

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.

This form was created inside of PGA HQ and sections - all Google users.

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