

2025 Youth Player Development Award Candidate Bio Form

Please submit this form no later than **Friday, October 4, 2024 at 4pm.**

Email *

rbryant@thousandoaksgc.com

Name of Nominee: *

Raquel Bryant

Facility Employed at: *

Thousand Oaks Golf Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

2009

Please describe each of the programs conducted to grow the game amongst youth at your facility, in the community, in the Michigan Section and nationally including the number of consumers who have attended these programs in 350 words or less: *

Youth Golf Programs:

-FUNDamental's Edge- 168 Juniors (48% girls), 6 one-hour clinics per session, 2 age groups, offered spring through fall for the beginner to intermediate golfer.

-PGA Junior League- 24 juniors (2 teams, 50% girls) 5 practices, 5 matches. Brian Kotowicz and I each coach one team. Team Bryant was the League Champion this year. I also coached an All-Star Team.

-Competitive Edge- 29 juniors (58% girls), 1 hour on Wednesdays throughout the summer in groups of 4.

-Active Edge- 27 juniors (59% girls) ages 3-5, met for one hour three times throughout the summer

-Play with the Pro- 11 juniors (63% girls) Played 9 holes with students and made post-round recommendations for improvement.

-Fellowship of Christian Athlete Short Game Clinic- 69 juniors (45% girls) Free to members, and only \$10-30 for non-members depending on the age group. A one-day clinic, 1-3 hours long based on age group, 3 age groups offered. I planned this clinic and volunteered my time along with four other golf professionals.

-LiveGolf Junior League- In the Thousand Oaks Golf Academy from November-December. I currently have 30 juniors registered.

-21 of my FUNdamentals Edge and LiveGolf Junior League students are from homeschool partnerships, giving these students access to golf lessons they may not otherwise be able to afford.

Total: over 328 juniors in group programs

Overall percentage of girls in 2024 junior group programs- 50%.

Hours of Instruction:

Private Lessons- 214 hours of private lessons given as of 10/1/2024, 64% of those were juniors

Group Programs- 160 hours of group programs as of 10/1/2024, 77% of those hours were in junior programs

In our programs we strive to provide excellent instruction, in a fun and motivating environment. We add exciting elements such as a putting course, putting objects, obstacle course, and end the last day with a popsicle in summer or cider and donuts in the fall. We track games and give prizes. Our programs are planned out in advance to ensure all aspects of the game are covered. We also have every size of US Kids clubs available.

Please describe your contributions to youth golf programs in the Section and on a national level * including service as a chairperson or as a member of the player development committee in 150 words or less:

Raquel has volunteered at many Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) Golf Camps, even as early as 2007 when she was an unpaid intern for FCA Golf. She has volunteered as both a Huddle Leader and golf instructor. The camps she volunteered at were in Florida, Oregon, California, and here in Michigan at Katke Golf Course and Gull Lake View Golf Resort. 2021 was the first year Raquel organized and executed an FCA Short Game Clinic at Thousand Oaks Golf Club. She secured four other PGA members and two LPGA members to volunteer at the camp so it could be offered at no cost to members and a minimal price for non-members.

Raquel has also volunteered for The First Tee of West Michigan's "Homework and Hitting" program.

Please describe your involvement and significant leadership contributions through mentoring * and sharing with other PGA of America Professionals about Youth Player Development and Growing the Game in 250 words or less:

Raquel has been a member of the Michigan Section for 12 years. She has coached Junior League teams for the last 9 years at Thousand Oaks Golf Club. Raquel has also been an all-star coach for the last three years. She shared best practices for PGA Junior League on a Junior League Zoom meeting that covered multiple mid-west PGA Sections.

Raquel highly encourages participation in Drive, Chip, Putt. She has had students move on to Subregional and Regional Qualifiers. She has volunteered at the West Michigan Golf Show many times, specifically giving free 5-minute lessons and working in the Family Fun zone.

Raquel has her American Development Model and PGA Coach Certifications and is a PGA Specialized Teaching Professional. Raquel was featured in the article, "Power of the PGA Brand", in the June 2021 PGA Magazine for her experience in becoming Specialized in Teaching.

Raquel has been a recipient of the Michigan PGA Youth Player Development Grant since 2014. She used the grant funds to make many improvements to her junior programs including US Kids tees, tee markers, putting objects, SNAG golf, obstacle course items, US Kids clubs, staff shirts, and more. In 2019, 2021, and 2024 the Thousand Oaks Golf Club FUNdamentals Edge program was named the Michigan PGA Junior Golf Program of the Year through the Michigan PGA grant program. Raquel shared best practices from this program over a Michigan PGA Zoom meeting featuring the programs of the year. She has personally shared ideas with professionals across the state as people have approached her asking for ideas.

Please describe your image and leadership in the area of youth golf and your overall integrity in *
250 words or less:

Raquel lives with high integrity and values, which she strives to pass on to her junior golfers. She impresses upon her students the value of a positive attitude, treating everyone with respect, and doing their best in whatever they are doing. Raquel’s desire is to encourage her students to grow not only in their golf game, but to also develop into people of integrity.

Outside of work Raquel can be found volunteering at Kid’s Connection on Wednesday evenings at church where she leads a small group of kindergarten to 1st grade girls. She also teaches Children’s Church once a month for preschoolers. In the past Raquel has also volunteered with Lingual Learners, a Spanish Immersion Co-op as well as leading a team from her church in helping an Afghan refugee family resettle in Grand Rapids.

Raquel is deeply involved with a grass-roots group of Christian golf professionals in Michigan who meet on Zoom to encourage each other to live out their faith and values in the golf industry.

“Coach Bryant has good morals and ethics and lives her life with integrity. It is a special combination to find a powerhouse coach with excellent athletic skills, coaching abilities, and an honorable lifestyle.” -Paul O’Grady

Thank you for considering me for this award. It is truly an honor to be nominated! It would not have been possible to run the junior programming we did this year without Payne Gniewek, PGA, Brian Kotowicz, PGA, and Hillary Tierney. Thank you to them!

Please list any other PGA Section or National Awards you've received and the year(s) you received them (50 word limit): *

2019, 2021, 2024 Michigan PGA Junior Golf Program of the Year
2015 and 2023 Michigan PGA Youth Player Development Award Winner
Nominated for the Michigan PGA Youth Player Development Award in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2022, 2023, and 2024.

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