

2022 Special Awards Candidate Bio Form

Email *

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Name of Nominee: *

Lauren Strong

Award Nominated for: *

Assistant Golf Professional of the Year

Facility Employed at: *

Forest Dunes Golf Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

2016

Using the Special Awards Criteria (link in the email,) describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award: *

Assistant Golf Professional of the Year Nomination (Lauren Strong):

It is such an honor to be nominated for Assistant Golf Professional of the Year. My name is Lauren Strong and I have been a PGA Member since 2016. It has been a privilege to be a part of the PGA of America and part of the Michigan PGA Section. I have a lot of close friends who are PGA Members, prior classmates from Ferris State PGM Program, and have had the pleasure of building new relationships and networking in the Michigan PGA section and other sections in the PGA of America.

In the midst of the pandemic, I moved back to Northern Michigan after working at Augusta National Golf Club in the spring of 2020 when the club shut down. I was offered the First Assistant Golf Professional and Teaching Professional at Forest Dunes last spring. Throughout my time working at several other types of facilities and operations, I am thankful to bring my strengths and experiences to the Michigan PGA Section and Forest Dunes Golf Club.

Forest Dunes Golf Club is a special place to me because I completed my first internship while in the PGM Program at Ferris State in 2013. I am thankful for all of the strong relationships that I have continued to build and maintain over the years with the guests, membership and staff.

I strive to continuously improve professionally and personally in all aspects of the industry including merchandising, teaching, day to day operations, professional improvement, relationship building, mentorship, and tournament operations, and facility improvement. I have been blessed to have so many mentors and examples of world-class operations and facilities throughout my time as a PGA Professional.

Some of the accomplishments that I am proud of and examples of opportunities that have made me a better PGA Professional include the following topics:

Overall Game Improvement:

It is important to me to as a teacher and a professional to keep my game the best it can possibly be. I make it a priority to dedicate time to improving my game on a weekly basis by practicing, playing in tournaments, and playing with the membership at Forest Dunes.

Teacher Accomplishments / Dedications:

- Created clinic curriculum and provided private individual instruction to members and guests
- Provided over 450 hours of instruction to 70 different clients in a 5-month season
- Continued to define my teaching philosophy and instructional knowledge base by continuing education of golf swing through shadowing, reading, and hand-on experience
- Utilized TrackMan, HUDL, V1, and several other training aids to provide the best possible resources to improve my student's game
- Interviewed on Michigan Golf Live "Best Teachers in State" Podcast
- Featured on the Michigan Golf Live T.V. Series
- Featured on the Barstool Sports Podcast, YouTube Series, and T.V. Travel Series
- Made it a priority to enhance social media presence by gaining over 1,000 followers through instructional videos, etc.

Merchandising Operation Contributions / Dedications:

Merchandising is a passion of mine and I have made it a priority to continue learning about how to improve the merchandise operation through the following examples:

- My past experience and dedication as well as a team effort towards the merchandise operation has equated to a 20% increase of sales which equated to an additional \$125,000 in revenue sales and a 3.5% increase of overall margin from 2020
- My dedication to attention to detail for displays and overall golf shop presentation
- I opened new accounts this year with RLX and Vineyard Vines through my relationships with past sales reps at our clubs I've worked at to bring a higher-end feel to the merchandise operation while still catering to low and mid-price point clientele
- Taken what I have learned from working at several other high-end facilities such as Augusta National Golf Club and the 2018, 2019, 2020 Masters Tournaments and applying to the merchandise operation at Forest Dunes
- Being creative with new patchwork for Imperial and Pukka hats, new headcover and leather goods design with Winston, and bringing several new companies and accessories to help separate our merchandise operation from others
- Provided enthusiasm to the golf shop staff by creating a monthly staff sales competition to as well as helping to mentor and educate the staff on proper golf shop display and presentation, restocking, and attention to detail

Tournament Administration Involvement:

I take pride in providing a strong sense of attention to detail while creating scoreboards, scorecards, unique tee gifts, and overall member and guest experience for over 40 events throughout the season. I am very involved with calligraphy, handicap assessments and ruling for all events. I also have been involved with several conversations for potential new golf course renovations and current facility / golf course improvement methods.

Business Professionalism and Overall Golf Professional Dedications:

I am constantly looking for ways to grow personally and professionally. I have made it a priority to improve my time management skills, organization skills, communication skills. From an athletic / physical perspective, I constantly train to improve my overall physical health to become a better player and stay healthy. I also have had the wonderful opportunity to help mentor other young staff members towards their goals as future merchandisers, PGA Professionals, and help steer them in whichever avenue / direction they decide to go in life and their careers. It is so very important to me to create and build on relationships with the guests, members, staff, and other PGA Professionals. I am constantly trying to improve, grow, and set goals in all of these aspects of the industry and operation.

Contributions Made to the Success of the Candidate's Facility and the Game of Golf:

Through my experience and contributions to merchandising, teaching, tournament operations, professional development, and relationship building, I am confident in saying Forest Dunes has continued to be considered a world class facility and operation. I have brought new players to the game by offering golf instruction, increased sales by improving customer service and providing my insight to the merchandise operation, and have provided a memorable tournament experience for members and guests.

Character, Image, and Integrity of the Candidate:

I take my reputation as a PGA Professional, coworker, friend, and business professional very serious. I make it a goal of mine to present myself the best way I can by being a respectful, hard-working, and dedicated individual. I feel it is important to communicate professionally, dress professionally, and take my job as an

Assistant Golf Professional seriously. I am dedicated to being considered a friendly, trustworthy, and motivated coworker, professional, and individual.

Examples of the Candidate's Mentors:

I have had the blessing and opportunity to work for and learn from several successful PGA Professionals in the industry. Some of the following include:

- Chad Maveus, PGA (Head Golf Professional at Forest Dunes Golf Club and former First Assistant Golf Professional at Pebble Beach Golf Links)
- J.J. Weaver, PGA (Director of Golf at the Inverness Club and Head Golf Professional at Augusta National Golf Club)
- Elliott Oscar, PGA (Former Head Golf Professional at Forest Dunes Golf Club, 3-time Merchandiser of the Year winner, and current Head Golf Professional at Ballyneal)
- Michael Shank, PGA (Director of Golf at Wilmington Country Club and 2-Time Horton Smith Award winner)
- Jason Guss, PGA (Director of Instruction for the Jason Guss Golf Academy and winner of several highly regarded awards as a Teacher and Coach)
- Don Meadows, PGA (Director of Golf at Quail Valley Golf Club and former winner of several highly regarded awards as a PGA Professional)
- Matt Dial (Director of Logistics at Augusta National Golf Club)
- Casey Lubahn (Head Golf Coach for Michigan State Men's Golf Team)

Again, I am so blessed and honored to be considered for Assistant Golf Professional of the Year award. I can't thank you enough my fellow PGA Members and to the Michigan PGA Section for considering me for this nomination. I couldn't have done it without my mentors, coworkers, and fellow PGA Professionals. I cherish every single relationship I have had the privilege of experiencing through my time as an overall individual and PGA Professional throughout my life. I look forward to continuing growing as a PGA Professional and sincerely thank you for your consideration.

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