

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 *

bret.hartman@ricksmith.com

Name of Nominee: *

Bret Hartman

Award Nominated for: *

MI PGA Teacher and Coach of the Year

Facility Employed at: *

Rick Smith Golf Academy at Oakland University

Year Elected to Membership: *

2006

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

I would like to thank all of you for reading my bio and achievements/accomplishments as you consider me for MI PGA Teacher and Coach of the year. I have over 20 yrs of teaching experience and have been a PGA member in the MI section ever since I graduated from the Ferris State PGM program in 2006. While there I graduated on the national deans list and was a member of the FSU golf team. I have been the Head of Instruction for the Rick Smith Golf Academy at Oakland University for over a decade and this year was the most challenging after losing 2 full-time instructors after the season started. However, I was able to still achieve the same amount of lesson revenue as previous years by working 100+ hours a week. I was tweaking and creating instructional programs, hiring part time help, and teaching more than I thought I was physically/mentally capable of. I was still able to run all the same programs and even added in new custom golf schools and corporate instruction. I hired and trained part-time help so the group programs were successful and to help take on new private lesson inquires.

After building up a very sought after golf academy the past 10 years the phone is ringing off the hook, the programs are full and I need to keep hiring additional instructors. I try hard every year to put my instructors in a position to have the best financial situation possible along with equipment staff deals, apparel and fringe benefits. This season my lesson book was full 4-6 weeks in advance and my touring professionals had to fly in to see me in MI because I was so busy and was committed to fulfill all the lessons inquiries at the Rick Smith Golf Academy and lesson requests from the OU membership and guests.

1. Overall Impact on teaching/coaching at the candidate's facility to include number/hours of lessons/clinics and dollars generated.

As the Head of Instruction my overall impact was substantial. I have hired and trained every instructor at the RSGA at OU, but this season my impact really was everything. I lost two full time instructors in the end of April/early May and it was just me. I had built up a busy sought after academy so the phone was ringing off the hook, but my lesson book was already full and I had no instructors. So that's how I can confidently say my impact was everything to the facility. This year I worked 50 -100 hours a week depending on the week. The Academy is on pace to match or exceed last years total lesson revenue of \$102K and the 2 full time instructors that were gone, generated 55% of that lesson revenue. So I stepped up even more!

I worked all junior camps and our 8-wk junior league, that I have not done in years. I was slammed 8-12hrs a day teaching private and group lessons, golf schools, charity outings, corporate clinics, playing lessons and club fittings. I also sold over \$10K in club sales. I taught more hours than I ever have in my 20+ years teaching. All of this was on top of creating programs, shooting lesson videos, hiring/training, payroll, meetings, updating websites, and other managerial tasks. So I think my impact was substantial. We are on pace to exceed \$100k in total revenue and I would be responsible for roughly 80% of that revenue. I would like to thank my new part-time PGA Teaching Professional, Brian Moore for helping me make this season a success.

Lastly, I believe having tour players and top junior players in the state coming to take lessons from me positively impacts the facility. This year my student won the girls regionals as a sophomore with a 31-39 (-2). She was shooting in the low 80's and after 5 lessons this year she is challenging to beat par now when she tee's it up. I have also helped Birmingham Seaholm go on win the state title. Willy Pumarol from the PGA Latino tour, started working with me and then won 5 times, which then qualified him for his first PGA Tour event in the Dominican Republic. I have many other student success stories, but being trusted by Tour players and top youth talent to maximize their potential does positively impact the Rick Smith Golf Academy and Oakland University.

2. Unusual, innovative or special teaching programs initiated or implemented.

I initiated almost every program at the RSGA, along with online lesson booking to eliminate the need/cost for a shop assistant and so the instructors can focus on teaching and not scheduling. From successful junior programs to golf schools to custom private group lessons, an innovative money making mindset was taking the initiative to create a corporate outing instructional program that was included as an option, every Monday at the club. To really increase revenue to big dollars, group instruction has to be maximized because you're making more money and reaching more students in less time. I also did test out small group semi-private lessons, where you get 3-6 students for a 2-hour block and charge them 75% of a 1-hour private lesson. My feedback on this was extremely positive and I am going to advertise and run many more of them next season. As the instructor you get to impact and teach more students. The students get a price discount, they spend more time at your facility practicing under PGA Professional Guidance, it creates a more fun and engaging group atmosphere and the Instructor/facility make more \$ per hour. It's a win-win!

Another innovate lesson avenue I started using this year is virtual and video analysis. It has lower costs and can be used for students who are out of state or can't come in for a lesson. I have instructions for my students on how and where to shoot down-the-line and face-on videos from and how to send it to me. From there, I analyze it and send back a video with voice over explaining what needs to be corrected along with some drills. I am going to launch this on a bigger scale on my website where I can refer them to specific video's on my website lesson library. This innovative and virtual technique is going to allow me to bring in residual income by charging them a monthly membership fee to assess all my lesson videos online via my website. My website has also brought in a lot of new business because I invest money to have it appear on the first page of a browser search. I believe investing in yourself is always the best play, before you invest your money elsewhere.

3. Instructional articles, videos or publications written or produced.

I have done all the above including radio and commercial. They all have been very successful, but serve different purposes and reach different audiences. I believe written articles, posting videos, running commercials, creating a website, using digital and social media platforms are keys to constantly growing your student base and increasing revenue streams. It also allows you to reach those that you cant see in person or who are working with another instructor and want to discretely get your opinion. It helps grow your brand and most importantly grows the game with the guidance and knowledge of a PGA Professional, instead of all the other questionable information that's out there. Below are some of the things I have done and what I have found to be successful in each category.

Instructional Articles:

I have posted written articles with demonstration pictures around my facility in high traffic areas, in news articles, email blasts and on my website. I found that in order to be successful this content has to true for every player and has to be very fundamentally simple with pictures if possible. The topics I used were: how to set up a practice station for proper alignment and ball position, how to take proper divots on the range, learn from your divot pattern, drills for proper body motion, sequence of motion drills, chipping fundamentals, rules and etiquette to name a few. I laminate them and post them on the range and bulletin boards around the facility. I also send them electronically in membership newsletters, monthly student emails, social media and my website www.brethartmangolf.net. However, it's typically best to post videos when using social media, website and other digital platforms.

Instructional Videos:

I have done a ton of instructional videos that I have posted on Youtube, social media, monthly newsletters to our membership and on my website. This year, I shot a series of instructional videos covering the fundamentals of setup, grip, backswing, downswing, impact, and follow-through. Additionally, I included videos on chipping, pitching, bunker play, putting, how to fix a slice/hook, impact drills, specialty shots, increasing clubhead speed, and many others. These are and will continue to be posted on my website under the video lessons page and anyone can view them for free right now. However, I am going to start charging small monthly membership fee to view all of these video's and give them an option to purchase a video analysis lesson at a fraction of the cost of an in-person lesson. You can view all these videos at www.brethartmangolf.net

Commercials/Publications:

I shot a chipping instructional commercial for 'live long live well' that aired on PBS. Now it has 1.4 million views on Youtube. There is the link <https://youtu.be/oM5l-Wlyu8A>.

I also did a instructional bunker video for a local new channel commercial. Now it posted on Youtube at this link: <https://youtu.be/aoeDd0BmON4>.

Multiple times on was on WJR with Beckman talking golf instruction tips for the local amateurs both at Oakland Hills CC and at Oakland University.

I did a commercial with Rick Smith for Voice Caddie that was shot at Desert Mountain in Carefree, AZ. It was then aired on the Golf Channel.

4. Examples of innovative techniques/technologies used or specialty certifications that enhance the candidate's programs, lessons and ability as an instructor.

I believe being innovative and using the best technologies is key to staying current with the changing times in this digital world. I

have listed about a new things that would also fit in this category, but here is a lot more that I have not listed that I have done to become the best instructor possible;

I use Trackman and video analysis, along with top training aids in all my lessons and club fittings. I am a certified club fitter for Titleist, Taylor Made and Callaway. I am a certified coach on PGA.coach and I would encourage everyone to do so since it has brought in new business and costs nothing. I also think its important to keep my game as sharp as I can because students do like it when I demonstrate as well as impress them during lessons. I compete every year in our Chapter and section events and share those experiences with my students. Additionally, I share the advice and experiences I have had through training touring professionals. In doing so it helps solidify my abilities/knowledge and illustrate my understanding of the pressure that comes with tournament play, both mentally and physically. As a result, I can help them overcome roadblocks.

5. Continued education and training in the area of golf instruction.

I always will continue to educate and train my expertise in the area of golf instruction, technologies, equipment, body movement/fitness/flexibility, mental approach, course management, managerial and communication skills. This January I attended the PGA Merchandise show in Orlando, FL to continue to grow my knowledge as Head of Instruction, as well as section and chapter meetings/seminars. I also attended equipment/product seminars from top manufacturers Taylor Made and Callaway. I really get a lot of continued education by shadowing in person lessons from top instructors Rick Smith and Butch Harmon. I have been on the PGA Tour many times as an instructor/player support. From my student participating or Rick Smith bringing in my younger years. Every time I learn a ton! I even learn from some of my veteran students on the PGA Tour, PGA Champions Tour or PGA Latino Tour. They have great knowledge and experience that they share and I am thankful that I am apart of that circle. I have letters of recommendation from those top players and instructors in case it is needed for this prestigious award. Those names include, Rocco Mediate, Gary Nicolaus, Willy Pumarol, Rick Smith, Tyler McCumber, Rory Sabatini, and Brian Moore who has worked at many top Golf Academies around the country. With that being said, I would like to thank all the PGA Teachers/Professionals around the globe and most importantly my fellow Michigan PGA Professionals that have helped me become the successful PGA Teacher and Coach that I am today. I appreciate your time for reading my bio for the MI PGA Teacher and Coach of year award and will be forever appreciative for your vote. Your are always welcome to give me a call or come up to RSGA at OU if you ever need anything. I am always here and happy to help any of my fellow MI PGA professional colleagues!

Practice With a Purpose,

Bret Hartman, PGA
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Awards & Recognition:

Competed in 2012 PGA National Championship
8 Professional victories
Certified Titleist & Taylormade Club Fitter
Video Analysis & Launch Monitor Specialist

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