

## **PGA PLAYER DEVELOPMENT AWARD**

*This award bestows special recognition on a PGA Professional for exemplary contributions and achievements in the area of Player Development and for extraordinary efforts in conducting and/or supporting Play Golf America initiatives. This award considers the PGA Professional's growth of the game leadership commitment at the Section and National levels, plus the impact made at his/her own facility.*

**Steve Loesher, PGA**  
*Reston National Golf Course*  
*Reston, Virginia*

Steve Loesher has been awarded the 2016 Player Development Award for his strong work as Regional Director of Player Development for Billy Casper Golf Management. Through his involvement with Player Development at nine golf courses in the Mid-Atlantic region and his commitment to creating personal relationships, Steve's passion to grow the game of golf is insurmountable.

Matt and Sandra Loesher (both deceased) celebrated the birth of their son Steve on May 5, 1961 in Chicago, Il. Steve is the youngest of four children. He has two older sisters Colette and Cindy, and one older brother, Michael. Being a devoted golfer, Steve's father introduced Steve to the game of golf at the age of seven when the family moved from the city to the suburbs, which gave them easier access to golf courses and driving ranges. Steve recalls there always being golf clubs sitting around the house that he would use to hit golf balls in the back yard and practice putting in the house. Steve played golf off and on as a kid and played a lot of others sports, but it was at the 1975 U.S. Open at the famous Medinah Country Club that changed everything for him. Steve and his sister were standing next to the tee box on the par-3 2<sup>nd</sup> hole and Arnold Palmer was walking from the 1<sup>st</sup> green to the 2<sup>nd</sup> tee. As he walked to the tee, Palmer gave Steve and his sister a huge smile and wink which meant a lot to Steve as it showed him that Palmer was aware of the people around him. That was it, Steve was hooked.

Steve's first golf-related job was doing golf club repair and making custom golf clubs for Doug Daley in Elk Grove, Il. It was a great job that allowed Steve to work with a few tour players and to see the other side of golf. In 1983, Steve graduated from the College of Dupage in Wheaton, Il., and became the Assistant Professional at Brookwood Country Club in Addison, Il. After working at Brookwood and at Lincolnshire Country Club in Champaign, Il., for two years, Steve became the Assistant Professional at the Country Club of Fairfax in Fairfax, Va. While working at the Country Club of Fairfax, he became the Head Golf Coach at George Mason University in 1989. Steve earned his Class A PGA Membership in 1994 and two years later was named the 1996 NCAA Division I Northeast Region Coach of the Year. In 1998, Steve became the Lead Instructor at the Everybody Golf School and Kingsmill Resort/Nike Golf Camps. Three years later, he accepted the position as Director of Instruction at the Nike Golf Learning Center. Then, in 2013, Steve began his current position as the Regional Director of Player Development for Billy Casper Golf Management.

Serving as the Regional Director of Player Development for Billy Casper Golf, Steve is responsible for over 20 golf courses along the east coast, nine of which are located in the Middle Atlantic Section. His job is to create a player development structure for each facility through adult classes and clinics (Get Golf Ready), junior programs (academy, summer camps, PGA Junior League) and women's programs. Steve works with each of these facilities and added new "Play Golf America" programs that helped enhance the existing curriculum. One could say Steve's most important skill is his time management as

he stays in continual communication with all of these facilities through emails, phone conversations and face-to-face meetings on a regular basis.

Steve implements multiple best practice ideas that have been successful in his growth of the game programs. First and foremost, he makes sure there is a table in each pro shop dedicated to player development programs with flyers, schedules and information that is easy to access and understand, is available. He expands his idea of making information easy to access to his website where Steve makes sure he keeps the content fresh and current, while making it user-friendly with online registration available. One of his most successful best practice ideas is his involvement and commitment to building relationships in the community. Steve attends around 100 off-course clinics and health fairs a year, all of which he does for free, and goes to companies to conduct clinics at their facilities. By going and conducting clinics at the companies' facilities, Steve creates relationships which bring over \$50,000 in corporate revenue. In 2015, he had participated in clinics at NASA, USA/Today, Freddie Mac, the SEC, Oracle, the FBI, the US Senate, Time Warner and many more.

Over the years, Steve has won multiple awards and has been invited to speak at several education seminars. Steve was awarded the 2007 Billy Casper Golf "Facility of the Year" for Reston National Golf Course. He was named to the Washingtonian Magazine "Top 5 Instructors" in 2011 and was on the US Kids "Top 50 Instructors" Honorable Mention three consecutive years in a row from 2010-2012. Within the past year and a half, Steve has been invited to speak at several education seminars including the East Coast Junior Golf Summit, The PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando, Fl., and the Inaugural 2015 Billy Casper Golf Teaching & Player Development Summit. There, Steve organized and brought in some of the biggest names in the golf industry.

To this day, Steve's biggest mentor in golf is his father. Steve has also had the opportunity to learn from and work for some outstanding individuals in the golf industry. Greg Befera, PGA, gave Steve his first on course job at Brookwood Country Club and got Steve acclimated to the golf business. Although tough and demanding, Melvin Rowe, PGA helped mold Steve to high expectations and strong values during Steve's tenure at the Country Club of Fairfax. Also, Ted Eleftheriou, Director of Program Development for the PGA and Mike O'Donnell, Senior Director of Golf 2.0 and Play Golf America have been monumental in mentoring and training Steve to becoming a leader in Player Development.

Steve's personal golf philosophy is to try and make golf as fun and as easy to understand as possible. Steve believes the key to his success at the Nike Golf Learning Center at Reston National was getting to know his students and creating a family-friendly environment where everyone is welcome and feels comfortable.