

2023 Special Awards Candidate Bio Form

Please send this form back no later Friday, October 21, 2022.

If you were nominated for more than one award you must **submit a bio form for each award.**

Email *

brad@railsidegolf.com

Name of Nominee: *

Brad VanGorder

Award Nominated for: *

Assistant Golf Professional of the Year

Facility Employed at: *

Railside Golf Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

2021

Please describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award. *

Introduction:

It is an honor to be nominated by my peers and have a chance to be named the Assistant Golf Professional of the Year. My name is Brad VanGorder and I have been a class A PGA Member since February 2021. I attended Ferris State University and graduated in the fall of 2020. During my time at Ferris, I accumulated several friendships and connections both in and outside of the program. I credit the contacts I've made to who I am and continue to be and grow as a professional.

I was hired at Railside Golf Club and started in January of 2021 as the Assistant Golf Professional. After one short season with Railside, I was promoted to the Lead Assistant Professional to begin the 2022 golf season. During my previous two years at Railside, I have furthered my network within the section, built great relationships and rapport with membership of the club, and continue to grow as a PGA Professional.

Strengths as a player:

Golf can be a humbling game; however, it is highly rewarding. As a player it is my belief that you should set challenging yet attainable goals to continually push yourself to improve. This same work ethic that it takes to maintain and improve your game as a player can be directly related to the work done in the office as well to grow as a professional. I believe it is important for me to perpetually hone my skills, as it builds credibility with membership.

Values and Achievements:

- Set goals to where I want my game and what I would like to achieve in a season
- Allot time when available to practice and play when I can
- Converse with other players to determine strengths and weaknesses in my own game
- Play in section and chapter events to support the section and chapter
- Finished top 10 in 2022 Western Chapter Championship

Strengths as a Teacher:

As a young professional I am constantly looking to expand my knowledge on the fundamentals, mechanics, and variations on the golf swing. Understanding the swing and pairing it up with lines of communication to each individual student is important as it directly influences the rate at which a student learns. I believe that I effectively do both and it can be supported by the growth of private lessons that I have done at Railside Golf Club.

Achievements:

- In my first year I increased private lesson revenue at Railside for the assistant professional position by an average of 400% (using years 2017-2020)
- In my second year I increased private lesson revenues at Railside for the assistant professional position from the average by 1,409% (using years 2017-2020)
- I increased my 2022 private lesson revenue by 201% over my 2021 revenue
- My 2022 year to date private lesson revenues are \$18,645
- Added Junior Golf programming allowing for more junior golf opportunities
- Added a second PGA Junior league team in 2021 at Railside
- In 2022 Maxed out both PGA Junior League team rosters (each team is capped at 12)

Strengths as a Merchandiser:

Merchandising at any facility requires the ability to predict trends for the coming season. It also requires a buyer to be unique in their decisions as well. At Railside I have worked alongside the Head Golf Professional to bring in different brands and looks to create distinction and add value to the Golf Shop at Railside Golf Club.

Achievements:

- Formed and grown relationship with different vendors to further grow different brands at Railside
- Increased equipment sales with TaylorMade by 126% since 2020
- Increased TaylorMade product annual turnover rate shown by growing 2020 account value from \$3,171 to the 2022 account value of \$16,982
- In my first year at Railside, we grew pro-shop revenue by 32.5% over 2020, and 22.3% over 2019
- In 2021 I was given more freedom to merchandise the golf shop for 2022 and grew year to date revenues by 2.7% over 2021

Strengths as a Tournament Administrator:

I have been a part of every facet of the event administrative process. The processes and procedures I have been a part of include but are not limited to include:

- Updating event formats to better fit the facilities ability to provide a better experience for participants
- Coordination with vendors to deliver custom awards for events

- Coordination with vendors to deliver merchandise, custom clothing (size specified), and other tee gifts for events
- Event rostering and confirmations
- Event formatting and tournament setup using Golf Genius
- Event marketing using social media
- Delegation of staff and properly scheduling them to handle events
- Scoring tournaments and use of calligraphy
- Make ruling based on situations that may happen on the golf course or during course of play

Businessperson and Overall Golf Professional:

I would say that I am a qualified business professional and golf professional. However, it is also my belief that the journey of self-improvement is never over. As a professional in all areas, I should perpetually look to learn and expand my knowledges to better impact my business and professionals around me.

Activities done to continue growth:

- Look for new opportunities within Railside to generate revenue not previously tapped
- Expand current opportunities within Railside to generate revenue
- Follow different golf related social media accounts
- Read different golf industry related and unrelated articles
- Gain feedback from peers

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

Railside has had continued and grown success in varied amounts since I became a member of its professional staff. Areas that have improved include but are not limited to the number of lessons given and lesson revenue generated, merchandise sales, hospitality, tournament administration, and new ideas to help automate the facilities daily operation.

Contributions to the game of golf that I have made at Railside can be seen in my strengths as a player and teacher. By playing with membership and building those relationships it has helped me build business teaching. In the large number of lessons, I have given, as well as, programs run, I have helped new players begin the process and start enjoying the game of golf.

Character, Image, and Integrity of the Candidate:

As a golf professional it's important to balance both business and hospitality. I continually look to improve social skills, member and guest rapport, presentation of self, reliability, credibility, and overall attitude as they are directly responsible for the image that surrounds me as a professional. I look to my peers and fellow professionals at Railside to give feedback as well as trusted members to continually improve these skills to make sure that I don't create a bad representation of myself as a professional.

Examples of the Candidate's Mentors:

I want to thank the following people as I consider them all to be mentors to my growth and I attribute them to be a large part where I am today.

Matt Koets, PGA (Head Golf Professional, Railside Golf Club)

Juan Martinez, PGA (Head Golf Professional, Blythefield Country Club)

John Seltzer, PGA (Seltzer Golf Academy)

Aaron Waltz, PGA (Director of US Sales, TrackMan)

Mark Wilson, PGA (Interim PGA Golf Management Director, Ferris State University)

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to run for Assistant Golf Professional of the Year. I am truly honored to have been given this opportunity.

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Email *

brandonarchibald@pga.com

Name of Nominee: *

Brandon Archibald

Award Nominated for: *

Assistant Golf Professional

Facility Employed at: *

Forest Lake Country Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

2018

Please describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award. *

First and foremost, it brings me great pleasure to have been nominated for such a prominent award such as the Assistant Golf Professional of the Year for the Michigan Section. Going down the list of past winners it is certainly an honor that I do not take lightly.

I was elected to membership in the fall of 2018 after graduating from the Professional Golf Management program at Ferris State University. As a former professional athlete, my current career path was not always my first choice, but one that I grew to love and grew a passion for during my time at Ferris State. Continuing my education after graduation was always something I had expected to do and that started with Titleist Performance Institute certification in 2018. In the summer of 2019, I completed the PGA Certified Professional Program in Golf Operations with aspirations of completing the Master Professional Program in the future. As of the Fall of 2021 I was nominated for the board, and accepted, the role of Tournament Co-Chair for the Eastern Chapter.

Being a member of the PGA has allowed me to curb the desire to compete again in Michigan PGA and Chapter events. Growing up I played in many junior leagues, however once my hockey career began to take off, competitive golf had to take a back seat. I look forward to every golf season starting in Michigan so that I can begin another tournament schedule.

The most rewarding part of the business for me is not only the relationships I have built with other members of the PGA, but the connections I have made with the members at the courses I have been at. Serving the membership at Forest Lake over the past four years has been some of the most rewarding times I have had. I began as an assistant at Forest Lake Country Club in 2017 after being contacted to help with their invitational from a friend who said they were short staffed. At the completion of the tournament, the Head Professional at the time, Dom Izzo, invited me to come on board. I jumped at the opportunity as I knew from over the four-day tournament Forest Lake Would be a great fit for me post University.

A lot has changed over the years at Forest Lake from Head Professionals, General Managers, even the course set up.

Communicating with members throughout the years I have been able to give countless lessons, as well as implement programs and playing opportunities that I believed would better serve the members. Perhaps the biggest change I was able to make was to our Junior Golf Program. I overhauled the Forest Lake Junior Golf Program in 2018 using my background as an athlete and applying my teaching philosophy of "creating athletes, not golfers". This idea implies that we need to teach juniors the basics of running, skipping, jumping, throwing, etc. if they are going to be able to play their best. In four short years we have seen unimaginable growth from 45 juniors in 2017 to 80 in 2020. With the re-introduction of sports after the pandemic we saw a small decline in 2022.

I also set up all the leagues and tournaments at Forest Lake with the assistance of Head Professional Jeff Rachar. If it were not for Jeff, I would not have the pleasure of writing this bio. Jeff has listened and allowed me to implement changes at the Club that we feel has benefited the membership. In 2019, I started a "Play with the Pros" season long tournament that saw 21 members participate. With the help of Jeff, we saw that number more than double to 45 members in only its second year. I have also implemented many teaching clinics such as women's "Wine and Wedges" and "Sipping and Swinging" that has grown the women's leagues.

Although my role of a merchandiser at Forest Lake is limited due to the tournament operations, I have learned a tremendous amount with the help of the professionals at Forest Lake. In 2018, we saw the departure of one Head Professional in the fall which allowed me the first-hand experience of creating a small budget to buy with until the next Head Professional was announced. Once Jeff Rachar was revealed as the new Head Professional, I gained more experience in both helping him select product based on my knowledge of the membership at Forest Lake as well as his merchandising philosophy.

I would not be where I am at today if it were not for mentors such as Jeff Rachar (Forest Lake Country Club), Dom Izzo (Grey Oaks Country Club), Ian Ziska (American Dunes), as well as my parents. My parent's have supported me every step of my life whether it be through my hockey or golf careers.

Lastly, I would like to thank my wife Kaitlynn who has been there to support me throughout the long summer months of early mornings and late nights all while taking care of our 2-year old son, Stetson Robert and 6-month old Kolter Wyatt! You three have made the journey of becoming a PGA Head Golf Professional one day the best that it could be!

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Email *

brianjake@gmail.com

Name of Nominee: *

Brian Jakeway

Award Nominated for: *

Assistant Golf Professional of the Year

Facility Employed at: *

Bay Harbor Golf Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

2013

Please describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award. *

I am in my second year as my Assistant Golf Professional at Bay Harbor Golf Club. In my role I am involved in every facet of the club. We are a very busy semi private facility. We have close to 300 hundred members along with public greens fees and resort package play. This season we have had approximately 26,000 rounds spread out between those three different types of guests. For my role it is extremely important to be able to jump back and forth from being an ambassador and host to first time guests as well as accommodating the needs of my membership.

One element of my job is maintaining and operating a busy golf shop. Along with running the day to day operations I setup, display and organize all merchandise. We receive merchandise weekly through the season and it is important to display and organize everything in a timely manner. This season our golf shop merchandise sales were over \$750,000. Keeping up with the everchanging merchandise and displays is constant responsibility.

Another element is my role is with the membership. I head up and run our weekly Men's Day along with our weekly Couples 9 and dine. As the head of these event I setup and run these events from start to finish. Our Men's day participation increased by over 6 players a week, averaging 40+ players. Our Couples events average 32-36 players. On top of these weekly events I also assist in running Member/Member, Member/Guest and Club Championship events for both Men and Ladies.

One of the most rewarding parts of my role are my interactions with our young individuals who work in the golf shop. We have 2 PGM interns through the season. I help train, coach and mentor those individuals. For most of them it is their 1st experience in a golf shop and we try make it a successful for them and us. Having an influence on our future golf professionals is very fulfilling.

Although I don't play competitively as much as I would like, I do play in a local event called The Harbor Cup. It is a team event with a Ryder Cup format that pits Boyne Golf PGA professionals against local PGA professionals from the Petoskey/Harbor Springs and surrounding area. The event raises money for local charities and has taken place over the last 26 years. I have been fortunate enough to have competed in 12 of the 26 events playing for both teams along the way. This season Team Boyne raised almost \$100,000. It is a tremendous honor to be apart of such an amazing event.

Thank you for the nomination.

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Email *

Fegertb@Ferris.edu

Name of Nominee: *

Bryan Fegert

Award Nominated for: *

Assistant Golf Professional Award

Facility Employed at: *

Battle Creek Country Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

2020

Please describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award. *

As a player in the Western Chapter Section, I always make it a goal to play in as many events as my work schedule allows me. This year I played in 12 total events, which included; Qualifiers, Pro Ams, Section and Chapter events. I utilize these events to meet other PGA Professionals, network, and test my golf skills against the rest of you.

Teaching in this profession has been a work in progress for me ever since I started in the PGM School at Ferris State University in 2015. At Battle Creek Country Club, 80% of my lessons are with juniors, while the other 20% resulting to members and guests. Throughout my internships and work after college, I have the confidence to teach players of all skill levels.

Having the opportunity to work at all 3; Public, Private, and Resort golf courses, has been a big leap forward in helping myself progress in the merchandising aspect of the business. Whether it be meeting with sales reps to pick out apparel, understanding the products in the shop we are trying to sell, stocking the shop with inventory, or folding shirts, I feel I have grown as an individual each year in the merchandising aspect of it all.

Spending countless hours on our tournament software, Golf Genius, is a part of the job I excel at. Whether it be the weekly net/gross games, side games, Pro Am's, Member Guest, or any member event for that matter, I feel confident they will be done correctly with no controversy from players.

As a golf professional overall, I have gained the confidence from members over my 3 years at BCCC to lead them in the right direction when asked upon. In the attempt to play with different members every Thursday through the season, this year I golfed with 32 different members. It is an effective way to build relationships, as well as to show off my golf skills to them all in the same time; which eventually leads to more lessons.

I have helped our facility in keeping a strong junior program since starting in 2020. I took over the PGA Junior League team for 3 years and have witnessed a great deal of success with the juniors. This year in specific, we had 15 kids on the Junior League team, with 7 of them playing "competitive" golf for the first time. Helping grow the game to the younger generation is a part of the job I take a great deal of pride in.

My image at the club has progressed over my time at BCCC. I bring positive energy to work every day and feel members want me there at the club. The trust from members to having myself instruct their kids for 3 consecutive years shows me that they trust my ability to teach and get them to enjoy the game as much as we do. Being asked to golf weekly, taking members to different courses for Pro Am's, and being able to hold conversations with members is all part of it that I thoroughly enjoy.

Ever since I started at Battle Creek Country Club, my boss, Doug Kreis, has been an incredible mentor for me. He has shown me what it takes to become a successful Professional, both in and outside the golf business. With his help, I have had the privilege to work at some of the top golf courses in Florida in the winter months. He connected me with my current winter club, Quail Valley Golf Club, in Vero Beach, FL, where I work for the President of the South Florida Section, Don Meadows, for what will be my 2nd year. All in all, I am grateful for everything this business has given to me so far in the early stages of my career.

Thank you all for the nomination and taking the time to recognize me for this award.

Bryan Fegert, PGA

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Email *

jbreedlove@oakland-hills.com

Name of Nominee: *

John Breedlove

Award Nominated for: *

Assistant Golf Professional of the Year

Facility Employed at: *

Oakland Hills Country Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

2022

Please describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award. *

First, I would like to thank you for considering me for the Assistant Golf Professional of the year award. It is an honor to have the hard work from this season acknowledged by our organization and considered against other assistant golf professionals in the Michigan section who work tirelessly to grow this great game.

2022 has been a challenging but rewarding year. I relocated my family from the Georgia section when I was presented the opportunity to come work as the senior assistant professional at Oakland Hills Country Club under the mentorship of Michigan golf hall of famer Steve Brady.

I'm sure you are all aware that 2022 has been a uniquely difficult year for Oakland Hills after the fire that destroyed the historic clubhouse on February 17th, 2022. The fire left the club scrambling to regroup and figure out the logistics of golf operations for an active membership at a 36-hole facility..... without a clubhouse. As Mike Tyson famously said, "everybody's got a plan until they get punched in the mouth".

I remember watching ESPN's coverage of the fire and thinking that it was one of the worst tragedies to occur in the sport in recent memory. At that time, I had no clue that I would soon be employed there and had no intention of ever living in Michigan. However, about a month after the event, I saw a job posting on pga.org for the senior assistant golf professional position at the renowned club. I was looking to take the next step in my career, and I thought it would be a unique opportunity to be a part of the planning and rebuilding process. I also thought that this was a great chance for me to be considered for a position at one of the top clubs in America as I'm sure, with the clubhouse just having burned to the ground, the stack of resumes being submitted wasn't quite as high as it normally would be. Fortunately for me, Steve Brady gave me a shot. I can honestly say that I have worked harder and been challenged more this summer than any of my other golf industry experiences, but it has been deeply rewarding.

A little background on me. I am originally from Deland, Florida where I first got my feet wet in the golf industry at Victoria Hills Golf Club (Golf Digest top 10 you can play in Florida 2005). I started working on the outside operations team and quickly worked my way up to 1st Assistant. I worked at Victoria Hills from 2004-2010. When the economy slumped in 2008-2009 it was devastating to the golf industry in Florida. I had always wanted to join the military due to the influence that my uncle, Colonel Gary Breedlove, had made on me when I was young. So, much to the surprise of everyone I knew (including my wife), I went to the local recruiter's office and enlisted in the United States Army.

Joining the Army was the best decision that I ever made. The military experience taught me discipline, the value of hard work, and a deep appreciation of the American way of life. I had a successful military tenure, earning 2 Army Achievement Medals, the Army Commendation Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Medal, and graduating as the Distinguished Honor Graduate at the Army Warrior Leader Course (top in class of 325 soldiers). I spent much of my military service time overseas being stationed in Germany for 6 years and deployed to Afghanistan for 10 months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

After being honorably discharged from the military in 2017, I knew I wanted to return to the golf business. I enrolled at Keiser University College of Golf and Sport Management and later graduated Summa Cum Laude with a bachelor's degree in Golf Management. During my time at Keiser, I was given one year of eligibility from the NAIA and walked on to the golf team at age 32. I competed for one season and later assisted the head coach by running practices and traveling with the team. At Keiser, I learned a tremendous amount about being a golf instructor under the mentorship of Dr. Eric Wilson, PGA and Ken Martin, PGA. I also gained valuable golf industry experience being employed at High Ridge Country Club, Moon Golf, and Callaway Golf.

In 2019 I was accepted into the University of Georgia to pursue a master's degree in Kinesiology with a focus in Sports Management. I was also given a position as a graduate teaching assistant as a golf instructor. I was responsible for teaching the game to over 100 undergraduate students each semester. This was an invaluable experience for me to be able to apply my skills as a golf instructor to over 400 students.

I'm very proud of the fact that in May of 2021 I graduated from the University of Georgia with a master's degree in Kinesiology and a GPA of 3.85. Furthermore, my master's thesis entitled "Impact of Sales with Advanced Analytical Technology on Golf Consumer Purchasing Behavior: Traditional vs. Technological Procedures" was focused on how the use of Trackman in retail sales impacts consumer behaviors. This paper has been condensed and submitted to the Journal of Sport Management for peer review. Another research project that I contributed to during my time at UGA was recently published in the Sustainability Journal. The article is entitled "Moving Away from Category Exclusivity Deals to Sponsorship Activation Platforms: The Case of the Ryder Cup" and was focused on sponsorship strategies used during the 2014 Ryder Cup at Gleneagles.

After completing my studies at UGA, I was blessed to be offered a position as 1st Assistant Professional at the Atlanta Athletic Club where I learned a tremendous amount from my friend and mentor Bud Taylor, PGA. I was able to complete much of my level 1,2, and 3 PGA apprenticeship during my year at the AAC and was a critical staff member during the 2021 KPMG Women's PGA Championship.

My previous education and experience culminated in this opportunity here at Oakland Hills Country Club. I am proud to say that I have been able to make a positive impact on the club during an exceedingly difficult time after the fire. I have been involved in many golf aspects of the golf operations from planning and logistics of temporary facilities to tournament operations, but my greatest contribution has been the revitalization of the junior golf programs at OHCC. Between the recent major renovation of the south course and the clubhouse fire, the junior golf programs had seen a dramatic decline in participation. I was able to introduce the Operation 36 program to the club. 9-Hole events are the cornerstone of the Operation 36 program and the true measurement of the skill level of the players. Players are attempting to shoot 36 to advance to the next division (Hole length D1 = 25 yards, D2 = 50 yards, D3 = 100 yards, D4 = 150 yards, D5 = 200 yards). Even from the shorter distances, the North Course at OHCC provides a stout test of a player's abilities. If these kids can learn to score on this golf course at a young age, they will be able to score anywhere in the world once they grow and develop. This summer we have had over 120 different kids participate in the program hitting 21,536 shots on the golf course this season with a scoring average of 43.2! Over 52% of kids who participated advanced to at least division 2 and some players advanced all the way to division 5. More importantly, the junior golf programs were well received by the entire membership and will be expanded for next season.

In summary, it has been a whirlwind of a few years since returning to the golf industry in May of 2017. During this time, I earned a bachelor's degree, master's degree, and Class A membership with the PGA. I have also been able to contribute to two of America's top private clubs, the Atlanta Athletic Club, and Oakland Hills Country Club. I'm proud to be a member of the PGA of America and I am excited to see where the journey goes from here.

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Email *

lucas.baumann@outlook.com

Name of Nominee: *

Lucas Baumann

Award Nominated for: *

Assistant Golf Professional of the Year

Facility Employed at: *

Bay Meadows Family Golf Course

Year Elected to Membership: *

2021

Please describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award. *

I started my golf career in Northern Michigan as the Assistant Golf Professional at Bay Meadows Family Golf Course, in Traverse City MI, under the direction of PGA Professionals, Michael Husby and Scott Wilson. My duties include all aspects of the golf operations such as staff management, budgeting, golf instruction, camp & clinic setup, club repair and club fitting. I am responsible for day-to-day operations of the pro shop and outside bag staff. I currently oversee the staff of 14 employees.

With the mentoring and training from Michael Husby, Owner, PGA Professional, I have improved my knowledge in customer service and sales in the pro shop from clear communication with staff and customers to using positive language and adaptability for certain situations. In 2018 I implemented a new policy and procedure manual in which all employees were trained. This helped bring better customer service to our golfers and improved our staff's self-confidence and communication skills. Over the past 6 years with the help of PGA staff and employees, Bay Meadows has increased rounds an average of 16% per season. In 2016 Bay Meadows had 12,600 rounds with an increase to 22,000 rounds in 2020. Now in 2022 we have set a record number of rounds with 24,500.

Club repair was not offered at Bay Meadows before I started in 2016. Over the past six years we have grown sales and added a club repair workstation for the increased business. I currently offer adjustments for loft and lie, cutting and tipping shafts, epoxy fixes and re-gripping. Re-gripping has been the biggest increase from selling 125 grips in 2016 for total sales of \$1,250 to 740 grips in 2022 for total sales of \$7,755. Club repair & re-gripping has been a great way to expand our business here at Bay Meadows but more importantly how it benefits our golfers. Members, guest and students can bring any club repair or issue right to our pro shop instead of sending items in the mail or to another business.

Bay Meadows had little merchandise on property and low sales when I came on board in 2016. Total merchandise sales for clubs along with apparel in 2016 was \$37,000. Merchandise sales have increased an average of 20% every season. This increase has come from adding new clothing lines such as Puma, Peter Millar and Skechers Shoes and proper sales training through our procedure manual. Last winter we got our hands dirty and renovated our golf shop which brought new clothing racks and track lighting. Club fitting year-round has helped increase our Callaway club sales to boost our total merchandise sales. Our current merchandise sales for 2022 are currently at \$147,000.

With the mentoring and guidance of Scott Wilson, PGA Professional, I have been able to expand junior instruction at Bay Meadows and grow the game for all abilities. The program I am most humbled by and proud of, is the program I started for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This three-week program gives the opportunity for disabled young adults to experience the joys of golf in an open and welcoming environment. This program covers the "FUN"amentals of golf and learning life skills through golf, with a play day on the final week. This program occurs three times throughout the year with eight different students attending each program. Over the past 7 years I have been able to introduce golf to over 60 young adults and help 4 individuals continue playing at the Michigan Summer Special Olympics.

Away from teaching and day-to-day operations, I participate in chapter and sectional events to grow relationships with members, customers and to stay competitive in the Northern Chapter. During 2022 I played in six pro-ams, one sectional event and a match play event. I finished 3rd in our Northern Chapter Assistant Championship and finished 12th overall in points for the season. My favorite part of the pro-ams is watching my members, friends and or family enjoying the game I love.

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Email *

ryan@kentcountryclub.com

Name of Nominee: *

Ryan Bayer

Award Nominated for: *

Assistant Golf Professional of the Year

Facility Employed at: *

Kent Country Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

2019

Please describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award. *

To start, I would like to thank anyone who nominated me for the 2022 Assistant Golf Professional of the Year award. As a young professional it means a lot to me to get nominated for the fourth year in a row now. I truly appreciate that my hard work is being recognized. Now that we have finally started to turn the corner and away from Covid now is the best time to start getting creative and trying to capture as many golfers as we can to bring to our great game.

Being at the same club for the last four seasons has shown me that if you put your time and effort into something that it will start to pay dividends. My first season was very much a learning experience, just trying to take in as much information as I could from the then current First Assistant Golf Professional, Jimmy Wisinski, who that season won the 2019 Assistant Golf Professional of the Year award. Much like a backup quarterback trying to learn under the savvy veteran. Fast forward a few years where I have now become the First Assistant Golf Professional here at Kent Country Club it has become a dream job where I have been able to develop all of my skills to their fullest potential.

One aspect I am truly grateful for about working at Kent Country Club is the opportunity to play. I have always held playing the game of golf as the most important skill any golf professional can have. Being able to entertain members and guests on the course has shown an increase in usage of the club. These member's who I have been able to play with take more lessons, play more golf, and spend more money in the shop. I have been fortunate to have some strong finishes the last few years playing as well finishing third at the Assistant's Championship, T-27th at the Section Championship, as well as winning the Fall Pro-Scratch. We not only encourage the golf professionals to play, but it has become expected here, and the support from the member's when we play well makes all of the hard work worth it.

The largest area of improvement for me has been teaching by far. Lessons my first three season were limited to mainly junior's and those who wanted a quick thirty minutes when Jimmy, our Director of Instruction, was unavailable. This season I have seen an increase of 400% in my lessons given. And have made more total dollars than my first three years combined. Not only with the hourly lessons, but I have done twice the number of clinics, and have created a leadership role with junior golf and PGA Junior League as well. I have a true passion for teaching junior golfers. My main focus is to make sure they are having fun first and foremost, after that I have been able to determine what they really want to get out of golf and can teach them from there. This passion stems from my ideology as a golf professional. My perception is that I want everyone to enjoy the game of golf as much as I have. Golf has brought me countless friendships and memories that I can take with me for the rest of my life. I can set out to help other people attain these same friendships and memories. And, in the end, I have learned that there is much more to golf than just swinging the golf club.

All strong assistant golf professionals have a core group of mentors that they are able to lean on and help them learn. My father will always be my biggest mentor, with him being a fellow PGA professional there is no question or scenario that he has not been able to help me with. From being able to send him a swing video to help me with my swing to being able to put a budget together. He has all of the answers. I am fortunate to be able to work with a few of my mentor's as well. Jimmy Wisinski and Matt Swan have truly molded me into the golf professional that I have become. There is nothing I have every felt uncomfortable asking. Their mentorship and friendships for my first job out of school will be something that I can take with me for the rest of my life.

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Email *

tsimons@cclansing.org

Name of Nominee: *

Tiffany Simons

Award Nominated for: *

MI PGA 2023 Assistant Golf Professional Award

Facility Employed at: *

Country Club of Lansing

Year Elected to Membership: *

2014

Please describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award. *

Assistant Golf Professional of the year (Tiffany Simons):

I have been a golf professional for 8 years and have found my passion in the game of golf. I am in the fortunate position of having found a career in an industry that I love and can continue to grow in. My understanding and love of the game has helped me become a respected and prosperous golf professional. My desire to teach and help others develop their game and my willingness to continue to learn give me the chance to become better every day. My career has allowed me to work in four different states including two of the top resorts in the country, Kiawah Island Golf Resort and Whistling Straits. I have also been fortunate to work alongside several great class A professionals that have helped shape my career. While employed at Kiawah, the resort hosted the 2012 PGA Championship, which allowed me to experience an entirely different sector of the golf industry. With the rescheduling of the 2020 Ryder Cup at Whistling Straits, I was still able to return and volunteer on my intended committee. At each of the facilities I've worked at I have learned a variety of different training methods, different tournament software, and overall different work responsibilities.

I am currently in my second year as an Assistant Golf Professional at the Country Club of Lansing (CCL). Having come from a resort style facility I was excited about my new adventure working at a private club where I would see the same members throughout the season and would be giving lessons on a more regular basis than I ever had before. Over these last two years I have learned from the Director of Golf John Lindert and Head Professional Logan Simmonds who have both helped tremendously as I transition from a resort style facility to a private country club.

To my delight I love the private sector as it allows me to build relationships with my members. One of the most rewarding aspects of being at a private club is seeing my students succeed. I have taught over 300 lessons since joining the CCL team and just this year got to see a student win her flight in the Club Championship and go on to win the Couples Club Championship. One of my favorite parts of the job is seeing a non-golfer grow into someone who loves the game. Two years ago, I began a ladies clinic, 'Women, Wine and Wedges,' that met once a week for 5 weeks and targeted all aspects of their golf game. We followed each session with a glass of wine and time to socialize! It was a huge success and is now a yearly event that averages over 30 members. Women, Wine, and Wedges continues to grow and bring new golfers to the club as well as growing our WGA.

Prior to my arrival at CCL the WGA averaged 180 participants in a season. Over my last two seasons the WGA has grown, and this season had 261 participants. I lead all WGA events including league and the Women's Invitational. CCL also hosts three member-guest events, two year-long match play events, and a spring and fall league. This past season I added an additional event to the WGA schedule. All the ladies' events grew significantly throughout the last two years as well. The Women's Invitational has increased 10 additional players each year and our Tri-Member doubled in size over the last two years. At each event the professional staff goes above and beyond to make sure our membership has the best time on the golf course.

Another area that I take great pride in is being a role model to my junior players, especially as a female in a male dominated industry. Having a part in continuing to grow the game by teaching juniors is what makes my job incredibly rewarding. Both years I was able to secure a grant from the Michigan Section for our juniors' activities and programs.

One thing that I was tasked with when coming onboard at CCL was merchandising the proshop. This was a new area for me as it was not something I had gotten into at past facilities, and I love it! In the last two years I have opened numerous accounts that include, Kinona, Tzu Tzu, 7 Diamonds, Scales, and several other brands. I am continuously researching and keeping up with the latest brands for our members. I started an Instagram page for John Lindert's Golf Shop where we promote new brands and show our membership when new merchandise has been delivered. This account has gained several hundred followers in just one year. Our social media presence has noticeably increased sales as well. In the last year I have taken over the buying, merchandising, and special-order responsibilities for the pro shop and sales have increased \$106,000 over the last year alone. I revamped the special-order system and help reduce shrinkage by 50%. Our corporate orders also increased 23% over the last two years as well.

As busy as the golf season is, I make it a priority to continue working on my game and playing as much as possible with both my colleagues and members. Furthering my education has also been a high priority as well as my hands on experience, which is why I became a Certified Professional in Golf Operations. I plan to continue my educational path to becoming a Master Professional in the future. I continue to participate in as many section events as possible. I enjoy meeting members throughout the state as well as playing new facilities around when the chance presents itself.

Throughout my career I have been extremely fortunate to have great mentors, these include:

Ric Ferguson (Head Professional at Osprey Point, Kiawah Island Resort)

Michael O'Reilly (Director of Golf at Whistling Straits)

Michael Aschenbach (Head Professional at Whistling Straits)

Josue Reyes (Director of Merchandising for Destination Kohler)

John Lindert (Director of Golf at the Country Club of Lansing)

Logan Simmonds (Head Professional at the Country Club of Lansing)

Thank you for considering me for the Assistant Golf Professional of the year. I am very thankful to be nominated for this award.

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Email *

timp@bhamcc.com

Name of Nominee: *

Tim Pearce

Award Nominated for: *

Assistant Professional of the Year

Facility Employed at: *

Birmingham Country Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

2019

Please describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award. *

Thank you to the Michigan PGA and its members for the nomination for the 2023 Assistant Golf Professional of the Year award. I am honored and privileged to be an active member in this section along with some of the best golf professionals in the country. My name is Tim Pearce and I am a 2019 graduate of the PGM program at Ferris State University. I have spent my 4 years as a Michigan PGA member as an Assistant Golf Professional at Birmingham Country Club in Birmingham, Michigan. Some of my responsibilities include managing and executing all men's tournaments and events, overseeing hard goods inventory and buying, conducting private and group instruction for all ages and abilities, and representing Birmingham and its members while competing in section and national tournaments. During my time at Birmingham, I found a passion in helping our junior golfers become better players and people through the game of golf. As a former junior golfer, I realize how important it is to have professionals willing to grow the game and be mentors to our younger golfers. Without the help of Gary Bashford, PGA, director of instruction, I wouldn't have the knowledge of course management and teaching the golf swing to golfers of all ages. I direct and manage our junior golf program made up of over 200 juniors. Some of the program objectives include full swing and short game mechanics, learning the rules of golf, golf course management, and most importantly instilling integrity and proper etiquette of the game. This fall, I volunteered to be on a panel for the Michigan PGA and spoke with junior golfers and parents as a way to get young people into the game of golf and to consider golf as a career path. We spoke about our many different journeys of becoming PGA professionals and provided insight into the benefits and opportunities of having a career in the golf industry. As an active player in section and national PGA events, I strive to be a good role model and inspire our juniors to work hard and be great students of the game. Because of the incredible playing opportunities the PGA of America provides, I was able to qualify and compete in the 2021 PGA Championship held at the Ocean Course at Kiawah Island Golf Resort. I have Steve Vecellio, PGA and John Pershern, PGA to thank because of their willingness to mentor and help shape my game in a way to compete at the highest level. This accomplishment was incredibly humbling and provided a substantial opportunity to showcase our facility at Birmingham and what I do as a PGA professional on a daily basis. Our membership and especially our juniors were excited to be a part of my experience of playing on one of golf's biggest stages. The support from our staff and membership at Birmingham Country Club is incredible and drives me to be a better golf professional every day. As a tournament director at Birmingham, I use my own playing experiences to provide a great tournament experience for our membership. I use my skills to show professionalism, anticipate wants and needs, and provide excellent communication to successfully conduct our club events. I meet with our entire golf staff prior to, during, and after these events to make sure the operation runs smoothly, our membership is enjoying their experience to the fullest, and to make any adjustments to improve in the future. Again, thank you to the members of the Michigan PGA for this humbling nomination. I would be honored to represent this section as the 2023 Assistant Golf Professional of the Year.

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Email *

benproben@gmail.com

Name of Nominee: *

Ben Proben

Award Nominated for: *

Assistant Professional

Facility Employed at: *

True North Golf Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

2018

Please describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award. *

First, Thank you for the nominee of this award for the 2023 season,

In regards to the criteria around the achievements and accomplishments of playing abilities, I competed in The Michigan Open (T61), Tournament of Champions (T21) Michigan PGA Professional Championship (T15) Pro Assistant, Assistants Championship (T7) as well as Adidas State Pro AM, although I would have liked to have had a better year of playing, making the cut in all events that were competed in was a big goal of mine going into the season.

Stepping into the teaching aspect of being a golf professional which is also my favorite aspect of being a PGA professional, teaching the game of golf to the members and guests at True North. Throughout the season I had the privilege to lead the teaching aspect of the club and take the main workload. Giving between 10-15 lessons per week and fine tuning as well as learning more about myself and teaching style was very beneficial to myself and the club.

Tournament organization and administration is especially important as True North is staffed by 3 professionals, Director of Golf Jimmy Liss, Assistant Professional (myself), and Intern Casey Jones from Ferris State. This leaves a lot on the staff to organize and keep on task to maintain a smoothly ran event. With utilization of the Golf Genius software for all aspects of tournament operations from event setup to scoring and live leaderboards.

Merchandising at the club falls upon the same constraints at the club being short on staffing levels in northern Michigan. As out Director of Golf was the buyer of all merchandise we as assistants are tasked to merchandise and display across our 700sq ft. of golf shop space. Generating north of \$320,000 in sales to our 200 members and guests.

Overall businessperson of being a golf professional from scheduling staff to running the day to day operation and carrying yourself in the right aspects towards the members and guests. Aspiring to be the best man and golf professional that you can be and hold the PGA of American to the highest standard.

Being employed at True North Golf Club for the past two seasons we have seen membership grow from 150 to our current full level at 200 members and a waitlist started. By being a familiar face and hard working employee it instills what ownership wants to see at the club from a golf professional standpoint as well as business. By carrying yourself as a player, teacher, merchandiser and businessperson I have has the chance to assist in growing the club to be one of the best clubs in Michigan.

In conclusion, the aspects of integrity, hard work, respect and being an understanding person that can deal with problems accordingly and in a professional manner has shaped the way that I have become a successful golf professional and look forward to learning, growing and furthering my career with help from mentors, friends, members, and other current PGA Professionals.

Thank you for the consideration of this award.

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