

Liz Cooper, PGA- Player Development Award

Liz Cooper has been awarded the 2018 Player Development Award for her strong work as the Director of Player Development at Army Navy Country Club in Arlington, Virginia. Through the various programs she operates at Army Navy, she is committed to creating personal relationships while growing the game of golf. Liz's dedication to not only her members, but to all members of the Middle Atlantic Section, is extraordinary.

Born to parents David and Rosalind Cooper on September 4, 1981. Liz grew up in Attleboro, Mass. with her brother David Jr. Liz attended Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pa. on a swimming scholarship and then attended the Golf Academy of America in Orlando, Fl. Upon moving to Florida, Liz took a series of lessons with a local PGA & LPGA Professional, Jen Cully. Jen not only helped Liz with her golf swing but she encouraged her to get into the golf business.

Liz's first golf related job was as a golf shop assistant from 2001 – 2004 at Summerfield Crossings Golf Course in Riverview, Fl. She then went to work at Dubsdread Golf Course, also as a shop assistant, until she relocated to Mount Vernon Country Club in Alexandria, Va. Liz worked at Mount Vernon for over ten years working as an Assistant Golf Professional and then as the Membership Marketing Director. During her time at Mount Vernon, Liz earned her PGA membership as well as her LPGA membership. In 2015, she changed career paths and took a job as Player Development Coordinator with the Middle Atlantic Section office. During this time, Liz earned her certification in Player Development and Teaching & Coaching in 2016. Shortly after receiving her certification, Liz accepted her current position as Director of Player Development at Army Navy Country Club.

Liz Cooper's passion is growing the game of golf and it is apparent whether she is sharing a best practice with a fellow Professional or teaching a beginner to hold the golf club for the first time. One of the first things Liz did when she took the Director of Player Development position at Army Navy was survey the membership to find out what programs they would be interested in participating in. What came from those results was a Player Development Pathway for both Adult and Junior Golf Programming. The ANCC Player Development Pathway provides a road map for the membership to progress in their golf journey. A member can start at any point of the pathway and work their way up as far as they would like to go.

In the spring of 2015, Liz was fortunate enough to play in a Former Members of Congress charity event that benefited Disabled Sports USA. She was paired with a group of three women that had been injured during their active duty tours. The tournament coordinator indicated that these women were uncomfortable playing with a male professional because of the injuries they had sustained. That gave Liz and fellow MAPGA Member Troy Beck and the team at PGA HOPE the inspiration to design and implement one of the only all-female Veteran Wounded Warrior Programs taught only by female professionals in the country. The six-week program was a tremendous success and allowed female veterans the opportunity to feel comfortable enjoying a sport that they loved.

Liz has created opportunities for new golfers or lapsed golfers to move from the lesson tee and driving range to the golf course through her Get Comfortable with Golf (Get Golf Ready) programming. She offers three levels of Get Comfortable with Golf culminating with 100% on course play and instruction in level three. Not only has this approach created more golfers it has helped form bonds between the participants so they now have a group of similar skilled playing partners, which makes them more likely to continue to play the game.

In 2017, Liz created the first All-Girls PGA Junior League Division in the country. Four different clubs in the Northern Virginia area participated in the inaugural division. ANCC had sixteen girls ages 13 and under on the team and there were over sixty girls playing that participated in the All Girls Division. Liz coached the All-Girls All-Star team made up of girls from Army Navy, Washington Golf & Country Club, First Tee/Ft. Belvoir and Springfield Golf and Country Club. The inaugural season was a success and Liz plans on growing the All Girls Division of PGA Junior League Golf in 2018.

This is the first Section award that Liz has received. She was previously named the 2014 and 2016 LPGA T&CP Northeast Section Professional of the Year and is a 2017-2018 Top 50 LPGA Instructor. She has served as a committee member for the Virginia State Golf Association Growth of the Game committee, is the current LPGA Northeast Section Vice President and currently serves as a Central Chapter Regional Director within the Section.