as the grand prize — and this year the game was transformed into an ad-supported, free venture with a future round-the-moon flight as the top offering.
- Other ventures, including North Carolina-based eSpaceTickets, have tried to set up space-themed contests but haven't yet gotten them off the ground.